

## Education Commission Meeting Minutes

May 12, 2009

**In Attendance:** Jane Carroll (Staff Member), , Pat Bredenkamp (Staff Member), Bruce Roles (3yr), Mary Zielinski (3yr), Tom Nathe (3yr), Susan Crook (2yr), , Sherry Campeau (2yr), Lisa Zastoupil (1yr),

**Absent:** Katie Gebhard (Staff Member) Ann Rotondo (1yr), Mike Nowak (1yr), Mary Powell (2yr)

**Visitors:** Peg Avery (Faith Formation representative)

**Hand Outs Attached to the Minutes:** May 2009 Faith Formation Report (electronic), May 2009 Principal's Report (electronic), 2008-2009 list of accomplishments

1. Meeting called to order at 7:25 pm.
2. April meeting minutes approved via email.
3. Update on advisory committees.  
Bruce updated the commission on the school advisory committee meeting held on April 27, 2009. This was the first official meeting and about ten observers were present. Some procedural things were learned during the first meeting that will be implemented in future meetings to get things to run smoother. The next public meeting is Monday, May 18, 2009 from 5:00 to 6:30 pm.

Bruce also commented on efforts to get school information into the bulletin in order to get folks aware of what is happening in the school.

Mary Powell was not present to give an update on the faith formation advisory committee meeting held on May 5, 2009.

4. Discernment process.  
Lisa Z is discerning to continue on for next year, Mike N and Ann R have discerned not to continue membership for next year.
5. Current staffing and enrollment.  
Jane updated the commission on projected enrollment numbers for the 2009-2010 school year. Over the past few years, the numbers have been trending down at Epiphany but also in the school district. Action plans are being drafted incase actions need to be taken to reduce staff if enrollment does not increase. We continue to work diligently at recruiting students.

Members also discussed various marketing ideas in order to increase public exposure with the intent of increasing recruiting effectiveness.

6. Accreditation review.  
Updates included in the Principals Report to the Education Commission attached below.
  
7. Summer Faith Formation Programs.  
Peg updated the committee about Vacation Bible School that starts June 22.  
Deadline for registration is in a few weeks.  
Other events coming up are...
  - Faith Formation early bird registration is going on.
  - Sr. High mission trip to Cass Lake
  - Sr. High golf outing
  - Middle school Summer Stretch program aimed at providing community service.
  
8. Strategic Plan.  
Commission members reviewed the updates to the Education Commission Action Plan. Commission members also discussed additional items to be added to the plan.  
  
Mary handed out a list of accomplishments that the education commission completed over the last year. This list will be attached to the end of this month's minutes.
  
9. Adjournment with prayer at 8:25 pm.

Next meeting: June 12 at 6:30/7:20-8:20.

## **May 2009 Faith Formation Education Commission Report**

We are in a new 'season' in our faith formation programs. We finished celebrating First Eucharist with 170 children on May 3. A few days earlier we celebrated Confirmation at the Cathedral with 165 teens. Children in our Sunday Program ended their program on May 3 with some special songs after the 8:45 and 10:30 Masses. Our Elementary Program ended on April 29 with a special performance for the children and families and an ice cream social. The Middle and High School Programs ended Sunday, May 3 with a cook out. A number of adults will celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation on Pentecost weekend (May 30-31).

During May and June our staff spend time cleaning up catechist work areas, recruiting and training some volunteers, planning Vacation Bible School, High School Mission Trip, Middle School 'Summer Stretch' as well as various summer youth events. They are also busy reviewing curriculum and planning sessions. As they receive registration information, staff determines volunteer needs as well as print/video/speaker resources. Most staff take some vacation in June and/or July.

Areas we will working on next year include:

- Working more with families who home school
- Reviewing program and curriculum needs (school will be reviewing religion curriculum next year too)
- Expanding Adult Formation opportunities
- Reviewing 'Family Life' programs'
- Reviewing Archdiocesan Religion Standards (gr. K – 8) and what we are teaching
- Concentrate on the following components of youth ministry: Prayer, Service, Catechesis

The archdiocese notified me that we did pass audit for 'Protection of Children and Youth Initiative'. Next year they want us to do more for families who home school. I will be working with them on that.

Because of the parish financial situation and members of our staff who took the Voluntary Separation, I am currently working on staffing for next year.

I will be on vacation next week, so Peg Avery will attend the meeting.

## Principal's Report to the Education Commission

May 12, 2009

### Enrollment Projection

I've mentioned at the last few months that declining enrollment continues to be a serious concern. I want to share projections that I gave to you last year at this time, actual enrollment when we started in the fall, and our projections at this time:

<u>Enrollment</u>	<u>2008-2009</u> Projection in the May	<u>2008-2009</u> Actual	<u>2009-2010</u> Projection in the May
K	47	56	46
1	59	59	51
2	71	76	55
3	72	73	72
4	54	60	64
5	63	65	53
6	69	57	50
7	69	66	54
8	70	73	62
Total	574	585	507

We continue to work diligently at recruiting students. Right now it looks like we **may need** to reduce staff in K, 1, 5, 6, 7. If this happens, we **may need** to reduce administrative staffing and specialists as well.

### Accreditation Summary

In the last issue of Star Lights I shared the following:

Dear Parents,

One of the major school projects during the past year and one-half has been re-accreditation. There are numerous reasons to seek accreditation: measurement against high standards, the process provides a practical framework to reflect and plan for the future, validation of strengths, and an outside look from a team of qualified educators. I applaud the work of all who have participated in this process in some way---from survey respondents, committee members, commissions, faculty and staff.

In the next issues of the Star Lights, I plan to share various aspects of the visit with you. Through the on-site observation, interviews with faculty, staff, students, parents, and review of supporting data, the team identified these **Five Most Significant Areas of Strength:**

1. Epiphany School is blessed with collaborative, visionary leadership. The pastor, principal, and parish administrator provide competent, clear direction for the parish and school community.
2. Leadership is present modeling a spirit-filled witness to the gospel and with a wealth of background experience in the accrediting process.

3. The team experienced Epiphany Catholic School faculty and staff living its mission statement, which is rich in Catholic Identity, therefore creating a faith community that truly “Manifests Christ to All.”
4. Epiphany has a strong community of parents and parishioners who believe in and support the school and parish in a variety of ways. (i.e. PTO, volunteers, stewardship, and outreach)
5. Epiphany Catholic School’s physical plant offers abundant space for a variety of academic, extra-curricular, and parish activities that enhance the life of the entire parish community.

Just as the team discovered strengths, an important part of the visit is giving the school community feedback for growth. **All accredited schools also receive five significant challenges for growth.** Four of our challenges are ones that we articulated in the Strategic Plan. Self-knowledge is always one of the first steps in change. Our top five challenges include:

1. Epiphany Catholic School is challenged to fully implement and embrace the curriculum design model as presented under Criteria 2.01 (Objective 2).
2. Epiphany Catholic School is challenged to build a school climate which supports a learning environment honoring all students and that addresses the challenge within the Junior High of adopting a team-building approach that leads to more consistent discipline and collaboration in instructional practice.
3. Epiphany Catholic School is challenged to focus on training and using “best instructional practices” school-wide throughout the curriculum, including integration of technology (Objective 1).
4. Epiphany Catholic School is challenged to develop a comprehensive financial plan that addresses long-term financial goals, faculty/staff salaries, and instructional resources (including technology). (Objective 4).
5. Epiphany Catholic School would benefit by establishing a marketing committee to formalize a plan to retain students, attract new students, and connect with alumni (Objective

Challenge 2 will become an additional major objective in the Strategic Plan. Additionally, within the past month a group of parents and staff have formed to formalize marketing at Epiphany.

In the Hebrew Scriptures we find the passage “*Without a vision, the people will perish.*” The re-accreditation process has helped sharpen our vision for students, families, and Epiphany.

**Professional Development.** Mrs. Cindy White, second grade teacher, has been awarded a fully funded masters degree scholarship through the University of St. Thomas and the Archdiocese. The degree program is in curriculum and instruction, with an emphasis in meeting diverse classroom needs.

### **Marketing Committee**

One of the school’s strategic initiatives is to form a marketing committee and develop a marketing plan. Gail Mikolich, Paul Foster, Brian Fritz, Char Provost, Cathy Sullivan, Megan Crowley, Mike Lentz and I have met twice and attended a marketing workshop at the Archdiocese. One of our first tasks is writing a marketing plan.

### **Curriculum Review**

Social studies teachers are reviewing teaching resources and we will adopt new resources for the 2009-10 school year.

## 2008-09 Accomplishments

- Reviewed written sacramental policies.
- Updated the commission's strategic plan (ongoing).
- Reviewed the school's self-study as part of the accreditation process.
- Assisted in the development of the School's strategic plan.
- Reviewed the school's policy regarding early kindergarten entrance.
- Worked to develop a plan to recruit and maintain catechists (ongoing).
- Assigned commission members to represent each of the programs within the Education realm, maintaining contact with these programs. Commission members also participated in the meetings of the other commissions in order to foster communication and working relationships.
- Worked to develop a forum to aid in communication between the commission and the people we represent. Initially, this was to develop an open mic procedure for the commission but was later changed to be consultative in the process of developing advisory committees for the school and faith formation programs.
- Discussed our needs for physical improvements to our campus to assist with education programs.
- Reviewed the religion books with regard to their scope and sequence.
- Developed the website for the Education Commission to help foster an understanding of who we are and what we do.
- Responded to open mic concerns presented at the parish council meeting (e.g., Catholic identity of school readiness program, communication and follow-through throughout Epiphany's programs but especially as it pertains to the educational programs, Fish Fry menu and price).