

Education Commission Meeting Minutes

April 13, 2010

In Attendance: Jane Carroll (Staff Member), Katie Gebhard (Staff Member), Pat Bredenkamp (Staff Member), Mary Zielinski, Mary Powell, Sherry Campeau, Lisa Zastoupil, Tom Nathe

Handouts distributed at the meeting: April 2010 Principal's Report

1. Meeting called to order at 7:30 pm
2. March meeting minutes approved via email.
3. Role of the Education Commission

Much of the discussion at this month's meeting surrounded the future of the parish council structure at Epiphany, and how the education commission can best serve Epiphany.

Epiphany is currently in the process of determining/deciding how best to decide/discern members onto the commissions. The year 2014 is Epiphany's 50th Anniversary and discussions are underway as to how to celebrate this milestone, as well as incorporate the new Parish council structure. Addressing the existing parish debt, and determining a mission statement were two important topics that were discussed.

The parish council will continue meeting on a monthly basis, but they will meet for a longer period of time to address all items needing to be addressed. Each commission will decide their own meeting frequency and duration in order to address requirements of the commission.

Discussion this month also surrounded the current parish mission statement. The lack of a mission statement that encompasses our current goals, focuses our current energies, and determines the general direction of the parish, is currently handicapping the efforts to work toward a common vision. The current mission statement is not providing sufficient direction to lead the parish where we need to go to flourish in today's circumstances.

The Education Commission brainstormed some "big" topics that might be our visionary conversation. This included: Special education needs, spiritual formation of adults, and changing demographics in the parish community

Education commission members were asked to review the parish mission statement and the education commission mission statement to establish a "baseline". Members can then pen their own mission statements to bring for discussion at the May commission meeting. The goal is to create something at the

commission level that can be brought to the council level to help with a new direction/mission statement for Epiphany.

4. Faith Formation and Principals Report are attached at the end of these minutes. New items that are being created are a middle school youth group, high school youth group, as well as creating a junior peer ministry group.

Adjournment with Prayer at 8:25 pm

Next meeting: May 11, 2010

April Faith Formation Report

March and early April has been an exciting time with sacramental preparation for First Eucharist and Confirmation. Our teens participated in a 30 Hour Fast in which they provided service at various locations, learned more about the Catholic Social Teachings, built community, and prayed. One big sacrifice was serving coffee/donuts after Masses on March 20-21 and not being able to eat! Our elementary and Sunday School children collected socks, Tshirts and pajama pants during for distribution by the Brothers of Peace.

During the Easter Vigil we celebrated the Sacrament of Baptism with 3 young children; Baptism, Confirmation and First Eucharist for 6 older children and 2 adults and a profession of faith, Confirmation and First Eucharist for 7 adults. Our staff has been working with the children/teens and adults all year. One of the great joys that God gives us is that new people are always calling to see how they can join our church and parish!

All faith formation staff participated in the National Catholic Education Association's conference. This week we spent the days at the Minneapolis Convention Center and most nights at the parish administrating various programs/meetings. We prayed, heard some wonderful speakers, reviewed various resources and networked.

April brings a Middle School Lock-In on April 9-10 with around 100 registered, meetings on World Youth Day, High School Mission trip, Middle School Summer Stretch, registration for Vacation Bible School, end of the year programs and celebrations of First Eucharist and Confirmation. We will also be sending out information on Faith Formation Registration for 2010-11. Our catechists and staff will also complete their review of various catechetical resources and make recommendations. I will review those recommendations and send them to Fr. Zehren for final approval. All materials used in our formal catechetical programs will have ecclesial approval.

Principal's Report to the Education Commission

April 13, 2010

NCEA Convention. The entire faculty participated in the three-day National Catholic Education Association Convention. Over 8,000 Catholic educators gathered to pray, learn, and collaborate with colleagues. In the next weeks we will continue to share “pearls” gained from this conference.

Literacy Night. To honor Epiphany's passion for reading and writing, we are celebrating our first “Literacy Night” on Thursday, April 22. From 4:00-6:00 PM visit the poetry café, book exchange, read student writing, and hear book talks. The Red Balloon Bookstore, a St. Paul independent children's bookstore, will be selling books. Enjoy refreshments, register for prizes, and much more!

To kick off this special event, Kevin Strauss, author and storyteller, will join us on Wednesday, April 21, for a presentation “Northwood Animals”, K-3, 12:15 PM and “American Tales”, 4-8, 1:20 PM. Thanks to the PTO for supporting literacy in this way.

Hallway Makeover. As part of our marketing initiatives to make the school environment inviting and compelling we're added fresh paint in the hallways of the school. It was fun on Monday to see students see color on the walls. I heard more than one “Cool!”

7th Grade Leaders. Our seventh graders led the entire school and guests in praying the Stations of the Cross during Holy Week. The actions, music, and readings were inspirational.

Star Lights Article for this Week. This notice will appear in this week's school newsletter:

In the spring of 2009 a consultative parent body was formed to advise me in actualizing the school's mission. This seven member parent group, appointed by the pastor, met eight times during the school year to advise me in actualizing the school's mission.

Monthly, we gathered to:

- Provide a forum for parents to provide input and have rich discussions that further the mission of the school.
- Advise me regarding matters brought to the meeting. It is also an avenue to build understanding programs, policies, and procedures.
- Keep communications flowing.
- Respond to ideas or concerns in a timely manner.

Thanks to Amy Fritz, Sharon Hettrick, Paul Lentner, Melissa Rabida, Bruce Roles, Cathy Sullivan, and Lisa Zastoupil (Education Commission liaison) for their dedicated service. Their advice and reflection has been extremely valuable. Their work has indeed furthered the school's mission! At the conclusion of this school year Amy, Sharon, and

Cathy will be completing their year of service and the other members are being reappointed for a second year. Special thanks to them!

Father Zehren is seeking parents interested in serving in this capacity. For a more complete description of the committee's role and work, please go to the school's web site. It gives an overview of the committee purpose, membership, meeting times and topics, and contact information. If you are interested in submitting your name for consideration of appointment by Father, please email him at fzehren@eipphanymn.org or me at jcarroll@eipphanymn.org by May 5th.

Award Announced. Mrs. Kate Gambino and Mrs. Dana Elfering, both kindergarten teachers, received notice that they have been accepted into a fully funded graduate program at the University of St. Thomas. Their study of autism spectrum disorders will enrich the professional life of the entire faculty and positively impact students.

Internet Safety. Last month our presenter on internet safety needed to cancel her presentation. We are pleased to announce that we have been able to reschedule Karina Berzins, Educator from the MN Dept. of Public Safety, to speak with our fifth through eighth graders on Tuesday, April 27th. She will cover these topics and give tips for safe use:

- Safe ways to browse the internet.
- Social networking via Facebook & My Space.
- Using email.
- Instant messaging.
- Posting photographs online.
- Cyber bullying

We urge parents to join us: 10:15-11:00 7th grade; 11:05-11:50 8th grade; 12:25-1:10 5th grade; and 1:15-2:00 6th grade. I urge you to join us for this assembly.

Courtyard Project. This Saturday, April 17, from 9:00-12:00, Student Council members and parent volunteers will be working in the courtyard to create a reflective space and outdoor classroom. If you'd like to contribute "muscle" to the project, please contact the school office. Also, the plans for the courtyard makeover are found on the school's website and go to Enrichment/Extracurricular and then click on Student Council.

Theater Presentations on Bullying. On Monday, students in grades k-6 participated in a theatrical production presented by Climb Theater. Both presentations defined bullying for kids as repeated and unwanted verbal put downs, physical contact, exclusion from friends and others. In an engaging presentation, students in grades k-2 learned response strategies of staying cool, standing tall, looking the bully in the eye, speaking up, and walking away. They explained how tattling is different than reporting to an adult. The grades 3-6 presentation focused on what to do if you are a bystander, cyberbullying (sending mean emails, pretending to be someone else), as well as strategies to address a bully, and the difference between bullying and negative events.

National Junior Honor Society. Also on Monday, fourteen of our NJHS students, Mr. Tinault (faculty advisor), and parent volunteers participated in service at Feed My Starving Children.

Iowa Tests of Basic Skills. Students in grades 2, 3, 5 and 7 will take National achievement tests from April 19th through April 29th. A measure of potential is also part of this assessment.

Mark Your Calendars. The Epiphany Drama Program will be performing “*It’s Still Rock’n Roll*” May 7 and 8 in the gym. Come and see over 150 Epiphany students in this incredible production. A free-will donation will be collected at the door with all proceeds supporting the drama program.