

WWCS Board Meeting Highlights from the October 24, 2019 Meeting

Present: Jerry Anhorn, David Byma, Father Nicks, Father Seidel, Claire Valente, Sherry Elly, Jim Barrow, Brenda Shields, John Lesko, Marlene Ramsey, Joyce Sanks (Skype) and Ruthann Haider.

Absent: Andrea Renholds, Kristal Hassler

Guests: Ed Little and approximately 25 parents, grandparents and community members.

President's report: Father Seidel presented his report and noted that from this report forward he will be structuring it to align with the five pillars of our strategic plan. Father discussed the decision to shift our celebrations at the schools to a celebration of Hoy Days, explaining the upcoming schedule for All Saints Day on November 1st.

Mission/Vision: The new school mission and vision signs we displayed during Sausage Fest will be permanently displayed in DeSales; locations are being decided for best visibility. We have also received a generous offer of funds to create more signage similar to the new signage on the football and softball field fences.

Academic Excellence: We are bringing in Mary Cortenas, formerly with WW Public Schools Explorers to assist us in our efforts to differentiate instruction within the schools. The initial focus is Mathematics. We have also met with Dr Barry Balof, Professor, Whitman College and will follow up with him our math curriculum. Homecoming week was fantastic with the spirit of community evident throughout the week.

Enrollment/Community Building: Claire Valente will speak on enrollment and retention. We have transitioned to a new communication tool – Flocknote. It is a Diocesan tool and does not have any extra cost for us to use as our communication medium. Melissa Thiessen will use this tool for the school newsletter as well.

Sustainability and Stewardship: Hank Worden, Mr. Lesko and Jerry Anhorn installed new waterproof speakers on the football field. The funds were raised by Hank, totaling \$15,690.00. These were donated funds for this purpose. We are also replacing tables in the entrance and adding more tables and chairs to the Aquinas Learning Center. The chapel chairs are also being replaced. We have a grant from Nazareth Guild for improved door security and cameras.

Principal's report: Mr. Lesko seconded Father's comments on the spirit during Homecoming week, especially the student body and student body leadership.

WIAA Classification: Mr. Lesko reviewed all the dates the school must adhere to for our determination to "opt up" in our sports classification. The final date for this decision is January 10, 2020. Father Seidel shared with the board that we are likely going to compete at the 1B level. Mr. Lesko discussed the schools we would compete with and explained the travel is a little bit more during the regular season but the travel during playoffs will be much less. Mr. Lesko announced Greg Fazzari was selected as the new DeSales head basketball coach. His assistant will be Eric Wood. The JV coaches are Ed Leahy and Andrew Dankel. Geoff White and John Crowley will coach middle school basketball.

Guest Speaker - Feasibility Report: Mr. Ed Little, Principal, Seton Catholic High School, Vancouver, WA presented his report to the board on the feasibility study he completed over the past several months in anticipation of a Capital Campaign. The purposes of the study was to determine are there any roadblocks the

school board and administration should be aware of prior to kicking off a capital campaign and to determine a ballpark figure of what we could expect to raise in a capital campaign. His report will help the leaders of the WWCS make decisions regarding the way forward on the capital campaign. Mr. Little met with 64 members of the community, with the demographic breakout as follows:

--29% identified as current parents

--12% identified as former parents

--15% identified as grandparents

--25% identified as alumni

--7% identified as board members or former board members

--6% identified as community members

--6% identified as current staff

Ed shared the following thoughts and comments from his interviews:

1. The WWCS has a long rich history of good Catholic Education, Sports and Activities
2. Our Catholic Schools have really nice kids and the culture of our kids is to serve others.
3. 92% of those interviewed shared positive comments about the schools.

Areas for growth and focus by the Board and Administration prior to start of campaign:

1. Communicate of the strategic plan. Many people are not aware of it.
2. Work on enrollment all the time. Must have an enrollment plan, but more importantly must have a retention plan – how do we plan to keep our kids?
3. Culture and climate - Assumption is very positive, and the high school may need some work; he recommended we give our high schoolers every opportunity to serve our elementary students.
4. More resources are needed for the leaders of the schools to effectively lead. He recommended assessing the leaders; feedback he received during interviews is most don't know Father Seidel yet or his skill set. It's very important to strengthen the leadership of the school.
5. We need to strengthen our communication with parents and grandparents.

Ed offered the ballpark figure, on what we could raise in a capital campaign, is somewhere between \$5-7M, or more. As a comparison, he shared that his school, Seton Catholic has a \$20M capital campaign ongoing and the school has raised \$14.7M to date.

Mr. Little wrapped up his presentation with these final thoughts:

1. Embrace our history
2. Work on Enrollment and retention
3. Make sure our strategic plan is understood and inculcated in every decision we make
4. Look outside the WWCS community for support
5. Communicate better with parents, grandparents and alumni

Committee reports:

Budget: Edie Mulvihill, Finance Director briefed the board that the financials are still in the works and October is the defining month. She has all former separate accounts under one account now, meaning seven former stand-alone accounts have been brought under one system of management.

Marketing: Melissa Thiessen shared The Retention/Enrollment Committee has re-started. The committee consists of administration, faculty, staff, parents and alumni parents. The committee's first meeting included completing a deep dive into the past 10-15 years of data on enrollment and retention to look for patterns or systemic concerns. Their next meeting is November 4th, where the committee will set priorities and goals, both short and long term. Contact Melissa if you would like to be part of this committee.

Policy Committee: Marlene Ramsey discussed the policy committee's focus will be evaluating older interim policies that need to be abolished or finalized.

Safety Committee: John Lesko briefed the committee is evaluating a Video Buzzer entry for the schools, He also discussed other safety items the committee is considering including keyless entry for some of the glass doors at both Assumption and DeSales to increase security along with cameras in the main entry to cover dead spots. He is working with a company out of the Tri Cities to get a quote. The focus for safety drills at the school is staff first, and age appropriate training for our students. We also have Title 4 funds for safety improvements.

Building and Grounds: Jerry Anhorn discussed the final two community forums were completed for the master plan. He shared the participation and enthusiasm were very high at these events. Claire shared that there were two more forums for the students remaining to round out our community input to the master plan. Jerry Anhorn shared there will be a timeline determined for the finalization of the master plan and it will be shared with the community.

Nominating Committee: Claire Valente shared she is completing her six years on the board in June and will need a replacement on the nominating committee, as she is the chair of it. We will need to have some nominations to replace several of our parents who will be completing their time on the board or transitioning to non-parent status as their children graduate. If you are interested in serving on the board, please contact Fr Seidel or Jerry Anhorn, their email addresses are on the school webpage under the school board link.

Mission moments: Claire Valente shared that the DeSales Knowledge bowl beat the Walla Walla High School Knowledge Bowl team in their first outing this year; congratulating the team and their coach, Mrs. Ruthven. Jerry shared how his son was truly sad for the injury of a classmate during the powder puff football game during homecoming week activities. Jerry shared the senior students are a great group of students who truly care for each other. Father shared his religion students took part in Project 177, an Adoration Night across the Diocese, and many students who participated said they really enjoyed it.

Next Board Meeting: Thursday, Nov 21st, 6:30pm