

Education Commission Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 10, 2008

In Attendance: Jane Carroll (Staff Member), Katie Gebhard (Staff Member), Bruce Roles (3yr), Mary Zielinski (3yr), Tom Nathe (3yr), Susan Crook (2yr), Mary Powell (2yr), Sherry Campeau (2yr), Lisa Zastoupil (1yr), Ann Rotondo (1yr),

Absent: Mike Nowak (1yr), Pat Bredenkamp (Staff Member)

Visitors: Clyde Schultz, Tim Sullivan

Hand Outs: March 2009 Faith Formation Report (electronic), March 2009 Principal's Report (electronic), Recruiting Volunteers Committee Report (electronic),

1. Meeting Called to Order at 7:25pm.
2. February meeting minutes approved via email.
3. Update on advisory committees.
Mary P and Bruce R will serve as liaisons to the Faith Formation and School Advisory meetings.

Bruce updated the commission regarding the first organized meeting. The first public meetings are planned to be on either the third or fourth Monday of the month. The April meeting is planned as the "kick-off" meeting using the new structure. Official start dates will be published in the school and parish newsletters.

Mary reported on how things are planning to progress on the faith formation advisory committee meetings. A good team of parishioners that represent the parish have been appointed. Public meetings are scheduled for first Tuesdays of the month. Official start dates will be published in the Parish newsletter.

We discussed the role and relationship of the education commission and the advisory committees.

4. Progress on web site development
Bruce created an initial rough draft of a what the education commission website would look like. Mary made significant edits to that and Bruce, Lisa and Mary met to edit that draft to create the draft presented at tonight's meeting. Commission members discussed the draft and proposed changes, corrections, and additions. Commission members are to forward any recommended changes to Mary in order to be included into the website. The information gathered will be included in the website when it "goes live". If commission members have additional suggestions, please forward them to Mary Z.

5. Budget update, including scholarship program (no discussion)

6. Old business:

Recruiting Catechists

Katie updated the commission about efforts to recruit and maintain catechists. Sherry and Mary met with Katie to discuss potential ways to recruit and maintain potential catechists. Catechists will be recruited all year long. Reference the Recruiting Volunteers Committee Report (electronic) for more information.

Katie also updated the commission on some faith formation concerns. Some students are showing up to confirmation classes without registering. Some are showing up late in the curriculum. Not having an accurate count of attendees for each class is creating some difficulties. How best to handle these situations needs to be decided.

School Accreditation

School Accreditation is fast approaching. Eleven members of the accreditation team members will be at Epiphany March 24, 25, and 26. Members from the Archdiocese will also be evaluating Epiphany's "Catholicity" and report their findings to the Archbishop. Epiphany will receive a site visit report from MNSAA and the Archdiocese.

7. Adjournment with prayer at 8:30 pm

Next meeting: April 14 at 6:30/7:20-8:20.

Attached reports below...

Faith Formation March Education Commission Report

February went quickly! Our Confirmation students had a final session plus a retreat. Middle and high school teens went to the TEC Center in Little Falls for a weekend retreat. It was a terrific experience, especially with the LifeTeen Band along. Our 'Welcome Back' series has begun, but was cancelled Feb. 26 due to the weather. Parish second graders are busy preparing for First Eucharist after Easter. They will have a retreat on March 14. Confirmation teens will have group interviews and letters to the pastor at the end of March. Our youngest children continue to enjoy Sunday School and will have one of the priests talk with them about Lent. RCIA is celebrating the Rite of Election at the Basilica on March 1 plus several scrutines during Masses March 14-15 and March 22. Their retreat is March 28. Fr. Campbell will be presenting 'A Walk Through the Mass' on Wednesday, March 18 from 6:45 – 8:00 in the church. All are invited.

During March our staff will be working on scheduling events for next year, finishing the budget and beginning to plan summer events (VBS, Middle School 'Summer Stretch' and youth ministry events). We are pleased to announce that Fr. Jim Deegan will be our Parish Mission Speaker on Feb. 21-23, 2010. All parish groups are being asked not to schedule events those 3 nights in order to allow parishioners to participate in the Mission. I met with the School PTO about speakers on parenting for next year. They have pledged \$300 to assist with speaker fees.

For a variety of reasons, our staff has recommended that we have Spring Registration this year. Like the school, we are not raising tuition. We will have an 'Early Bird Registration' with the current amount (\$75 per child for a maximum of 3). Those who register late will have an increase of \$25 per child. The main reasons we are requesting early registration are to get a better sense of how many children/teens will be participating at the various levels. Our staff needs additional time to recruit and train them before sessions begin. It is almost impossible for us to have 250+ people registered in mid-late September and expect staff to find and train enough catechists by the end of September. Even if parents don't know their child's schedule in the fall, we are requesting that they still register – the session they attend can be changed at a later date if needed. We normally order textbooks and some supplies in the summer, thus assuring delivery in time for when sessions begin. Parents have the option of paying the tuition in full or having monthly withdrawal.

The Faith Formation Advisory Committee will meet for the first time on Tuesday, March 3 from 5:00 – 6:30. Members are: Mary Powell (Education Commission), Beth Plante, Jim Miller, Charlie Nichols and Erin Welters. They represent a wide range of parents and parishioners. Once we confirm the future times, we will publish information about the 'open forum' time.

A summary of the *Recruiting Volunteers Committee's* last meeting is attached.

Principal's Report to the Education Commission

March 5, 2009

Accreditation Update

The MNSAA self-study & Strategic Plan Draft was mailed to the eleven member team on Friday, February 27th. The Association expects that schools disseminate materials several weeks prior to the visit. A few last minute details include:

- The team will interview faculty members, a sampling of students and parents, heads of departments connected to the school, and the pastor. Through the interview process the team validates and evaluates the self-study and strategic plan. Are there Commission members that would like to have an opportunity to be interviewed? If so, please bring your calendar to the meeting.
- Eric Peterson, Mary Kane, and Gary Wilmer, from the Archdiocese will be present on Tuesday, March 24, to review the Catholic Identity portion of the document.
- Thank you for your input as we reviewed the standards and criteria and developed the strategic plan. Your comments, questions, and recommendations made the document stronger.

Registration for 2009-10

Registration materials were sent home on Thursday, February 26th. The following decisions have been made regarding tuition for the upcoming year and were part of my letter to families.

- We are **freezing the current tuition rates**. This means that parish stewardship will be supporting more of the costs of education. While we are freezing tuition, we know that insurance, facility costs, and utilities will continue to increase.
- We are committed to working with families to help every family re-enroll for the 2009-10 school year. We use the TADS (Tuition Aide Data Services) to assist us in making tuition support **grants**. We urge families to use this confidential process to receive additional support.
- It is **our promise** that if a parent loses a job during the 2009-10 school year, that we will work with a family to have the children remain at Epiphany.
- One of our annual school challenges is determining the number of teachers needed for homeroom classes. As an **incentive** to get “a handle” on anticipated students, Epiphany will credit \$100.00 to every family's account that registers by **March 23, 2009**. We hope this incentive will help us plan for the staffing we need to serve your child (ren). **After March 23**, we will begin to make staffing and class size decisions.
- At many grade levels we have room for additional students, and we know that you are our best **marketing strategy**. Any current Epiphany family that recruits a new family to the school will receive a **\$300.00 tuition credit**. This offer begins with this letter through August 15, 2009. Simply contact me to verify your recruitment work.

Advisory Committee

On behalf of Father Zehren, I am pleased to announce that the following parents will be serving on the committee: Amy Fritz, Sharon Hettrick, Paul Lentner, Melissa Rabida, and Cathy Sullivan. Bruce Roles will be the liaison from the Education Commission. Jeri McCorkle, school counselor, will also join the committee. Our first organization meeting is Monday, March 9, 5:00-6:30.

Marketing Update

The 5th through 8th grade staff and specialists are hosting a recruitment event Thursday, March 19th, 5:30-6:30 PM with the special purpose of retaining current students and attracting new families. The evening will feature the unique characteristics of the upper grade program at Epiphany. Faculty and student representatives will be available to answer questions and tell our story.

FYI---Kindergarten registrations are coming in very slowly.

Sue Besst and I are teaming together to advertize at the local Cub store.

Observing Lent

The counseling staff is leading a school-wide observance of Lent that promotes kindness. Daily and weekly activities include: scripture, prayer, literature, PA announcements, and many practical ways of practicing kindness.