

WEST CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

September 27, 2023

MAK Boardroom
West Catholic High School
1801 Bristol Ave NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Attendees: Michael Curry, John Frey, Joe Ricord, Sr. Damien Marie Savino, FSE, Tom Wesholski, Duane Kluting, Tania DeVries

Absent: Emmanuela Chukwuezi, Suzette Colon, Pat Kalahar, Fr. Tom Simons, Duane Kluting, Molly Nawrocki, Dave Veneklase

Resources: President/CEO Jill Annable, Principal Tony Fischer, Admissions Director Julie Herdegen, Communications Director Natalie Scalabrino

Agenda Item	Discussion/Conclusion/Action	Responsibility
<u>Opening</u>		
1.1 Call to Order & Welcome	Wesholski called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.	Tom Wesholski
1.2 Opening Prayer	Opening prayer led by Frey	John Frey
1.3 Roll Call	5 of 13 present at time of roll call, 7 present before voting	John Frey
<u>Comments from the Floor/Community Topics</u>		
<u>Presentations/Information</u>		
3.1 Admissions Director	<p>Herdegen introduced herself and shared her family's journey at West Catholic. Former WC parent, hired as WC Admissions Director in 2022.</p> <p>Herdegen shared summary of admissions numbers ADMISSIONS REPORT here. Barriers to Catholic education include finance/tuition assistance, special needs, and friends going to other schools. Received hundreds of scholarship applicants this year (largest to date) for ~70 scholarships. Annable shared information about the award process. Major named scholarship donors recently attended a luncheon to meet student recipients. Total enrollment for 2023-2024 is currently 481.</p> <p>Upcoming financial planning event for families to provide them with ideas and resources to finance Catholic education. Scholarship essay writing workshop for students will take place while parents attend the presentation. English department representatives to assist.</p>	Julie Herdegen

	<p>Retention is being tracked. 17 students unenrolled from last year. Exit survey results showed students left for mental health, moving, social interactions, etc.; 7 students did not share details. Kluting asked how this compares to other years. Annable & Herdegen shared that this information has not been tracked well previously but will be moving forward.</p> <p>Also tracking retention for partner schools to better track estimated freshman class. WC is committed to providing more information in these areas. Financial planning event noted. Curry: it is in the interest of Catholic feeder schools to share this message, suggested looking for opportunities to partner with feeders. Annable pointed to the annual report draft (Future Falcons section) to highlight current work with partner schools. Curry asked what can we do to help provide savings plan/budget model to families starting Catholic education. Hard to initially wrap head around price but easier to finance with tools. Annable shared that financial planning presentation will be recorded and shared with prospective families. Presentations will also take place at OLC and IHM.</p> <p>Kluting asked if financial aid data could be shared between partner schools and high school to make sure parents know they can afford Catholic education before families may consider leaving school to pursue other educational options. Annable shared that principals often provide anecdotal data about who may need the extra push, assistance and support. Noted that Diocese does not provide any data (ex. contact information) until 4th grade.</p> <p>Wesholski asked if partner schools are growing. Annable shared that most lower grades are growing but there is a drop once students hit middle school – often because students are preparing to attend another school (public, charter, etc.).</p> <p>DeVries asked if financial barriers were the most significant factors. Annable shared that there are a number of factors (friends, electives, sports opportunities, etc.), many jump ship if faith is not a driving factor. Curry noted that ROI should be heavily emphasized. Herdegen shared that this will be a focus of financial planning presentation. Admissions is committed to focusing on the Why as well as the How.</p> <p>Herdegen shared engagement efforts – All-Sports Passes distributed, 65 visits to partner schools, 123 shadow students, 1,560 recipients of Falcon Flyer (5-8th families, summer camp participants), 142 Falcon Flyer swag contestants. Staff members are out and about in community, attending events to represent West Catholic. Coaches, theatre director, etc. engaging with student participating in activities at feeder schools. Shared that Joe Houdek, Darren LaPrise work directly with partner school students. Growing community relations efforts, building partnerships with community organizations like Catholic Charities of West Michigan.</p> <p>Kluting asked if full pay/partial pay is considered. Herdegen shared that we attempt to provide aid to families but have limits. Curry asked if there was a national standard for</p>	
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	<p>discount rates as it may be a good metric to consider. Annable will reach out to NCEA to see if there is a national or Midwest/Great Lakes average. Kluting asked if there were kids who had applied but could not afford minimum pay. Herdegen confirmed that, over the years, a small number of students have not been able to attend for this reason.</p> <p>Deeper discussion about numbers from specific schools. Additional barriers noted, including transportation, legacy students at another school, etc. Annable discussed WC is still looking into other options for transportation since additional busing is not currently available. Herdegen shared that she often connects with families directly to come up with creative ways to minimize barriers like these. Curry shared that Detroit Catholic Central pulls students from as far as 1 hour away, solutions that can be a game changer.</p> <p>Kluting asked about population. Is there a big enough pool of students to reach 600? Annable and Herdegen were unsure. Annable stated that Catholic education has flatlined, need to watch incoming numbers and plan accordingly.</p> <p>Herdegen shared that word of mouth is most effective way to promote Catholic education according to recent study. Parent Ambassador program is growing. Herdegen asked to let her know if anyone would like to be an ambassador and receive a t-shirt to wear/promote the school.</p>	
<u>Approval/Discussion</u>		
4.1 Review & Approval of Minutes	Motion to approve June Board meeting minutes: Wesholski; seconded: Ricord; unanimously approved.	Duane Kluting
4.2 Strategic Plan Process Update	Annable shared that every committee/board meeting will have strategic plan present. Reports will be aligned with various points of strategic plan. Spreadsheet version will be updated by staff and committee chairs in order to be able to report back on what has been accomplished each year.	Jill Annable John Frey
4.3 Diocesan Mission Effectiveness Survey Results	No report. Annable shared that every spring there is a survey conducted. WC's came back with errors, Annable asked for corrections, Diocese has not provided updated results. Annable to present survey at November board meeting.	Jill Annable
4.4 Board Survey of Governance & Leadership	<p>Survey was distributed late due to change in administrative assistant at the Diocese. Executive committee went through survey, which then becomes diocesan board data.</p> <p>Annable touching base with Dave Faber to make sure processes are being completed regarding board feedback and data.</p>	Jill Annable
<u>Organization Minutes & Reports</u>		
5.1 President's Reports	Annable opened to questions. Kluting shared that he appreciated goals being listed in terms of accountability.	Jill Annable

5.2 Principal's Report	Kluting asked about Sr. Frances Zajac in her role as Assistant Principal. Fischer shared that Zajac is focusing on the small things – making sure processes are being followed and things are being done right; sets the tone for making bigger changes later. Annable stated that some partner school principals have shared that families are considering WC because students are being held more accountable. Handbook being followed. Fischer shared Zajac has background as a teacher, gaining WC teachers' trust because she's experienced in education.	Tony Fischer
5.3 Finance	<p>Kluting shared that board receives minutes, should be read prior to the meeting, bring questions to meeting. Committee Chairs are on hand to answer questions or present data.</p> <p>Annable expressed that engagement of board and committees has been incredibly helpful with staffing transitions. Kluting noted strong new committee members have helped to strengthen this engagement and assistance. Annable shared rough draft of annual report. Plan to snail mail 500 and make a digital push via email. Aim to continue to produce by JP II feast day (hits mailboxes prior to Falcon Awards Night). Focused on facts rather than narrative. Datapoints can continue to be assessed each year. Will be on tables at FAN and other events.</p> <p>Wesholski suggested listing committees in annual report. Annable suggested the possibility of adding this list with member names to the Westword as well. Curry expressed that factoids could be shared elsewhere. Kluting shared that he has been working with Annable to help decide which points to include. Ricord suggested certain data points highlighting student success be added to the back of ambassador t-shirts.</p>	Molly Nawrocki
5.4 Development		Tania DeVries
5.5 Facilities		Joe Ricord
5.6 Catholic Culture		Sr. Damien Marie Savino
5.7 Marketing & Enrollment	Marketing Committee minutes were distributed as a supplement to the board packet (late addition).	Michael Curry
5.8 Foundation		Duane Kluting
<u>Open Discussion</u>		
<u>Adjournment</u>		
6.1 Closing Prayer	Closing prayer led by Curry	Michael Curry
6.2 Adjournment	Kluting adjourned the meeting at 7:24 p.m.	Duane Kluting

UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER:

- Oct. 3: All A's Classic (8:30 a.m. Mass with Bishop)
- Oct. 13: Homecoming
- Oct. 25: Falcon Awards Night
- Nov. 1-4: Fall Play
- Nov. 10: Veterans Mass
- Dec. 13: Christmas Open House