

St. Brigid of Kildare Parish  
Standardized Parish Committee Meeting Minutes

Who: SAC

Prepared By: Michelle Loudon

When: November 8, 2021

Where: Via ZOOM - 6:30 PM

**1. Welcome & Opening Prayer** - Karen Steinbrunner & Jill Kilanowski

**2. Attendees**

Kathy O'Reilly, Principal	Karen Steinbrunner (Chair - 4)
Cindy Lombardo, Vice Principal	Jill Kilanowski (Vice Chair - 3)
Michelle Loudon (Secretary - 4)	Hillary Harper, Preschool Director
Jennifer Roncone (4)	Dan Creekmur (3)
Sara Reville (3)	Zach Haughwout (2)
Derek Hegarty (2)	Stacy Austin (2)
Jaime Shiavone (2)	Leila Ulrich (H&S)

**Absentees**

Monsignor Joseph Hendricks, Pastor

Jill Carfagna, Assistant Principal

Jen Obers (H&S)

**3. Review/Accept Past Minutes.**

- Approve meeting minutes from the October 11, 2021 Zoom Meeting - Approved by Jill Kilanowski and seconded by Jennifer Roncone.

**4. New Business**

• **Principal's Report (Kathy O'Reilly)**

- Kathy informed the group that Monsignor was sorry to miss the meeting, but was attending transition activities at the Diocese.
- **Retention/Recruitment Follow-up** - Kathy reviewed the feedback from the retention/recruitment survey. They were appreciative of the feedback and certainly encourage all to pass along any feedback that they receive on these particular topics.

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One of the surprising things that Kathy noticed on the survey is that there is again discussion on the grading system used by St. Brigid. She felt that we had been using the standards based grading system long enough that it would not be as much of an issue to parents. However, it appears that as we bring in new groups of parents, there needs to be continued education on the standards based grading system. In addition, the grading system is not necessarily something that can be changed by Kathy alone. It is a Diocesan directed initiative. We have spent a very large amount of time on the standards based grading system. Now, maybe it is important to spend additional time on the communication piece of the grading system so that it gets through to as many parents as possible. It is important to parents, especially those with children in middle school, that the background and explanation of how the grading system works would be helpful for parents. In addition to how the grading system works, it would be helpful to explain to those parents in middle school preparing for high school with their students that the parents and students understand the changes in the grading system that their students will experience as freshmen. Another issue is battling with students to get homework done on time. Students need to learn the responsibility portion that the homework should be completed on time. As parents, the committee expressed that in the lower grades, the standards based grading is appreciated and seems great, but as they get older it often causes parents angst because they don't really understand the grading system since we were most likely all raised on letter grades. It is very hard to compare the standards based grading system to the letter grades as well. Think more explanation is needed for the parents and at a younger age with the children so they are not confused by the time middle school rolls around. Kathy mentioned to the committee that the last page of the survey results contained six areas that she is hoping we can do some additional brainstorming on and have discussion at a future meeting. If you have a particular interest in any of these particular items or would like to share thoughts with Kathy, please send her a note by email as soon as possible. The six topics are: finances, Catholic school connection, class sizes, grading system, rules & traditions and athletics. Lastly, Kathy wanted to remind the group that with concerns about middle school aged children, that we need to remember that they are somewhat tough to motivate anyway, so looking at many of these things, we just need to be aware of this. There is some hope that as PBL gets off the ground that this might be an opportunity for kids to feel like they have a bit more say in what they are learning and therefore, they might get a little more excited about their school day.

- **Meeting with Diocesan Office (Karen Steinbrunner)** - Karen shared with the group that she had the good fortune of meeting with Superintendent Adam DuFault and Lori Dulin about retention and the future of Catholic Schools. Adam and Lori had prepared an entire retention document of Karen for K-8 schools within the Diocese. St. Brigid is not the only school to be seeing potential drops in enrollment and retaining the children that we do have in the school at the current time. She will share this document with the group once she shares it with Kathy. In addition to retaining students, Karen talked with Adam and Lori about the ways that the Catholic High Schools needed to become more visible to the middle school students and at an earlier age so that they have a better chance of becoming the "household name" in high schools. Karen shared concerns that a "bridge" to high school is not really there in the middle school grades and she continued to express interest that one needed to be built. They also discussed masking in the K-8 schools and whether they might follow the high schools in lifting their mask mandates. Adam has new hope now that the K-8 students are becoming eligible for the vaccine, but still sees it to be a ways off.
- **Open House Scheduled for 2022** - Kathy continued to report with the Open House scheduled for January 9, 2022. There will be an in person version and a hybrid version

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plus the option for a virtual tour. Ads will be coming in the next month in regards to the Open House.

- **Diocesan Letter regarding high school optional masking** - Kathy shared that cases needed to get to about 100/100,000 before we could make a real local decision regarding the mask mandate for St. Brigid of Kildare school. We still need to work through the local decision making process. It will probably not be a black and white issue, but one that might need to be reevaluated throughout the year based on cases, etc. There is a new policy that has been released by the public health department called "Mask to Stay, Test to Play" It is in reference to exposures happening at school and while it sounds good, and the athletics piece will be very helpful, the contact tracing and follow-up to the testing is going to be super time intensive. She will keep the group updated about this project
- **Teacher support** - Kathy shared that the administration and staff are doing pretty well right now. H&S has been a great source of support and are the best cheerleaders!
- **Pre-School Report (Hillary Harper)** - Hillary shared that all was going well with the youngest learners in the school. Dublin has approved the use of the "Arks" through August 2022, so they are planning class sizes, etc. with the intent of moving back to the "big school". Parent teacher conferences are underway. They also have a lunch and learn program for the students and it is full. Leila Ulrich will be the newest substitute in the pre-school program.

#### 5. Standing Committee Reports

- **Home and School Report** - Leila reported that the H&S Trunk or Treat was great. Barn Bash also was a successful event with about 800 people in attendance. No one seemed to miss the hot dogs and they plan to continue with the pre-packaged snacks through next year. The date for Barn Bash in 2022 is October 21, 2022. Spirit Wear sales are open for just a few short weeks. The recess volunteer program is going well. The new gear for indoor recesses has been distributed to the various classrooms. There is going to be an author visit by Meg Hunter-Kilmer for 4th - 8th grade about her newest book "Saints Around the World." There will also be a toy drive benefiting three different organizations in November/December. Please watch the Wolfhound Wednesday for greater details. Lastly, the Annual Fund is up to about \$30,000 with 130 families donating. We will continue working to grow this fund.

#### 6. Date/Time of Next Meeting

- The next meeting is scheduled on Monday, January 10, 2022 at 6:30 PM. We do not meet in December, but stay tuned for information from Karen. Again, we hope to be in person, but information will come out regarding this issue prior to January 10.

#### 7. Closing Prayer

The meeting was closed at 7:36 pm.

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