Holy Family Catholic Schools

School Board Meeting
Thursday, October 15th, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.
Schrup Family Board Room

Members Present: Kevin Mullen, John Callahan, Maggie Kramer, Fr. Brian Delleart, Rennie Root, Mike Dodds, Isabelle Pattarozzi, Jeff Weber, Nick Edwards, Annie Murphy

Members Absent: Jon Sarrazin, Fr. Gary Mayer, Fr. Michael Schueller

Holy Family Staff Present: Phil Bormann, Rebecca Mueller, Zoe Houlihan, Cole Smith, RJ Willis, Bailey Peterson

Meeting Start at 5:30 pm

New Board Member

Nick Edwards started on the board as a St. Joseph the Worker Representative. He was introduced to the board and introductions were made by the rest of the board.

Recruitment/Retention Update

Rebecca Mueller gave a presentation on Recruitment and Retention. She talked about how certified enrollment has been completed and we are showing growth for the fifth straight year in a row. Three of our schools showed fantastic growth: Mazzachelli had a growth of 3.7%, Wahlert had a growth of 5.4%, and St. Columbkille had a growth of 8.5%. Enrollment is sitting at 270 for Our Lady of Guadalupe, 284 for Resurrection, 345 for St. Columbkille, 416 for Mazzuchelli, and 492 for Wahlert, making total enrollment 1,807 from TK-12.
Our 6th grade class had a 96% retention rate, and our freshman class also has a 96% retention rate. We had 96% system retention rate last year and 94% this year, which is still a very strong number. 90.1% of the student body is Catholic and it was asked if it was possible to have a breakdown of what percentage of students belong to each parish. Rebecca will provide this breakdown for the next board meeting. The data also that 78 students transferred to Holy Family Catholic Schools this year in grades 1-12, an increase of 39 percent compared to last year. Projected enrollment for next year is somewhere between 1,866 (conservative 3.2% growth) – 1904 (aggressive 5.4% growth). These numbers will be looked at and revised again in January and could be changing based on the decision of the Dubuque Community School District.
Mike Dodds recognized the amount of hard work that goes into enrollment and acknowledged the amount of work that Rebecca has been doing as a one woman department. He also asked if there was a potential of getting a breakdown of low, middle, and high economic class statistics. Rebecca stated that with FACTS, ESA, and Free/Reduced Lunch data, we should be able to get a breakdown of students. There has also been a bigger push for encouraging families to apply for

any form of tuition assistance there is, whether it is parish membership grants, ESA, or STO through FACTS.

Approval of the September 17th, 2026 Board minutes

Rennie Root moved that the September 17th board minutes be approved as presented. Jeff Weber seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chief Administrator Report

Ruth Carlson is working with Katie Bormann and the site administrators to incorporate the Catholic Virtues into the Leader in Me curriculum. Students and staff are using the Hallow app for daily prayers, with over 100,000 prayers logged by both students and staff. Mass times, sacramental prep, and faith formation opportunities are all shared monthly in the Catholic Mission newsletter put out by Ruth and it is being very well received by families.

Teachers have been meeting with the Archdiocese to new science and social studies standards for Kindergarten through 8th grade. They will be helping to determine which standards are assessed and reported on for progress reports. Specialist teachers began working through an auditing, vertical alignment, and resource evaluation process in their content areas. Work has recently begun on the 27-28 high school course guide and 27-28 curriculum, assessment, and professional development budget.

In Finance, the finance committee had two members, David Becker and Father Quint, step down, but there were three people who joined the committee, Father Schuller, Father Mayer, and Zac Scherrman. The finance committee also voted to move Platform I Dupaco cash to Steele investments ahead of formation of the Foundation. It was also reported that in facilities, the auditorium is expected to be used as of the Fall of 2028. We hired Charlie Sisler as our Director of Building and Grounds. He is coming to us from Paulson Electric, is a member of St. Columbkille Church, and has children in our system. He believes in our mission and wants to help provide the best possible conditions for our students to succeed. Another thing that was discussed was that we are introducing a market increase for wages for our custodians.

We are currently looking for custodians to fill some positions that we have available, as well as an additional robotics coach for our Mazzuchelli team. We currently have more STEM students involved in the club than we can accommodate with coaches. October is reporting month for both the Archdiocese and the state. We submitted detailed staffing and benefit data to the Archdiocese for the National Catholic Education Association and to the state for the Iowa Department of Education, as well as information about our student body.

Old Business

Father Gary Mayer has the updated copy of our Constitution with the amendment language update for the pastorates. Father Mayer will sign and have the head of each church council under the East Pastorate. When he is completed, he will pass it over to Father Schueller, who will do the same for the West Pastorate.

New Business - American Logic May Term

Cole Smith presented along with RJ Willis and Bailey Peterson about a potential trip that they would like to plan for May Term. The class would be called American Logic and would involve a trip to DC with Grand Classroom from May 18-21. The class itself would entail learning about our country's history and how religion ties in with the foundation of our government. The class will also teach how to understand what a text is saying, consider whether the argument holds, and learn to express a judgement clearly. They will learn the following terms and be able to discuss arguments fully: premise, conclusion, assumption, fallacy, validity, and soundness. At the completion of the course, students will produce either a short written argument or presentation about liberty, justice, or civic responsibility, supported by observations from the trip, as well as primary sources. RJ Willis discussed how a lot of the learning would be based in the Socratic Method, where the only materials you need are good questions and discussion. The course will primarily be sophomores and juniors, but seniors will have the opportunity to take the class if they desire to.

The trip itself will have the students seeing and doing as many things as possible. Partnering with Grand Classroom provides an all in one cost for the families, including a 24/7 tour guide, food, admission for the various activities, hotel stay, airfare, and bus transportation to the airport. As of now, the price is based on flying out of O'Hare. Jeff Weber presented the option of flying out of Cedar Rapids instead, stating that even if the price is a little more, it would be worth it to fly out of a smaller airport. This provides the opportunity for experiential learning by doing whatever the group decides. The cost of the trip is approximately $2,479, based on 20 full paying students. They are aiming at having a class size of 25, with a chaperone ratio for the trip of 1:10, but the possibility of lowering it to 1:8. There will be the potential for receiving a scholarship through Grand Classroom, as well as setting up a payment plan. A 10% non-refundable deposit is required when signing up for the class, with the full remaining balance due 95 days prior to departure. Every chaperone for the 8/10 students that are in ratio will be free.

Jeff Weber motioned to approve the May term course American Logic and the trip to Washington DC as presented. Maggie Kramer seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

New Business - Enrollment Projections and Capacity

As mentioned in the Enrollment section above from Rebecca, our projections are up in the air right now, as we currently await the decision of the Dubuque Community School District and what they are planning to do with their secondary buildings, and potential changes to ESA. As of now, our projected growth percentage is 3-5.4%, but this will be reevaluated in January with the updated information. Because of this, it is estimated that we will have waiting lists and they will be longer. Phil presented our enrollment trends for the past few years and what that looks like for the future with no changes at all. We are running very efficiently for the amount of space

that we have. Based on our current model, we have a capacity of slightly over 2,000 students in our system. By adding extra sections in both middle and high school, we would be able to expand our enrollment to 2,150, however, that would also have some disadvantages, such as more teachers without a classroom (mobile/floating teachers) and less choices of what classes to take for students due to the increased number of students. One of the last things that Holy Family wants to do is increase class sizes, which is why this would happen. Our class sizes are smaller than Dubuque community with our class cap for K-5 at 22 whereas Dubuque Community has a cap of 26 for K-2 and 28 for 3-5. More students in a class means that the teachers and associates have less time with each student. The board also listened as Phil showed enrollment trends and how Dubuque birthrates are on a decline, which means we have a smaller pull of students in the area. Despite this, Holy Family is in a strong financial position and our program is continuing to expand in its curriculum, providing new classes for our students. Phil asked the board what they would like to do and the consensus was that we do not want to increase class sizes as that would lead to burnout in teaching staff, that the wellness of our staff members is important, and that the choices are being made in a very intentional way to support our students and provide the best education and experience possible. It was also discussed that one of the biggest strengths of our program is that everything we do helps with the service of our mission.

New Business - Update to Early Childhood Handbook

Lis Ernst sent in an update to the Early Childhood Handbook for the board to approve so that our early childhood program can advance in IQ4K Compliance, which is Iowa's Child Care Quality Rating System. The changes were minimal but are what is needed for IQ4K. Mike Dodds made a motion to approve the changes and John Callahan seconded the motion, leading to a unanimous approval from the board.

New Business - Archdiocesan Policy Review

The board was given a link to the Archdiocesan Policy Review link for them to peruse at their leisure.

Final Blessing & Adjournment

End Meeting at 7:15 pm

Next Meeting: November 19, 2026