

**OUR NEXT ST. FERDINAND SCHOOL ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
TAKES PLACE
THURSDAY, JANUARY 12, 2023 @ 6:30 PM IN THE ACTIVITY CENTER**

All Parents and Stakeholders Welcome to Attend

**St. Ferdinand School Parent Advisory Board Meeting
September 22, 2022 Approved Meeting Minutes**

PARISH/SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVES IN ATTENDANCE:

Erin Boyle Folino, Principal Fr. Peter Gnoinski, Pastor
Br. James Drangsholt

ESTABLISHED SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Artur Stozynski Ronald Miller
Renata Chocianowicz

ADVISORY BOARD OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Richard Wiltse Chairperson & Meeting Facilitator
Isaura Islas Secretary

Meeting Topics:

1. General school updates
2. Parent club updates
3. Signage updates
4. Open forum for Q&A

General school updates provided by Principal Folino:

1. An outline was presented for the continuous school improvement plan which is required for all Archdiocesan schools. The plan consists of meeting the following five objectives by the end of the 2025 academic year, unless noted otherwise.
 - a. 75% of students meeting benchmarks in I-Ready reading and math. We are currently at 59% and 51% in reading and math respectively.
 - b. 75% of students will strongly agree that God is present in their lives. We have already hit the Archdiocesan 75% goal and must work to maintain it.
 - c. Attain a rating of "strong" on at least 3 of 5 categories in the State of Illinois' 5Essentials survey. We have already achieved a "strong" rating in 4/5 of the Essentials and rated "neutral" in the remaining category.
 - d. Fully enroll kindergarten by 2024. Our quota to reach is 25 students by the start of the 24/25 academic year. For the 2022-23 school year, we have 17 Kindergarten students enrolled.
 - e. Operate within an approved budget. We are already meeting this requirement.
2. Academic updates:
 - a. STEM and technology lab classes were expanded for this year.
 - b. We have implemented a new reading curriculum and textbooks for the first time in many years.

- c. We have implemented the Daily 5 personalized learning framework.
 - d. We have implemented new vocabulary tactics.
 - e. We have a new academic coach- Dr. Kari King.
 - f. Articulation meetings and collaborative practices are in effect.
 - g. Relationship with God- Family Sunday Masses continue but changes to 8:30 AM for this school year, and weekly school Masses continue on Fridays.
 - h. An overview of the CLIP Program, which immerses pre-school children in Spanish and Polish language, was given.
3. Personnel updates:
 - a. All previously vacant positions including Science, PE, Art/Receptionist, Title and Academic Coach have been filled.
 - b. We are still seeking a qualified maintenance person.
 4. SEL (social emotional learning) updates:
 - a. We have implemented SEL Buddies, pairing younger grades with older grades. This is a program where SEL students meet up with peers the first Wednesday of the month and share in learning emotional response tactics through fun, multiage, partnered activities.
 - b. Additionally, SEL students participate in twice weekly in sharing circles within their homerooms.
 5. Student Council elections were recently completed, and the winners have been announced. Principal Folino is looking forward to working with the new council members.
 6. Fundraising update:
 - a. We are postponing the usual fall fun-run event until spring to afford time to revise the fundraising strategy. We liked the company that we used last fall, but they retained too much of the money that we raised.
 - b. We may change the event to something like a color run and attempt to keep more of the funds raised by our students for the school.
 7. Updates given on behalf of the Operations Director (Mr. Ryan is on paternity leave-congratulations to his family).
 - a. Mr. Ryan secured a \$10k grant for sustainability upgrades. Specific upgrades purchased with the grant and installed over the summer months included:
 - i. Water bottle filling stations.
 - ii. Automatic toilet flush valves in select rest rooms.
 - iii. New rest room hand dryers.
 8. Updates were given related to other recent grant-funded purchases including:
 - a. New desks for the 6th grade.
 - b. More smart boards were acquired for use in the library and other specials classes.
 - c. Additional technology and equipment for the STEM lab.

9. Marketing updates were given with respect to the Belmont Avenue banners, which were finally installed over the summer.
10. Other facilities-related updates included:
 - a. We are planning to redecorate the front entrance of the school to reflect a more welcome representation of our various cultures at some point this year.
 - b. We are also planning to redecorate the area near the front courtyard fountain to reflect Marian themes from different cultures.
 - c. The gymnasium roof replacement is scheduled to occur from October 3-26. During the project, the western-half of the main parking lot will be closed to provide a safe work zone.
 - i. Outdoor recess, P.E., and basketball practices will be relocated as needed.
 - ii. Extended care pickup will be relocated to the south Polish School Entrance door
 - iii. School dismissal will temporarily occur via the Mason Avenue doors and staggered by grade level. To keep traffic flowing, every effort will be made to send siblings out at the same time and from the same door.
11. Sports-related updates:
 - a. Basketball will be starting soon for grades 4-8.
 - b. Principal Folino will be reaching out to St. Pat's. to see if we can utilize one of their gyms for our basketball practices until our gym roof replacement project is complete.

Parent Club updates provided by Principal Folino:

1. Parent Club is up and running for the academic year and is off to a good start.
 - a. The September food truck event was really nice and raised some money for the school.
 - b. Trunk-or-Treat is our next event in October, pending cooperative weather.

Signage updates by Mr. Wiltse:

1. A presentation was given to the meeting attendees outlining three signage options for improving the visibility of our school. The presented options included:
 - a. Installing vinyl clings in school colors, and with the school's name or logo, on the windows above the east and west gymnasium doors. This would also include painting the gymnasium doors blue and grey to match.
 - b. Installing raised-metal letters along the gymnasium parapet facing Belmont Avenue.
 - c. Replacing the electronic sign facing Belmont with a new two-sided electronic sign.
2. A group discussion occurred, and it was decided that we would proceed in the following manner:
 - a. Mr. Wiltse will investigate the cost of vinyl clings for the gym windows and painting of the doors after the roofing project is complete. It is likely that we can afford to make this upgrade using marketing funds already in the school's budget. This will help draw eyes to our school from Belmont and it will also help new parents know which door to pick their children up at going forward as one door will be blue and the other grey.

- b. It was decided that the raised-metal letters, while nice, would not be all that visible from Belmont. Given the likely cost for the letters, we would be best served not pursuing that option any longer. Instead, we will start planning and fundraising for a new electronic sign. While the exact location of the sign and its specifications are to yet to be determined, we know that we need to plan for raising at least \$50k toward this initiative.
3. It was shared with the group that St. Patrick's High School is getting a new electronic sign installed later this fall. We can discuss the specification and permitting process with their principal and learn more about what is needed before we proceed with planning to modernize our own sign.

Open Forum Discussion Items:

1. An inquiry was made as to whether it would be possible to have a staff member or parent volunteer available to watch children during future advisory board meetings. The thought being that more parents might attend the meeting if there were a responsible adult available to watch their children. Principal Folino agreed to investigate this.
2. Extensive conversation ensued with respect to school safety. Key points discussed included:
 - a. A question was posed as to whether classrooms should be equipped with door lock-down devices. The group was informed that all first floor classrooms do in-fact have door lock-down devices already. Upper floor classrooms currently do not have lock-down devices; but all teachers do have keys such that they can quickly lock their doors should it be necessary.
 - b. Principal Folino shared that an Active Shooter Drill will be conducted with the support of the Chicago Police Department in the near future. In accordance with Illinois law, advanced notification for the drill will be given to parents.
 - c. A question was posed as to whether select exterior doors should be equipped with electronic door locks. Mr. Stozynski and Fr. Peter will be looking into this matter further.
 - d. Fr. Peter stated that he will be making inquiries within the community seeking out parishioners who are retired police or military and willing to serve as volunteer security around the school and church.
 - e. There was extensive discussion about the practice of having children attend mass in the church vs. the chapel. The church is more open to the community and, given all the glass, makes the children more visible. The chapel is more sheltered and possibly more secure, but it is not the preferred venue as it does not provide the full church experience to the students. Options to increase security for school masses conducted at the church were suggested to include:
 - i. Possibly restricting access to the church during school masses to school children and their parents.
 - ii. Possibly locking down the exterior doors of the church during school masses.
 - iii. Possibly routing children into the church from the back courtyard such that they are not visible from the street while entering the church.
 - f. It was also discussed that, while well-intended suggestions to increase safety inside the school and church are welcome, we must maintain perspective. The children do play outside at recess and during P.E., and they are outside for other events during the school year. Accordingly, appropriate vigilance is necessary from all parents and parishioners as well as from school faculty and staff at all times. As part of the vigilance conversation, it was suggested that the school and parish work with the local alderman's office to request additional police patrols around the school and church to the extent possible.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:10 p.m.