

**Board of Education Meeting**  
**September 21, 2023**  
**Schrup Family Board Room**

**Board Members Present:** Fr. Dennis Quint, Mike Dodds, Cole Cluchey, Isabelle Pattarozzi, Amy Henn, Dan Walsh, and Scott Leibfried

**Board Members Absent:** Kevin Mullen, Fr. Phil Gibbs, and Diane Oglesby

**Staff Present:** Phil Bormann and Jeff Rusch

**Guest Present:** Steve Kane

Meeting began with prayer at 5:33 p.m.

**STO Presentation**

Steve Kane, Director of Our Faith School Tuition Organization, presented to the board regarding the Education Savings Accounts and Our Faith STO. Steve shared that enrollment is up across the Archdiocese and there is money available from STO to help the kids and families in our schools.

The Our Faith STO is one of 12 Iowa School Tuition Organizations in the state. The STO's have \$20 million in Iowa income tax credits available to distribute, promoting incentivized giving. Our Faith STO receives more than 25 percent of the state total. The 75 percent tax credit given is the largest percentage credit of any other tax credit in the state of Iowa.

The Education Savings Accounts help families choose the education they want for their children and help cover tuition, fees, and other qualified expenses related to non-public education. In 2023-2024 it is providing \$7,635 for qualifying families.

The US Census estimates that schools in Iowa spend \$14,683 on average to educate a student in Iowa. The average cost to educate a child in our schools in 2023-2024 is more than the ESA cost, which makes the STO an important piece of a family's consideration to attend one of our schools. Any ESA funds beyond the cost of tuition and other qualifying expenses will remain in the student's account through high school graduation.

In the 2023-2024 school year, 3,135 Archdiocesan students received STO assistance. The amount of aid varies based on the income qualifying need as verified in their 2022 tax return. Of the \$5.6 million dollars in STO assistance, more than \$1 million was awarded to Holy Family Catholic Schools.

Steve emphasized the importance of families, especially new families, applying for STO, even if they are ESA qualified.

Mike Dodds questioned what other qualified expenses would be covered with an ESA. Steve shared that it will be up to the state for those expenses. Fr. Quint asked if they anticipated that the

Archdiocese will allow us to have tuition meet the ESA money next year. Phil shared that Cathy Walz has been working with the other superintendents and the Archbishop again for those guidelines and larger discussions will need to occur.

The board thanked Steve for all his work with STO and his support from the Archdiocese.

### **Facilities Update**

Jeff Rusch, Director of Buildings and Grounds was present to share an update on the facilities.

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

The renovation wrapped up in December of 2022. The elevator was installed and is operational.

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

The East side renovation is complete. The next step will be preparing the West side rooms for St. Columbkille's relocation.

#### **Resurrection**

The pea gravel was removed and rubber mulch was installed after concerns with DHS. Asphalt was also installed in the playground, a walking path was created and the play area was expanded. The next step will be preparing the South end rooms for St. Columbkille's relocation.

#### **St. Columbkille**

The boilers were recently inspected, one boiler is operational and we are working with the Parish on a replacement for the second boiler. Holy Family is working with Conlon Construction, the Architect, and the Parish on the design and new build for the school to get it out to contractors for bids in February.

Isabelle Pattarozzi asked about the relocation of St. Columbkille and being split between two sites. Phil shared that the plan would be to have early childhood through 1st grade at St. Joseph the Worker and 2nd through 5th grade at Resurrection. Phil is meeting with St. Columbkille regarding the communication next week.

#### **Central Campus**

The softball dugouts were renovated and a batting cage was installed. The water main was also replaced over the summer. The bleachers on the stage will be replaced along with the existing ones being recovered. Plans are moving forward to convert the Wahlert kitchen to a central kitchen.

## **Staffing**

Jeff shared that he was fully staffed for the first time going into the school year. They've done a lot of work to bring up the wages and benefits for the maintenance/custodial staff and he's happy with the cleaning at the facilities.

## **Wahlert Track Update**

Jeff shared that the original track surface was installed in 2003 by Midwest Tennis and Track. They recommended a follow-up maintenance coating every 6-7 years which was applied in 2013. In 2018, Midwest Tennis and Track advised that adding another top coating would not be cost effective as it would only provide a short life span with a harder surface. They recommended removal and replacement of the existing surface. The condition of the track is deteriorating fast, there are numerous sinkholes around the inside of the track and several areas that have broken off which causes some safety concerns.

In April 2023, Mr. Rooter did a comprehensive filming of all the drainage systems and they were clear. We believe the water is flowing off the parking lot and running over the hill onto the track. Portzen will be installing a curb on the north half of the parking lot to help divert water to the existing drain in the parking lot. The main drain that runs down the hill will be dug up, reattached and will divert water to the drains located on the hill.

Phil shared that at this point, this facility needs attention and it's hard to know the type of investment that will be there. Scott Leibfried mentioned that there's a lot of tracks in the city and it would be worth exploring the ability of a partnership, such as with Loras as it's used for football. Dan Walsh stated it's a good idea, but it would be tough utilizing another track facility with the amount ours is currently used between middle school and high school. Fr. Quint suggested looking into it as a temporary plan.

Dan questioned what the cost would be to explore and see what's going on under the track and see what potential costs might be. Jeff will look into the cost and continue discussions with options on moving forward with direction from the board on a vision for the facility.

Phil stated that Jeff does an outstanding job and he greatly appreciates his skill set as he's done some major improvements for the system. The board thanked Jeff for all his work.

## **Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from August 17, 2023 were included for review.

- **Fr. Dennis Quint moved to approve the August 17, 2023 meeting minutes as presented. Isabelle Pattarozzi seconded. The motion carried.**

## **Consent Agenda Items**

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

- **Cole Cluchey moved to accept committee minutes as presented. Mike Dodds seconded. The motion carried.**

### **Chief Administrator Report**

Administration is doing a shared read of *Educating for Eternity - Making Every Class Catholic*. This was offered by Fr. Andy for guidance in putting faith into all classes. The Faculty Faith Formation focused on charisms/saints, “Joyfully Gifted” retreat that was led by Matt Shelby. Ruth Carlson and others are looking into Ut Fidem programming which means “Keep the Faith.”

Enrollment for 2023-2024 stands at 1650 for K-12, a 4 percent increase for the system. Preparation for 2024-2025 recruitment is underway. The Homecoming Tailgate is scheduled for Friday, September 22, from 4:00-6:30 p.m. at Nativity and the Little “Eek”-gles Trick or Treat scheduled for Monday, Oct. 30 at Central Campus.

The Fall PD series with teachers focused on Faith Formation, Leader in Me, and teacher onboarding of new curricula. Adopting a new math curriculum for elementary will be the focus for 2023-2024 with implementation in 2024-2025. Handwriting curriculum is being offered to use as an alternate resource this year with full implementation for next year. The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd programming will begin in October.

Food service has begun catering food daily to Holy Ghost Early Childhood and has exited the parish basement. St. Columbkille continues to move forward with their plans.

We began the year fully staffed and shortly after had an unexpected music opening at St. Columbkille. Owen Borelli, a 2018 graduate, has obtained his sub authorization and has been filling in for music. He brings many musical talents to the school and it has been a blessing to have him there.

Holy Family is working on a reimbursement policy to help invest in our people for additional credentials and is working with the Office of Catholic Schools for verbiage.

### **Verification of Email Votes for Resignation**

- **Scott Leibfried moved to verify the email votes for the acceptance of Kelsea Bellows’ resignation. Isabelle Pattarozzi seconded. The motion carried.**

### **Verification of Email Votes for St. Columbkille Resolution**

- **Cole Cluchey moved to verify the email votes for approval of the St. Columbkille Resolution. Scott Leibfried seconded. The motion carried.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:49 p.m.