

Education Commission Meeting Minutes

December 8, 2009

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

Absent: Lisa Zastoupil

Electronic handouts distributed prior to the meeting: December 2009 Principal's Report, December 2009 Faith Formation Report

Handouts distributed at the meeting:

1. Meeting called to order at 7:10 pm
2. November meeting minutes approved via email.
3. Archdiocesan project: Key Facts about the Archdiocese
What are the implications of this data? (Continuation from last month)

Commission members discussed the various topics on the Archdiocesan project. One comment made was that much of the data is reflective of the current Archdiocese and does not dig into the "why" behind the data.

Members also discussed how current needs at Epiphany can address some of the items discovered by the Archdiocesan report. Special needs and educating seniors on how to use the internet were two topics discussed.

4. Ministry Fair follow-up
Commission members discussed their experiences at the Ministry Fair.

Other discussion surrounded the various commissions under the Education Commission, and how best to get all the groups to help each other and work toward the Parish Mission. The general consensus is that sub-groups listed in the parish governance structure do not have an understanding of their relationship with their assigned commission.

5. Summary of response to MNSAA (Jane)

By the end of this month (December), with input from stakeholders, Jane will be responding to recommendations made by the MN Non-public School Accreditation Association. An additional objective has been added to the strategic plan in response to recommendations.

6. Parish mission (Katie)
February 21, 22, and 23 of 2010 will be the “Change Your Heart” Parish Mission. Fr. Jim Deegan will be conducting the mission from 7-8 pm each evening. He will also present from 10-11am on Monday and Tuesday, February 22 & 23. He will preside at an all school Mass on Feb23.

Discussions are currently underway regarding whether the theme will be just for the mission, or for the whole season of Lent at Epiphany. Clyde Schultz will be recording each evening’s message and CD’s will be available in the gift shop. See the attached Faith Formation report attached below.

7. Reports: Advisory Committees, Faith Formation, School
School Advisory Committee notes are posted on the website.
8. Adjournment with prayer at 8:00 pm

Next meeting: January 12, 2010

Principal's Report to the Education Commission

December 8, 2009

Kindergarten Round Preparations

We have been busy marketing and preparing for next year's kindergarten. On Monday, November 16th, we hosted a Kindergarten Open House. It was an opportunity for families to come and explore the school, meet teachers, a chance for children to engage in some fun activities, and ask questions informally. It was a very positive evening. Thirty families participated---17 of these families are first time families looking at Epiphany School.

On January 7th we are hosting Kindergarten Roundup from 3:30-5:00 or 6:00-7:30. Attached you'll find data that I have been tracking.

Kindergarten Students	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Parish Potential	182	143	227
Current Siblings	40	32	29
Minus number of siblings in Pre-K	14	14	9
Pre-K Readiness Parish Members	1	5	5
Pre-K Readiness Non-parish	0	2	14
Actual Pre-K Enrollment	34	32	28
Actual Enrollment	55	56	

Professional Development Participation

Teachers have participated in the following professional development:

- Participating in Writing Conferences: Mrs. North, Ms. Duerr, Mrs. Ressler, and Ms. Hird. Writing curriculum is an area of study for the entire faculty this year.
- Interactive Board Training: Ms. Hird, Mrs. Nichols, Mrs. Ressler, Mrs. Paine, Mrs. Flannigan, Mr. Schultz, Mrs. Wilkie and Mrs. Gulenchyn.
- "Digital Kids Seminar": Mrs. Wilkie and Mrs. Gulenchyn.
- This past summer Mrs. Klisch and Mrs. Paine participated in a teacher development grant "Imagining History". The grant focused on connecting the study of history with writing skills. This week their professors from the College of St. Scholastica visited Epiphany to observe implementation of their study.
- MN Middle School Conference: Six junior high staff participated in training on December 3 or 4.
- Mrs. Wilkie and Mrs. Gulenchyn participated in training at a metro Catholic school that uses lap tops with every junior high student.

Students, and the entire faculty, are enriched by the efforts of our faculty.

STARS Recognition Display

New this fall---students, parents, volunteers, staff and friends are invited to acknowledge the “STARS” among us. Recognition forms are available on line or at school to commend the work of others. These commendations are posted on the bulletin board near the school office. Stop by to learn about our brilliant STARS! You’ll notice that these STARS reflect the school’s core values: *Spirit of Family, Developing the Whole Person, Christ Centered, Challenging Academics and Manifesting Christ to all.*

“Bag Lunch with the Principal” On December 2, I hosted the second of four gatherings with parents to visit informally about the school, activities, and topics of learning and parenting. These conversations have been helpful and enjoyable.

Archbishop Nienstedt Visits. Archbishop Nienstedt led our all school Mass on Tuesday, November 24. It was a delightful visit---our students were “stars” in every respect: participation, leading readings, music, etc. Archbishop Nienstedt’s deep commitment to Catholic education is always evident.

Students reach out in Service. Epiphany students are doing an amazing amount of service during the Thanksgiving and Advent season. A sampling of student service this month includes:

- Have you been in the cafeteria? The Thanksgiving turkey grew to have over 2700 feathers, representing food items donated to the Epiphany food shelves.
- 4th grade students created Christmas cards to be used by the residents of Assisted Living and Pines.
- The Junior High Band performs for the residents of the Coon Rapids Senior Center.
- The Junior High Choir performs at Northtown.
- Students and teachers in 2nd, 4th, 5th, and 8th grade are providing gifts for a number of families in an inner city Catholic school
- Residents of Assisted Living and the Pines are invited to the school’s afternoon concert performance
- Kindergarten students carol at the Pines.

December 2009 Faith Formation Education Commission Report

Our youngest children are preparing for a special Christmas program entitled 'A Baby is Born'. They will present it on Sunday, December 20 after both the 8:45 and 10:30 Masses. Mary Fritz, our coordinator, has been working with the children and catechists to prepare this unique presentation. All are welcome to join them in the gym.

Elementary children are having Advent Wreath prayer during December. Mary Ann Marschall, the coordinator, is leading them in prayer and song. Our second graders are getting ready to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation on Thursday, December 17th. Several of our parish priests will be available at a certain time so the 2nd graders can go to one of them if they would like to. It is at the same time as our parish's Advent Day of Reconciliation. We have numerous other priests who will be available to the general public. If a child cannot participate on the 17th then we ask that the parents take them during the week at one of the many times our priests are available for the sacrament.

Doug Hennen, Middle School Youth Minister, coordinated 33 middle and high school teens who worked diligently to assist with assembling Thanksgiving baskets and cleaning on November 21. Seven teens went to the NCYC (National Catholic Youth Conference) on November 19 – 22 in Kansas City. Janine Ricker, High School Youth Minister, said the conference was a wonderful experience of the faith and community with our teens. December will bring a high school lock-in on December 11-12, a 'Saturday Night Alive' on December 5 and Snow Tubing on December 29 for both middle and high school teens. We have an 'open youth room' for middle schoolers on December 17. Doug and Janine have also met with Paul Foster who coordinates the Life Teen Band. They are planning an experience of XLT (Praise and Worship) for the spring.

We are very proud and grateful for the food donations from our faith formation families. The cornucopia in the cafeteria reflects some of the food collected. It was a great support to our parish outreach/basket program.

Staff had the Protection of Children and Youth Initiative lessons on safety during November and early December. Children/teens were very responsive. One parent chose to 'opt out' and not have her children attend.

One of our tenth graders, Aaron Jurek, died on November 22. He had attended Epiphany School and was currently at Blaine High School. Many teens gathered here on November 23 and were supported by our youth ministers and priests. His funeral was November 28. We continue to minister to these teens.

Our faith formation department co-sponsored three parenting sessions during November. The school PTO also sponsored them. Topics were: Spirituality of Children, Parenting Teens and Internet Safety. We look forward to planning other events next year.

Save the Dates: February 21 – 23 will be our Parish Lenten Mission. The theme is 'Change Your Heart'. Fr. Jim Deegan from Christ the King Retreat Center in Buffalo will

facilitate. We will have presentations at 7:00pm on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday nights. He will also present on Monday and Tuesday mornings at 10:00. Watch for more details. Let me know if you can help!

Members of the Faith Formation Advisory Committee and our staff are contacting 20 parishes to get ideas of how other parishes present faith formation/youth ministry programs as well as the resources they use. We are asking catechists to do an evaluation during December and give us their ideas by Christmas. One thing we have been asked to consider is not having elementary classes on Tuesday night. We would replace it with having Elementary, Middle and High School on Sunday nights. Currently only Middle and High School meet on Sunday. If a family has children in all three programs, then the only time they can all come here is on a Wednesday night. Again, this is a suggestion that we are exploring. It would obviously have consequences that need to be evaluated.