

**Board of Education Meeting  
September 16, 2021  
Schrup Family Board Room**

**Board Members Present:** Fr. Jim Goerend, Diane Rambousek, Kelley Schiesl, Todd Link, Scott Leibfried, Fr. Phil Gibbs, Brian Kane, Dan Walsh, John Meinert, Sharon Wulfekuhle-Hefel

**Staff Present:** Phil Bormann, Bob Noel and Jeff Rusch

Meeting began with prayer at 5:29 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from the August 19, 2021 Board of Education meeting were included in the packet for review.

- **Dan Walsh moved to approve the August 19, 2021 meeting minutes as presented. Sharon Wulfekuhle-Hefel seconded. The motion carried.**

**Consent Agenda Items**

Committee minutes and reports from system administrators were included in the packet for review.

- **Scott Leibfried moved to accept the committee minutes and reports as presented. Fr. Phil Gibbs seconded. The motion carried.**

**COVID-19 Update**

Several Holy Family parents and community members attended the meeting to express their feelings regarding the temporary order allowing public schools to implement mask mandates. In addition to those in attendance, Brian Kane shared that several parents have reached out to the Board of Education via email to express their concerns. All communications received were shared with board members prior to the meeting.

Whitley Johl, Holy Family parent of students at Mazzuchelli and Resurrection, addressed the board to share her opposition to implementing a mask mandate in the Holy Family school system. Whitley shared information suggesting that CO2 levels caused by mask wearing can impact human growth and development as well as statistics suggesting that masks are a breeding ground for infections after eight hours of wear. Whitley asked the board to keep the policy of mask wearing a choice so parents can choose what they feel is best for their students.

Kelley Duehr, Holy Family parent of students at Wahlert expressed her concerns regarding the mental health of students if they are required to wear masks. She shared that the mask mandate in place during the 2020-2021 school year greatly impacted the mental health of her high school students causing further academic issues. Kelley asked board members to look at the bigger impact a mask mandate will have on students.

Britney Krapfl, Holy Family parent of a child who attends St. Joseph the Worker Early Childhood, also shared her opposition to implementing a mask mandate at Holy Family. Britney shared that her child was taught by individuals wearing masks last year during a time when he was learning to speak, which could have impacted his ability to learn. She asked board members to consider the social and psychological impact mask wearing has on younger children.

Nicole Weber shared her strong opposition to implementing a mask mandate and shared her feelings that those who choose to wear a mask may be experiencing mental health issues. She also feels that implementing a mask mandate is unconstitutional and goes against the freedom of religious exemptions.

Lindsey Topping, Holy Family parent of students at Our Lady of Guadalupe, expressed that mask wearing should be the parent's choice and it is the parents responsibility to maintain the safety of their children.

Lavonne Hansen Larken, who shared that she does not have students in the system, but is standing in for a Holy Family parent who is ill, highlighted details regarding a petition that is being started in the Dubuque area that states that the use of face coverings should be optional for all students, school employees, and school visitors. She also shared information suggesting that studies have found contaminants and dangerous pathogens on masks.

Marty Michel, Holy Family parent, also shared his opposition to mandating masks and expressed that parents are doing their own research on masking and the COVID-19 shot to decide what's best for their children. Marty asked board members to do their research before making a decision that affects students.

Nicole Wolf-Murphy also opposed a mask mandate and shared her thoughts that, with only 40 cases between the public school and Holy Family, it is apparent that children are not the super-spreader carriers of the virus. Nicole also expressed concerns about the vaccination and whether the parents' choice to vaccinate their children will be taken away.

Michelle Zeal, Holy Family parent, thanked board members for listening to parents towards the end of last year when the mask mandate was lifted. Michelle hopes that the parents' choice to mask their children will stay the same.

Brian Kane, Board Chair, thanked parents for attending to express their concerns. Brian shared that, since the May board meeting when the mask mandate was lifted, masks continue to remain optional for all Holy Family students, staff and visitors. He also shared that the Archdiocese of Dubuque has advised that, as of now, the temporary injunction allowing public schools to mandate masks does not apply to non-public accredited schools. There is currently no mask mandate at Holy Family Catholic Schools. Holy Family, along with the Archdiocese of Dubuque, will continue to monitor the situation very closely.

## **Chief Administrator Report**

Fr. Ament has offered to hear confessions every Tuesday morning from 8:30 - 10:30 a.m. at Wahlert in Katie Jones's office.

Katie Jones will be taking a team of Holy Family faith formation leaders to the Duc In Altum conference in Nashville, Tennessee. They will share their learning with the Religion and Mission Committee.

Rebecca Mueller, Director of Enrollment, is working to create a comprehensive scholarshiping strategy for the upcoming school year.

ISASP results are in from the previous Spring semester. Holy Family out-performed both the Archdiocese of Dubuque and the state of Iowa at every grade level in both English language arts and math. The same was true for science in every grade level, but sophomore year. A study will be done of that concern to improve it.

Loras graduate students worked on a project to disaggregate learning data from multiple points and break our results down by assessment and grade level. Their research concluded that students who took part in personalized learning out-performed their peers.

Phil Bormann has been working with directors to set goals for the upcoming year in relation to the strategic plan.

## **Facilities Update - Jeff Rusch**

Jeff Rusch, Director of Building and Grounds, updated board members on the facilities at each Holy Family site.

### **Holy Family Central Campus:**

Work is being completed to wrap up a few items pertaining to the Our Lady of Guadalupe transition. Light poles will be installed and the PA system will be finalized in the next couple of weeks. The marquee located in the front of the campus will be updated. Two playgrounds were added for early childhood and elementary students and the courtyard is now finished. The project was budgeted at \$1.8 million and came in under budget \$1,779,000.

Holy Family along with the Facilities Committee is exploring the possibility of creating a central kitchen on the Holy Family campus. An outside consultant will be brought in to help determine if this is possible.

### **Holy Ghost Early Childhood:**

Holy Ghost Early Childhood received a \$750,000 grant from the Department of Human Services that will be used to update ten early childhood rooms, add a warming kitchen, and update laundry facilities at that location. Due to grant requirements, the project must be completed by February 28, 2022. A second grant for an additional \$750,000 through the Dubuque County ARPA has also been applied for.

### **Resurrection School and Early Childhood:**

The Resurrection building project is on schedule with a completion goal set for mid-June, 2022. The transition of Resurrection to their temporary location at the St. Anthony campus went well with no issues.

### **St. Columbkille School and Early Childhood:**

Holy Family is working with St. Columbkille Parish to determine the scope of the renovation for the early childhood and elementary school.

### **St. Joseph the Worker Early Childhood:**

St. Joseph the Worker will pursue the same path as Holy Ghost Early Childhood by working to secure grants and other opportunities that will benefit their facility and program.

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Jeff expressed his greatest challenge as the Building and Grounds Director is attracting new staff and retaining current staff. Some salary adjustments were made and brought in two new employees; however, overall custodial positions are difficult to fill. Holy Family is currently looking to hire a custodian at Holy Ghost Early Childhood.

Phil Bormann thanked Jeff for his dedication and for the work he and his team have completed over the last year.

### **Executive Session**

At 6:24 p.m., Todd Link moved and Sharon Wulfekuhle-Hefel seconded to convene to executive session.

At 6:58 p.m., it was moved and seconded to conclude executive session.

Meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.