

ST. MONICA SCHOOL COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
March 15, 2023

A meeting of the St. Monica School Committee (the "Committee") was held at Donovan Hall at 7:00 p.m. local time on March 15, 2023. The following voting commission members participated in person: Susan Eloff, Dan Cary, Brian Wolf, Jeanine Boudreau, Meghan Dean, Alissa Prater, and Ryan Van Den Elzen. Members Bill Nurthen, Sara Rolfs, and Beth Cherveney were unable to attend. The following ex-officio non-voting commission members participated in person: Emily Friday, Interim Principal of St. Monica School (the "School"); Chris Ott, Pastoral Council Liaison; and Victoria Underwood, Home and School Committee Liaison. Also present by invitation was Tim Kasprzak, Interim Assistant Principal of the School.

PRELIMINARY MATTERS

1. Opening of Meeting. Mr. Van Den Elzen opened the meeting and acted as Chair of the meeting. Mr. Van Den Elzen also acted as Secretary of the meeting. Mr. Van Den Elzen directed that the minutes of the meeting reflect that all members were properly notified of the meeting and that the meeting was properly called and convened and ready to conduct business.
2. Approval of Minutes. Mr. Van Den Elzen next asked for any comments or corrections to the minutes of the Commission's February 8, 2023 meeting that were previously distributed to the members. There being no comments or corrections, upon a motion duly made, seconded and unanimously approved, the Commission approved the minutes of the Commission meeting held on such date.

BUSINESS MATTERS

3. Principal's Report. Mrs. Friday then provided her report on School activities to the Commission.

(a) *Standards Based Grading.* As part of the report, Mrs. Friday discussed certain opportunities and challenges with the School's implementation of standards based grading and the fact that an additional explanatory letter will be going to parents to help them better understand report cards and standards based grading. The Commission engaged in a lengthy discussion of standards based grading with several members expressing various concerns with the system. Mrs. Friday reminded the Commission that the use of standards based grading is required by the archdiocese and that it could affect the Schools accreditation if the School were to cease using standards based grading. Mrs. Friday also explained that the requirement to use standards based grading is under the purview of Sue Nelson, Associate Superintendent of schools for the archdiocese and that any decision to revert to letter grades would need to come from Ms. Nelson. The Commission members asked questions and received answers.

(b) *School Calendar.* Mrs. Friday also discussed the process to prepare and finalize the School calendar for 2023-2024, which is expected to be completed soon.

4. Committee and Liaison Reports.

(a) *Finance Council.* Mr. Van Den Elzen provided an update on the recent Finance Council meeting. As part of the discussion, Mr. Van Den Elzen explained that the Finance Council views the School as a priority item for the Parish and wants to make sure it has the financial resources to continue to succeed. Mr. Van Den Elzen also reviewed certain topics affecting the school discussed by the Finance Council, including teacher salary scales and increases, Parish plans to recruit a director of stewardship and a communications coordinator, the status of

the School entrance remodel project and related approvals, and the School budget and tuition structure. The Commission members asked questions and received answers.

(b) *Annual Fund.* Mr. Van Den Elzen then reviewed an update on the School's annual fund effort that was provided by Mrs. Cherveney, including a report on the monies raised to date and the forecast full year results, which are expected to exceed the fundraising goal. The Commission members asked questions and received answers.

(c) *Home and School.* Mrs. Underwood then updated the Commission on the recent activities of the Home and School Committee with a focus on its efforts to recruit auction chairs for next year's auction which will be on November 11, 2023. The Commission members asked questions and received answers.

5. Prior Meeting Updates.

(a) *Unpaid Tuition.* Mrs. Friday then explained that there are still two families who have not signed tuition agreements for the current school year and six additional families who are behind in tuition payments but are working to catch up. Mrs. Friday also explained the efforts that the Parish and School are taking to ensure that all tuition is timely paid and that financial aid is being offered and allocated in a fair and just manner. The Commission members asked questions and received answers.

(b) *Grading System.* Mrs. Friday also updated the Commission on the status of the School's grading system and the failure to properly implement Power School. Mrs. Friday explained that after the failed efforts to get Power School to work and serious concerns with the customer service provided by Power School, that the School would be staying with Option C for the time being while also considering potential remedies from Power School. The Commission members asked questions and received answers.

(c) *Teacher Retention.* Mrs. Friday then discussed her current expectations for teacher retention, and the School's efforts to fill two expected vacancies. The Commission members asked questions and received answers.

6. School Commission Membership and Leadership. Mr. Van Den Elzen then reviewed the terms of the current Commission members and discussed the upcoming discernment process. Mr. Van Den Elzen also informed the Commission that following the recommendation of the Commission at the prior meeting, Mr. Van Den Elzen asked Mrs. Dean to consider taking the Vice Chair role and that Mrs. Dean was willing to do so. After joyful discussion, upon a motion duly made, seconded and unanimously approved, the Commission resolved as follows:

RESOLVED, that Mrs. Meghan Dean is hereby elected to the position of Vice Chair of the School Commission, to serve in such capacity for the remainder of this school year, after which time she will automatically become Chair of the School commission for the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years and Past Chair for the 2025-2026 school year.


7. Curriculum. The Commission then engaged in a discussion of the School's curriculum, including as it related to Theology of the Body and sexual education. As part of the discussion, one Commission member indicated that a parent who happens to be a physician may be willing to help teach the subject if the School were interested. The Commission members asked questions and received answers.

8. Enrollment; Recruitment; Tours. Mrs. Friday then reviewed the current enrollment numbers for next school year, which are at about 380 students, down slightly from this year. Mrs. Friday also described that there were several admitted families who have not yet formally enrolled and that if all of those families choose to enroll

the total student population could be as high as 410 to 420. The Commission then discussed the admission and recruitment process for new families. As part of the discussion, the Commission discussed certain prospective School families who expressed frustration to School Commission members that the School was not responding promptly, or at all, to their requests for tours. The Commission members discussed the process for tours and recruitment, as well as possible process improvements.

There being no further business, the meeting of the Commission was adjourned at approximately 8:40 p.m. (local time).

Respectfully submitted,


Ryan L. Van Den Elzen, Acting Secretary