

St. Francis of Assisi School Leadership Council Minutes

April 9, 2026

Board Members Present:

Father Pins (Pastor)
 Brenda Pedersen (Vice Chair)
 John Cord (Treasurer)
 Jennifer Tracey (Volunteer Coord)
 Becky Baker (Fundraising Coord)
 Andrew Phillips (At-Large)
 Baylie Panzi (At-Large)
 Phil Stover (Communications Dir)
 William Downs (At-Large)
 Michael Perrin (At-Large)

Not Present:

Mollie Mertens (Secretary)
 Adam Mullinax (At-Large)
 Steve Craig (Chair)

Others Present:

Jeff Lynch (School Principal)
 Jodi Halligan (Vice Principal)
 Wendy Henry (Preschool Director)

Nicole Kolbo (Band Teacher)
 Paige Kolk (Music Teacher)
 Kristin Ritchey (Librarian)
 Becky Buckmiller (Spanish Teacher)

Prepared by: Baylie Panzi

Called to Order: 6:30 p.m.

Adjourned: 7:48 pm

Location: Saint Francis Science Lab Classroom

Minutes Prepared By: _____
 Baylie Panzi

AGENDA ITEM	DESCRIPTION/DISCUSSION	NEXT STEPS/ACTIONS
Call to Order & Opening Prayer	Brenda Pedersen called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and Fr. Pins led an opening prayer. This included [prayers for St. Lukes & Welcome back to Fr.	Call to Order and Opening Prayer.
Approve Minutes	Minutes from the February 12, 2026 Leadership Council meeting were sent out electronically before the meeting. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Phil Stover and seconded by Andrew Phillips. The minutes were unanimously approved.	Minutes of the February 12, 2026 meeting were unanimously approved.

AGENDA ITEM	DESCRIPTION/DISCUSSION	NEXT STEPS/ACTIONS
<p>Presentation by Related Arts Teachers</p>	<p>Related Arts Instruction 2025-2026 presented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nicole Kolbo, Band Director. 9th year teaching at SFA. Offered to 5th-8th grade students. 47 students are currently enrolled. Students have 1-1 lessons once per week for 20 minutes. Jazz band offered this spring for 6th-8th graders. A lot of collaboration with Dowling (pep rallies, Band Bash and school mass). Low enrollment when students go to high school due to conflicts with schedules and band class, Thanked Nicole for re-energizing the band department. ● Paige Kolk, SFA Choir Program (6th- 8th Grade). The Singing Suns (4th & 5th grade) 15 students who meet 7:45am-8:15am M/W. Chorale du Soliel 6th-8th grade, 20 students T/Th meeting. An obstacle is getting a ride before school. Other events: OPUS Choir, 5th Grade Diocesan Choir, Spring Community Outreach, Christmas Concert. Taking the lead on the diocesan choir efforts with hopes of increasing participation. Will have 4 community outreach events with local retirement community on a quarterly basis. Also does all middle school students, two 41-minute classes per week. 225 students total who all perform at the Christmas concert. Spring focus is non-performing standards. ● Kristin Richey, SFA Library. Walked through library stats (25,574 total books!). Does weekly classes for K-5 where she does read aloud, vocab, research skills & developing a love for reading. Middle school does not have a weekly class, but she visits classrooms & hosts a lunch book club which has been very fun. Shared Battle of the Books with over 150 students 3rd-5th grade; run by parent volunteers. ● Report from Bonnie Shaw, ESL. 15 students participate in programming and 8 languages represented from 10 different countries. Preparing for the ELPA21 Testing in Spring 2026. ● Report from Tracy Schmulbach & Mike Hazel, PE. Currently on the back end of rollerblading session. Watched rollerblading obstacle course video. ● Becky Buckmiller, Spanish, K-8th Grade Spanish. They are doing Spanish 1 in those years. 6-week cycles, 2 times a year. 4 grades at a time are in session. Goal is so have fun & learn Spanish. By the end of 8th grade they have completed Spanish 1, where they can test out of Spanish 1 at Dowling & go straight into Spanish 2. SFA is 1 of 4 schools in the diocese who have a similar program. ● The team feels very supported by Leadership Council i.e. Battle of the Books, classroom resources & a supportive team. Becky Buckmiller would love to attend a professional conference if possible. 	<p>Update on Related Arts Instruction 2025-2026</p>

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Open Forum	There was no request for an Open Forum at this meeting.	
Treasurer's Report	<p>John Cord presented the Treasurer's Report:</p> <p>Leadership Council Account (2422): As of February 9th, 2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Beginning Balance (01/01/26): \$173,705.47 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Slight adjustment from last reports ending balance ● Current Balance: \$147,580.01 ● Remaining Budgeted Expenses: \$111,542.82 ● Surplus: \$66,642 <p>Recent Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 4th Grade March Mission (Aheinz57) \$1,831 ● PE Roller Blade Rental: <p>Fundraising Account (2426): As of January 31, 2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Beginning Balance (01/01/26): \$150,718.07 ● Current Balance: \$128,256.84 <p>Recent Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Auction donations and expenses (casino, catering, entertainment) ● Full auction revenues & expenses will be presented at next LC meeting <p>Approved \$38,000 for new locks on the doors.</p>	Treasurer's Report from John Cord.
Fundraising and Development Report	<p>Report: Fundraising and Development Director Update (Becky)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meeting with GiveSmart. We are using an outdated version & we have until the summer to decide on an upgrade or not. Need to make sure the outdated version will continue to be supported. ● We expect a final auction update to come next month. 	Fundraising Report from Becky Baker
Volunteer Coordinator Report	<p>Report: Volunteer Coordinator – Update (Jennifer)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reached out to current parent volunteers to confirm interest next year for art & library. ● Spirit wear vendor inquiry on if we can use a new vendor for 2026. 	Volunteer Coordinator Report from Jen Tracey.

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Old Business	<p>Brenda Pedersen presented the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Notes from Leadership Council Chairs Meeting attended by Steve Craig 2/25/26 - no comments or questions ● Update on Pre-School and School Enrollment for 2026-2027 – Status of Wait Lists- see administrator report below ● Update on Filling Teacher Vacancies for 2026-2027 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● One more music teacher to fill; had a really great candidate pool overall we were pleased with the applicants. ● Catholic Schools Office Report from Feb 9-10, 2026, Site Visit – 4 Suggestions for Continued Growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Went well other than the doors/locks. You are required to have a “Table Talk” and we had never called it a Table Talk before (although the concept was in place). It is being done just wasn’t noted. ● Won’t do a fire drill after mass, because of guests in attendance. Will do a ‘mock’ fire drill with the students at mass. ● SIACC Committee is working on car line & how we can improve moving forward. ● Working on the SFA 5-year plan- Jeff Lynch says this will be ready in June ● 2026-2027 School Calendar (1120 contact hours/1093 contact hours excluding conferences) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Calendar is out; there was an error on the Catholic School’s Mass date. ● Leadership Council to serve coffee & donuts on May 3, 2026 (after 7:30 & 9:30 am Masses) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Email to go out with volunteer sign-ups for mass 	Old Business discussion led by Brenda Pedersen.
Pastoral Report	<p>Fr. Pins presented the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fr. Pins has returned from medical leave. ● Upcoming 1st Communion for 2nd graders ● Update on <i>Rebuild My Church</i> capital campaign - \$12.6 million has been raised from about 280 people to date. 84% of the way there; only 10% of our families have committed. We are hopeful to go over our \$15M. ● Goal is to raise \$15 million. Currently in silent phase with personal visits. Public Campaign will launch in April 2026 (just after Easter). ● Goal is to break ground on preschool in September and have it completed by August of 2027. ● We are also hopeful that we can break ground on the chapel 9/2026 for 5/2027 completion. ● The church is going to put in 4 confessionals where current chapel is. ● Redoing parish kitchen & classrooms on the south side (as a last phase). 	Report from Father Pins

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continuing to work with project manager & architects on project planning. ● Preschool construction will also include 750-person storm shelter 	
Report from SFA Preschool Director	<p>Wendy Henry presented the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Easter Prayer Service was held & it went very well. ● Ronald McDonald was the Lenten Project - families went above & beyond. ● A week from Monday we start GL conferences. 	<p>Report from Wendy Henry.</p>
Report from SFA School	<p>Jeff Lynch and Jodi Halligan presented the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2 surveys sent out on Leader in Me & on Carline in News & Notes. ● Issue with carline backing up on Ashworth Rd. In order for us to move forward with construction plan we have to submit a plan on how we can fix the carline. Survey went out last week & will again this week. Drone will be over the school at dismissal to survey carline activity. Currently takes 12 minutes but we need to get cars off Ashworth. We need to take the new preschool traffic into consideration as well. Would like to eliminate one line. Mr. Lynch would welcome any opinions on how to fix this. Ashworth & 76th is the problem area. Parents have brought forward many good ideas. Increasing carpooling is happening but can be difficult. ● Issues with Kids Care pickup with track season. Kids aren't using the crosswalk & cars are parking on the street. ● Kindergarten Roundup is 4/24/26. ● Deadline February 13 for Kindergarten responses- offered 76 spots, still waiting to hear back from 8 families. ● Currently meeting with architects to finalize plans for new preschool building -hope to have ready for start of 2027 academic year. <p>Entering assessment season</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ISASP (Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress) Middle school – 4/13-4/17 and Elementary 4/20- 4/24 ● NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress)- 2/27 8th grade (NCEA) Pilot School Testing ● FAST (Formative Assessment System for Teachers) in spring- Elementary 5/4- 5/8, Middle school 5/11- 5/15 	<p>Report from Jeff Lynch and Jodi Halligan.</p>
Update from Committees	<p>Written summaries sent by email to LC members in advance of meeting - no questions.</p>	

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New Business	Brenda shared the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Plans for Kindergarten Roundup & Discussing with Parents the Covenant of Trust ● Council Member Terms Expiring: Andrew, Brenda, Mollie, Steve – all have agreed to serve 2nd term ● Stipends for Teachers Moderating Extracurricular Activities: Survey Results discussed, Proposal for Stipends in 2026-2027 presented. Motion approved and seconded ● Follow up conversation about additional safety measures on AI etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We are putting in 3 new cameras to upgrade school security - LC approval of the door locks - Mr. Lynch is hopeful to bring the cost down on the AI software with additional safety measures 	
Executive Session	No executive session	
Closing Prayer and Adjournment	Father Pins led a closing prayer. There was no other new business to discuss so the meeting was adjourned at 7:48 pm.	The next Leadership Council Meeting is scheduled for May 14, 2026 at 6:30 pm