

Holy Childhood School Advisory Council Meeting Summary

November 20, 2025



Overview

This was a wide-ranging school advisory council meeting covering faith formation, curriculum updates, academic performance, facilities, budgeting, employment changes, upcoming events, and community initiatives. The principal emphasized forward-thinking planning, continuous improvement, and proactive communication with staff and families.

Opening & Attendees

- **Opening Prayer:** Led by Father, focusing on gratitude, safety for travelers, and openness to learning, especially about God's love.
 - **Attendance:** Father Mark, Deacon Dan, Mrs. Uptergrove, Mrs. Proffit, Mr. McClenney, Miss Ryckert, Mr. Brennan, Mr. Gryga (noted correction of name pronunciation), and others. Mr. Spears was absent.
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Principal's Report

Strategic Planning & Surveys

- **Three-Year Plan:** Based on a 2021 family survey identifying valued traditions (Variety Show, Buddies, Munchkin Basketball) and areas for improvement.
- **Future Survey:** Plans to administer a new survey to reassess family priorities, but timing is not yet determined.

Faith Formation

- **Living Saints Museum:** Fifth graders presented on saints, well-prepared by their religion teacher. Students used cue cards, dressed up, and engaged with the material.
 - **Pope Leo's Address:** Middle school will watch the address in the gym; elementary staff invited to participate.
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Academic Performance & Testing

- **Iowa Tests:** Annual standardized test, with data available back to 2013. ELA scores remain strong, attributed to emphasis on reading at home and school.
 - **COVID Impact:** Noted disruptions for certain cohorts, especially those in grades 4-6 during the pandemic, with continued effects expected for several years.
- **Renaissance Star Testing:** Preferred for tracking student growth across the year (beginning, middle, end).

Curriculum Initiatives

- **Guaranteed & Viable Curriculum (GVC):**
 - Teachers focus on 15–18 essential benchmarks per grade, ensuring mastery of critical skills that scaffold to the next grade.
 - **Backward Mapping:** Eighth-grade teachers identify high school expectations and work backward with lower grades to align curriculum.
 - **Professional Development:** Emphasis on the “Four Essential Questions”:
 1. What do we want students to know?
 2. How will we know if they’ve learned it?
 3. What will we do for those who have mastered it?
 4. What will we do for those who haven’t?
 - Plan to form a curriculum committee and involve teachers in curriculum review and selection.
- **Math Curriculum Update:**
 - Reviewing K–4 math curriculum for consistency; samples from various publishers are being evaluated.
 - Grades 6–8 use a mix of Envision and Illustrative Mathematics, aligning with the local high school.
 - Teachers have autonomy, but there’s a move toward more unified materials and terminology for scaffolding.
 - Decision expected in late spring, with new hires included in discussions.

Enrichment & Staffing

- **Enrichment Teacher Resignation:** Miss Hill will leave in December; replacement options are being considered.
 - Enrichment on Fridays included art and targeted academic support, tailored to classroom needs.
- **Employment Changes:** Two lunch staff members leaving; efforts to optimize staffing for cost savings.

Technology & Facilities

- **Website Improvements:** Staff assigned to review and update their sections; positive feedback on responsiveness.
- **Facilities & Safety:**
 - Ongoing window updates and proactive maintenance.
 - **Safety Enhancements:** Pursuing installation of panic buttons to lock doors during emergencies. Grant applications submitted for funding; full surveillance system deemed too costly for now.
 - Fire doors lock upon alarm, but some older doors require updated locking mechanisms.

Budget & Financial Planning

- **Principal's Learning Curve:** Principal is becoming more involved in budget management, with guidance from Mary Mall.
- **Pre-K Program:** Evaluating if the program is self-sustaining; historically profitable, but under review for accurate forecasting.
- **Lunch Program:** Fewer lunches sold, affecting revenue; staffing adjustments underway.
- **Salaries & Staffing:** Reviewing hours and roles for non-teaching staff to identify savings for future budgets.
- **Annual Fund:** Plans to revive the annual fund with help from experienced volunteers, aiming to reconnect with alumni and increase fundraising.
- **Auction/Fund-the-Need:** Not yet recorded in the October budget; will be included in future reports.

Community & Events

- **Recent & Upcoming Events:**

- **Red Ribbon Week, Box of Joy, Veterans Day:** Successful events promoting faith, service, and community.
 - **Special Persons Day:** Scheduled with a half-day and celebration of Eucharist.
 - **Book Fair:** Successful, with sales ahead of last year; reading and STEM night planned for the second semester to increase middle school engagement.
 - **Movie Night:** Scheduled before Christmas break; simplified format with families bringing their own snacks and gear.
 - **Christmas Concert:** Santa appearance planned.
- **Family Initiative:** Upcoming program to encourage device-free family activities, such as shared meals, with a gamified approach to motivate participation.
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Athletics & Extracurriculars

- **Scheduling Issue:** Concern raised about two games in one night for a team; principal confirmed it was a rare occurrence and not standard practice.
 - **Youth Ministry:** Suggestion to balance athletic and ministry events.
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Calendar & Registration

- **Next Year Planning:** Preparation for 2026–27 begins in January, including registration and tuition setting.
 - **Open House:** Aim to have tuition rates and financial aid information ready for prospective families.
 - **Enrollment:** Strong numbers in Pre-K4; anticipated need to manage class sizes for kindergarten.
 - **Scholarships:** Information on scholarships and financial aid to be provided in a consolidated handout.
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Strategic Plan & Communication

- **Strategic Plan:** Available on Google Drive, color-coded, and regularly updated; staff encouraged to review and provide input.
 - **Ongoing Communication:** Principal encourages open dialogue for questions, clarifications, and suggestions.
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Next Meeting

- **Date:** December 18th, 6:30 PM at school (coinciding with Movie Night).
 - **Additional Events:** Adoration night for families scheduled the day prior; both events promoted as family opportunities.
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Closing

- **Appreciation:** Principal thanked all attendees for their support and participation.
 - **Open Door Policy:** Staff and families encouraged to reach out with any needs or questions.
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End of Summary