

GRACE Board of Trustees
August 15, 2023
Minutes
6:30 p.m., Faller Training Room, GRACE Riverside Office

Present: Sue Amtmann, Nick Anderson, Jessica Beauchamp, Jim Christensen, Leah Cohen, Eric Guzowski, Ed Kippley, Chet Lamers, John Peterson, Marv Wall, Kelly Williams

Others Present: Kim Desotell, Lisa Niemuth, Melissa Wolcanski, Lori Ashmann-Recorder

Not Present: Sue Amtmann, Dan Bins, Mary Burich, Amy Pautzke

Nick Anderson called the meeting to order with an opening prayer.

1. **New Members:** Nick Anderson presented Jim Christensen and Eric Guzowski. Introductions ensued. In part, both have served on a committee of the Board of Trustees. Jim Christensen and Eric Guzowski were formally presented as Trustee candidates to the Board. Motion made by Chet Lamers and seconded by Marv Wall to approve both as Trustees. Motion carried.
2. **Minutes:** Motion made by Chet Lamers and seconded by Marv Wall to approve the June 13, 2023 Board meeting minutes. Motion carried. Motion made by John Peterson and seconded by Ed Kippley to approve the presented Finance Committee meeting minutes. Motion carried.
3. **President's Report:** Kim Desotell presented her report and highlighted the following.
 - a. **Enrollment:** Status of 2023-24 enrollment was provided. Overall, retention is strong with no concerning themes or trends evident. Diversity is leveling out and school specific assessment and analysis will take place.
 - b. **Diocese of Green Bay Office of Catholic Schools Superintendent:** Dr. Becky Walker has taken the position, and GRACE looks forward to working with her. She is acclimating to her role.
 - c. **Catholic Belief Statement:** At a recent August 10th Diocesan meeting, the Catholic Statement of Belief was shared. The document was distributed and will be posted on the Board's portal for reference.
 - d. **State of Wisconsin Literacy Bill:** An overview of the legislation was provided and its impact to GRACE schools.
 - e. **St. Norbert College:** A meeting has taken place with SNC Teacher Education resetting the relationship and understanding moving forward. In addition, the new SNC President, Dr. Laurie Joyner, attended the recent CatholicLink Executive Team meeting, and GRACE looks forward to continued work with SNC under her leadership.
 - f. **Staffing:** Principal position turnover was reviewed, and discussion ensued regarding challenges to this leadership role. Current support and retention measures were discussed along with opportunities to further cultivate development and assist this integral leadership role.
 - g. **President Goals:** The year's goals were presented and reviewed: 1. Increase Student Proficiency Rates (test scores); 2. Continue to Grow Enrollment; 3. Elevate GRACE Brand; 4. Prepare Long Term Development Plan.
 - h. **Social Media Specialist:** GRACE has established a part-time social media specialist position which will support and enhance the growing digital communication area for each school and the system overall.
4. **Development Update:** Director of Development, Lisa Niemuth, was welcomed. Director Niemuth extended gratitude to the Board for its essential leadership support of Development initiatives including the Annual Appeal. Statistics from the 2022-23 Annual Appeal were shared. The DonorPerfect software remains an optimal tool for managing donors and gifts.

Preparations for the 2023-24 Annual Appeal were provided; the Appeal will launch the weekend of September 23/24 during which sharing of testimonials at Masses continues to be powerful and effective in messaging the value and benefits of a GRACE Catholic education. The extent of the number of Masses at which speakers are necessary continues to be a challenge but requests are broadly made to families, leadership and employees to participate. Other Development areas were summarized including the Chesterton Academy campaign, grants, 2024 calendar raffle, Site Advisory Councils (SACs) and key fundraisers. Discussion followed. SAC use of GiveSmart has been integral. SAC bylaws will be addressed by the Governance Committee. Gratitude was extended to Lisa Niemuth for her contributions.

5. Committee Reports:

- a. Development: Kelly Williams reported that the meeting cadence for this Committee is under development. The Committee will be building upon a foundation of current success. Focus areas were reviewed from which goals will be established.
- b. Education: Kim Desotell reported that the Committee is addressing its standard business items including curriculum cycle, Voice of the Customer Survey and principal input. The Board received a review of the new initiative involving Professional Learning Communities.
- c. Facilities: Chet Lamers reported that the FOCUS- Facilities and Operations Condition Update Survey- has been sent out. Responses to date have been well done. A report card by site will be developed. GRACE realizes we do not own the site but wish to continue to support the partnership. An update to the Board of Directors will be needed at their fall meeting.
- d. Finance: Marv Wall reported that year ending financials appear to be solid to budget. Financials has also permitted a \$10,000 rebate per school site for energy costs as we continue our partnership with our parishes. Finance will be working with Facilities to address metrics in order to further assess rent costs. Melissa Wolcanski reported that the auditors were on site last week, and the financial audit went smoothly. Kim Desotell reported that at her standard exit meeting with the auditors, they provided positive feedback validating the diligent and detailed financial work that takes place at GRACE demonstrating our commitment to fiscal responsibility and integrity.
- e. Governance: Nick Anderson reported that the Committee will be focusing on bylaws, Board development, Board recruitment and expertise, and the formal process to evaluate the President.

6. Board of Trustees Chair Report:

- a. Meeting Topic Schedule: The meeting topic schedule to date was presented and edits will take place upon review and feedback.
- b. Expectations: A guideline has been developed to document the expectations of the Board of Trustees. The guideline is intended to level setting expectation and it was reviewed; each Trustee was asked to sign. Discussion followed.
- c. Strategic Plan: The progress of the strategic plan was recapped and acknowledged. Work will continue in earnest throughout the academic year.

7. Other: Invitation was extended to attend the August 22nd In-Service during which Mass, State of GRACE and recognition award will be presented. The event will take place at St. Agnes Parish from 8 to 10 a.m.

8. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Next Meeting: October 10, 2023