

Board of Education Meeting
May 19, 2022
Schrup Family Board Room

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

Board Members Absent: Scott Leibfried and Kelley Schiesl

Staff Present: Phil Bormann, Lis Ernst and Barb Roling

Guests Present: Jwan and Trisha Brookins and family, Andrea and Collins Eboh and family, and several other parents and community members.

Meeting began with prayer at 5:35 p.m.

Public Comment

Trisha Brookins addressed the board. At previous board meetings, Trisha and her husband Jwan shared their daughter Trinity's struggles with looking different than her peers at school and how she would express to them that she doesn't like her brown skin. Because of this, Trisha and Jwan felt it would be nice for Trinity to see more of herself reflected in her classroom. So for Trinity's most recent birthday, instead of her friends getting her gifts, they asked that they donate a toy or book representing different ethnicities in honor of her birthday. Trinity and her family presented her donation of toys and books to the Board of Education and requested they be donated to St. Columbkille School.

Brian Kane thanked Trinity and her family for their kind donation and requested the board to pass a resolution to accept their donation.

- **Dan Walsh moved to accept the donation of library books and boys on behalf of Holy Family Catholic Schools to be placed at St. Columbkille School. Sharon Wulfekuhle-Hefel seconded. The motion carried.**

Early Childhood Update

Lis Ernst, Early Childhood Program Director, gave the following update on early childhood:

At the beginning of the year, the early childhood centers were surviving, but they have since moved from surviving to thriving due to hard work and several grants that were awarded to early childhood. Funding was made available through COVID relief and Holy Family applied for every opportunity. Almost \$5 million in grants were received. This has allowed all Holy Family early childhood centers to move forward with increased programming and quality. In addition, a \$1,000 grant was offered to each full-time early childhood employee who applied.

The early childhood centers are growing in enrollment and a new program will be added this summer. Eagles Day Camp will be offered at the Holy Family Central Campus and was supported by a grant opportunity, which will cover the start-up costs. With this new program, Holy Family was able to add 75 additional childcare slots for the summer. In addition, grants

have provided funding to purchase four brand new mini buses, which will be used to help facilitate field trips and other transportation for the system.

The Holy Ghost expansion is in full force and almost completed with Phase II. Lis invited board members to tour the updated facility once complete. With the renovation, Holy Family will add an additional 150-175 child care spots from birth to school-aged. This will be a beautiful spot for children and their families.

The Resurrection School and Early Childhood Center renovation will be completed in July and will offer more preschool spots. There is potential for further growth at this location as well.

Early childhood enrollment numbers have increased. The Holy Ghost campus is also seeing a huge increase in interested families requesting tours. Current early childhood enrollment is approximately 1,100 children.

A stabilization grant was applied for and received by the early childhood program. The first grant totaled \$1.1 million and was used to increase wages for early childhood employees. This also provided increases based on experience and education, as well as added professional development incentives. An additional stabilization grant will go towards further employee and recruitment efforts. A total of \$44,000 has already been given back to employees who participated in additional training and will result in Holy Family moving to a higher quality rating. Employment applications have also increased since the new hourly wage went into effect.

The early childhood program has also moved to the ProCare Cloud, which has streamlined a lot of the processes, making things more efficient with parent communication, registration and fees, electronic documents, billing, etc.

Looking ahead:

- The Resurrection building and Holy Ghost building will be complete in the coming months, and renovation at St. Joseph the Worker will move forward. Plans continue to be made for an upcoming St. Columbkille renovation as well.
- Lis will also be exploring the Eagles Day Camp model and ways to use it on non-school days and school breaks.
- Classroom materials and furnishings will be updated and will include increased diversity and inclusion materials.
- The Frog Street curriculum will be added in every classroom.
- Working on branding at each early childhood site so families know they are at Holy Family when they walk in.
- Iowa Quality 4 Kids rating for Resurrection and Holy Ghost will increase next year.
- Continue to improve recruitment, retention, onboarding, and training programs for employees.
- Increased training for early childhood leaders and administrative support staff.
- Collaborate with the food service department to improve early childhood menus.

Phil Bormann and the board thanked Lis for all of her hard work. Brian Kane suggested sharing this information on the Holy Family website on the early childhood page.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the April 7, 2022 Board of Education meeting were included in the packet for review.

- **Dan Walsh moved to approve the April 7, 2022 meeting minutes as presented. Todd Link seconded. The motion carried.**

Consent Agenda Items

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

- **Sharon Wulfekuhle-Hefel moved to accept the meeting minutes and reports as presented. John Meinert seconded. The motion carried.**

Equity and Cultural Responsiveness

Phil Bormann provided an update on the social justice coalition. On March 10, the board determined several goals to be accomplished including updating and aligning policies across the system, providing transparency with data practices, and increasing training for employees and staff.

The Social Justice Committee has been working on updating and aligning policies, which were shared with the board. All policy updates were reviewed by the Religion and Mission Committee, the Student Services Committee, the Social Justice Committee and the Executive Committee and Board. Updates include the following:

- The discipline code will be updated and discrimination will be added to the list of unacceptable behaviors.
- The bullying/harassment section will be updated to include racially insensitive language, name-calling, shaming for any reason (i.e. physical appearance, socio-economic status, etc.), and exclusionary behavior (i.e. ignoring or alienating others).
- Investigation procedures will also be added to the handbook and will include general procedures on what to do if someone is subjected to bullying/harassment, how to file a report, and how to file a formal complaint. The official complaint form will also be linked in and located in the appendix of the handbook, as well as accessible in the school office.
- A retaliation statement will be added that will protect those who come forward with a complaint and will also indicate that falsely making an allegation of bullying/harassment will have consequences.

The Loras College study on social justice was shared publicly on the Holy Family website and data regarding Holy Family's diversity has been moved to the social justice page.

Leader in Me has been chosen as the program that will be leveraged to assist in improving the level of respect and interpersonal strength K-12 students need to stand up to exclusionary and discriminatory behavior. St. Columbkille School has been using Leader in Me for 15 years and it is the longest standing program in the Holy Family system. Phil shared that there is a crosswalk with Leader in Me that relates closely with DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) work.

Administration is also discussing additional training options for staff including the possibility of Bias Interruption Training.

The importance of forming goals related to respect and belonging have also been discussed. The goal is to have 3-4 questions that go out to the community in relation to inclusion that can be looked at annually and tracked. The goal is to utilize Leader in Me and other DEI functional work to track progress.

John Meinert asked if Leader in Me will be for students or staff. Phil shared that the hope is to utilize the program for students, staff and parents. Leader in Me will provide a connection with families and will infuse avenues to educate families on the Catholic faith and the 7 Habits of Success.

Brian Kane reiterated that Equity and Cultural Responsiveness will be an ongoing agenda item so the board can stay updated on what's happening. He also asked those in attendance to continue to hold the board accountable for making sure progress is being made.

Phil Bormann shared that one of the system goals regarding recruitment and retention is to increase enrollment by 2 percent by October 1, 2025 and that growth will be reflective of Dubuque's diversity.

Jwan Brookins shared that he is really encouraged by the work being done. He likes that Holy Family is taking the Leader in Me approach that will include parents as well as students and staff, as these changes need to start in the home. Jwan feels parents cannot just send their children to a Catholic school and make the school teach them, it's a combination of home, parish and school. Jwan also shared that there are still some parents in the system who have no clue what's going on and why these initiatives are being implemented. Jwan understands that the board does not want to be the bearer of bad news, but there are still some students who continue to engage in this behavior and continue to get away with it. Jwan encouraged the board to share this information more transparently with families with a request for their help.

Trisha Brookins agreed that these conversations must start in the home between parents and their children in order for change to happen.

Andrea Eboh shared that she grew up in a school district that was all white and that many people her age do not understand what's wrong. Andrea appreciates that policies and processes are in place and that's a good place to start; however, culture change is very hard. There will always be people who are reactionary and there will likely be those who are reactionary if messaging goes out. The hope is that those individuals could be redirected to the faith where we are taught to respect others in our community. Andrea feels people should be educated on the "why" with the language and historical context around that language and why this is wrong. Andrea also feels parish priests should be involved in the conversation.

Trisha Brookins agreed that bringing parish priests into the conversation would be beneficial so families know this is a Holy Family system-wide and parish-wide initiative.

Brian Kane shared that the board continues to discuss this and are trying to determine the best way to educate families regarding these issues.

Collins Eboh asked if the recruitment and retention efforts around cultural assessment include staff as well and suggested it be added to the list of goals so students are able to see themselves in those that teach them.

Jwan Brookins suggested updating the investigation policy to encourage the student being bullied/harassed to report it to a school official at the same time they address their perpetrator so it is recorded if it happens again.

Chief Administrator Report

Holy Family has worked through parent and student feedback surveys, as well as feedback provided during staff meetings to determine goals for the upcoming year, which include:

- 100% of students (4-12) will indicate they “agree/strongly agree” that “My school has helped me build a relationship with Christ” by 2025.
- 75% of HFCS students (4-12) will indicate they “respect one another” by the end of the 2024-25 school year according to the year-end student satisfaction survey.
- 80% of students (4-12) will agree that they “fit in at school” according to the year-end student satisfaction survey.

STO awards have come in and families will receive letters in the coming days notifying them of the amount. Scholarships will also be awarded as part of this process. Holy Family is on track to be above budget goal for enrollment with possibility for positive growth for the upcoming school year. Holy Family is on track to achieve the following goal:

- HFCS enrollment will grow by 2 percent K-12 by October 1, 2025 and growth will be reflective of Dubuque’s diversity.

Administrators have determined the need to expand Leader in Me from St. Columbkille elementary to the entire system beginning in the 2022-2023 school year. Title funds will be used to cover costs of the program.

Other system goals include:

- 75% of HFCS students (4-12) will indicate they are satisfied or very satisfied with “support for social and emotional needs.”
- The student ACT composite will be 26 by the year 2025.
- 100% of the class of 2026 will have completed the Prepared Portfolio.

The Dubuque County Supervisors have awarded Holy Family Catholic Schools \$400,000 in grant dollars to assist in the expansion and renovation of Holy Ghost Early Childhood. This will likely be the final dollars associated with the project.

Phil has been working with Fr. Jim Goerend and transitioning Fr. Brian Dellaert to get the St. Joseph the Worker Early Childhood revitalization underway. Phase I will begin soon.

The St. Anthony school building had a concern with a ceiling in their storage area. Origin completed a safety review and approved continued usage until the end of the school year.

Our Lady of Guadalupe 3rd grade students have found an area for their salsa garden on the central campus. It will be located behind the tennis courts, near the solar panel.

A motivated group of parents wanting safer batting cages at Wahlert have come up with funds to help cover the project. The project will also be paid using Booster Club funds.

Kelly Mussehl, Student Information Coordinator, resigned her position effective July 1. Kelly has done an outstanding job of running IT systems and working as a point person for her database expertise. Holy Family is actively in search of her replacement.

Molly Menster has been hired as the Brain Health Liaison who will work in the Brain Health Room located at Wahlert beginning in the 2022-2023 school year.

Phil has been meeting with parents inquiring about music at Mazzuchelli Middle School. Music will still be offered at Mazzuchelli in the 2022-2023 school year along with band and orchestra. This will be communicated out more widely.

Across the system, there are five teaching positions that have not yet been filled. Holy Family is working to intentionally reach out and recruit teachers.

Fr. Phil Gibbs asked, with the scrambling to hire new teachers and the possibility of needing to hire those who are non-Catholic, if that will impact the Catholicity of the system. Phil shared that this is why it is more important than ever to facilitate faith formation for teachers. In addition, all new teachers review the morality clause when signing their contract.

Brian Kane asked what the ratio is for Catholic to non-Catholic teachers. Phil shared that elementary and middle school is mostly Catholic. There are more non-Catholic teachers at the high school level, especially with specialist teachers.

2022-2023 Employee Handbook

A draft of the 2022-2023 Employee Handbook was shared with the board along with an update on changes.

- **Fr. Phil Gibbs moved to approve the 2022-2023 Employee Handbook as presented. Todd Link seconded. The motion carried.**

2022-2023 Early Childhood Handbook

A draft of the 2022-2023 Early Childhood Handbook was shared with the board.

- **Sharon Wulfekuhle-Hefel moved to approve the 2022-2023 Early Childhood Handbook as presented. John Meinert seconded. The motion carried.**

Verification of Email Votes for Teacher Candidates

- **Dan Walsh moved to verify email votes for the hiring of Meredith Recker, Elise Cullers, Amy Pham, Ashley Frank, Candice Held and Cathrine Sears that occurred since the last meeting. Diane Rambousek seconded. The motion carried.**

Review of the Consolidation Agreement

The Consolidation Agreement was shared with the board for their three-year review.

Brian Kane shared that the Executive Committee reviewed the current board representation and that, throughout Holy Family Catholic Schools' history, the number of board members has fluctuated. He requested board feedback on if Holy Family should have three at-large members instead of two, and if St. Columbkille and St. Joseph the Worker, who currently shared a board member, should each have their own board representation. It was also suggested that there be more inclusive representation of the board.

John Meinert shared that he would advocate for having different perspectives that represent the diversity we want in our schools and perhaps add someone who is a specialist in the area of inclusion.

Fr. Phil Gibbs shared that priests have voiced that they would like more representation on the board.

Todd Link expressed that he does not feel comfortable speaking on behalf of the parish priests until the Pastorate is consulted.

The next Deanery meeting will be held in July and it was suggested to consult the parish priests at that time.

- **Fr. Jim Goerend moved to acknowledge the three year review of the Consolidation Agreement. John Meinert seconded. The motion carried.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.