

**St. Cecilia School Board Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, August 4, 2020**

**Online Group Meeting via “Zoom” due to Federal Social Distancing Recommendations, 7:00 PM**

**Members present:** Mike Cowan, Barbara Read, Pablo Raúl Stinga, Colin Murphy, Ayinde Popo, Carol Bond

Administrator Present: Sara Rooney

Ex Officio: Father Don Czapla

**Opening:** Meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

**Prayer:** Led by Sara Rooney

Welcome to Fr. Don and introductions of the school board members.

**Agenda Changes:** Fr. Don would like to add feedback about the Gala Golf Tournament.

He noted that some of the photos released about the Gala Golf Tournament showed attendees not wearing masks. He has gotten feedback from parishioners stating that they were upset that the school supported an event that didn't require proper distancing and mask wearing.

**Approval of Previous Minutes:** Minutes approved by consensus.

**Unfinished Business:**

- (a) None at this time.

**New Business:**

- (a) Changing CSB Leadership
  - a. Mr. Murphy has asked Mike Cowan and Pablo Raúl Stinga to serve as CSB chair and vice chair, respectively.
  - b. Mr. Murphy nominated Mr. Cowan for Chair and Carol bond seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations for School Board Chair. He was approved unanimously.
  - c. Mr. Murphy nominated Mr. Stinga for Vice Chair and Mike Cowan seconded. No other nominations. He was approved unanimously.
  - d. Mr. Murphy nominated himself for secretary and Mr. Popo seconded. No other nominations. He was approved unanimously.
  - e. Committee assignments were distributed as follows: Mr. Murphy the Finance representative, Mr. Cowan will be on Pastoral Council and all others stayed the same as last year.
- (b) Return to Learn Plans
  - a. The School Board was given copies of the plans from the Building Leadership Team of St. Cecilia School that was submitted to the state prior to July 1<sup>st</sup>. These plans need revisions since they do not meet the 50% on-site threshold for on-site hybrid learning

that the state required after July 1<sup>st</sup>. The Ames Community School District School Board met last night (Aug. 3<sup>rd</sup>) and decided to push back the start of school to Sept. 8<sup>th</sup> with a phased in hybrid schedule. The board discussed whether St. Cecilia School will follow Ames' plans or keep the previously approved calendar and schedule.

The board was given a document with St. Cecilia School's plans for in-house use regarding a typical day when school resumes on-site and how the staff is preparing to handle social distancing.

Multiple families have emailed Mrs. Rooney and the School Board asking to offer more face to face learning than Ames Public School.

Mrs. Rooney has reached out to Durham Bus Services to ask questions about bussing. They responded that we need to follow ACSD. But Mrs. Rooney reminded them that we are a separate accredited school. She is still waiting for Durham to respond to her request.

The Board had questions about the number of students who rely on bussing. Currently there are a total of 14 families that use bussing.

Mrs. Rooney spoke with all of the teachers and most of the staff are willing and ready to start on Aug. 24<sup>th</sup>. St. Cecilia has a piece of technology that is ordered and will allow for better learning experiences for the families who stay at home.

Questions about surveys showed that 70 families responded. Of those, 88% of the families prefer on site learning.

Mrs. Rooney asked for suggestions about the number of days in person vs. online. Since the plans made for the hybrid version were based on ACSD planning, if we decided to do a hybrid version we would need to do something different than ACSD.

The plans that are in question include 100% online for those who choose it. The hybrid plan has to meet a 50% threshold (50% on site minimum). Full time in person learning is another option.

Mrs. Rooney reviewed the document that laid out a typical school day schedule. She stated that there are a few students who do not have access to computers. St. Cecilia is planning to purchase used Chromebooks from another school that equals or exceeds the technology of our Chromebooks. ACSD has invested \$72,000 in hotspots for the community so St. Cecilia shouldn't need to invest in hotspots.

Mrs. Rooney is confident that by Aug. 24<sup>th</sup> the school will be ready for students. If cases increase, we will apply for a waiver from the state to go 100% online for 14 days.

Fr. Don expressed concerns about the multiple entrances to the school and assuring the safety of our students. He plans to work with Jeremy Hess and Sara Rooney to make sure everyone stays safe.

ACSD has only approved the start and end date. They have not approved any schedule for the year. Therefore St. Cecilia could not vote to use the ACSD calendar in its entirety since ACSD calendar is incomplete.

Mrs. Rooney was asked about her opinion regarding this decision. She stated that she believes face to face learning is the best but our online resources are a lot better now than they were in the spring. We need to balance the health considerations for our students with their education.

The new online technology will include “The Swivel” which allows the teacher to wear a microphone and the camera follows the sound. Therefore it will mimic a student present in the room better than a meeting format. There will be ongoing training with this technology. Six units have been ordered.

Attendance will be taken with the online learners by having them check in or turn in an assignment. There isn't a way to record the number of hours they are learning when they are online.

The Board agreed to keep the previously approved calendar where the start date is on August 24<sup>th</sup> and the children will be offered in person instruction five days a week.

If the situation would arise where a hybrid model would need to be implemented, the Board discussed multiple options. Fr. Don wanted clarification about when a hybrid model would be needed. If a student tests positive for COVID 19, that classroom would likely go to 100% online. The IDPH has stated that they will help in deciding what steps will need to be taken if a case presents. The staff has been encouraged through a “Return to Work Plan” to social distance from each other to help protect the school from the spread to other classrooms.

Mrs. Rooney did not have a suggestion for the hybrid model. Fr. Don pointed out that if we went four days a week with one day off, the day off could be used for teacher preparation to make sure the remote learning material stays strong. He felt that the four days on and one day off week was a strong plan. Mrs. Rooney felt that the teachers would be agreeable to this hybrid model. The day off would work the best on Wednesdays.

Mike Cowan motioned to have the hybrid model be in person learning on Mon. Tues. Thurs. and Friday. Weds. would be a day off. Mr. Stinga seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Cowan asked about a plan for bussing. Mrs. Rooney tentatively plans to communicate to families that a bussing plan has not been established. Mr. Murphy suggested that language be included to have people prepare for alternative solutions. Mr. Cowan suggested that families be asked to volunteer to help other families but not have it school sponsored. Fr. Don cautioned that the school cannot coordinate transportation due to liability issues.

#### **Visioning and Catechetical/Faith Formation Planning:**

- (a) Tim Read has been helping create signage around school that features CeCe the Songbird mascot. Cloth bags featuring CeCe and St. Cecilia bookmarks have been printed, and will be handed out to students as a back to school gift.
- (b) Mrs. Rooney as reached out to FSA to help cover costs for reusable water bottles featuring CeCe since the children will not be able to use the drinking fountains.

#### **Administrative Issues:**

- (a) Principal's Report
  - ii. Strategic Planning Update - Principals and other strategic planning leaders met virtually with Maria Ribera from Catholic School Management last week. She emphasized the following top 5 priorities at this time:
    1. Emphasize community
    2. Set up a communication hub
    3. Make it easy, less can be more
    4. Keep recruiting and gather testimonials
    5. Intentional relationship building.

Mrs. Rooney gave the Board an example from Marshalltown that highlights the "Less is More" idea. In regards to recruiting, an idea that was brought to the board previously was to offer a new student referral program which gives families tuition credit for referring new students.

We have had 13 move-outs and only 3 move-ins K-5. In the past 24 hours, after ACSD plans were announced, there has been more new families calling for enrollment information.

For preschool, only 2 of 16 spots are filled for 3 year old preschool and 11 of 18 spots for 4 year old preschool. There is no one enrolled in the afternoon preschool class, so Ms. Eash will be assisting with online instruction at that time.

### **Committee Reports:**

- Marketing- They are not meeting at this time.
- FSA – No meeting.
- Finance – No meeting in July. Most items are staying the same at this time.
- Faith Formation – No meeting. The sacrament of First Communion has been offered on a limited basis, with one child receiving the sacrament per mass prior to Fr. Secora's last mass. There are still children who are waiting to experience this sacrament. Confirmation is being held this Sunday, Aug. 9<sup>th</sup>, at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish. Faith Formation classes are open for registration. Fr. Don stated that there will be a special First Communion mass in two weeks. They are anticipating about 20 participants. He also stated that registration numbers are quite low.
- Pastoral council – They had a brief meeting with Fr. Don to get him updated about the current projects. No official meeting in July.
- Facilities – Ayinde Popo reported they discussed the HCVC update that includes features outside air being pulled in and circulated multiple times a day. The filtration balance with sound disturbance is being determined.
- Election, Constitution & Bylaws: No meeting or discussion.

**Meeting was adjourned at 8:52 pm:** Mike Cowan motioned to adjourn, Barbara Read second.

Next meeting will be September 1st, 2020 at 7:00PM via Zoom meeting platform.

Submitted by Barbara Read