

GRACE Board of Trustees
February 13, 2024
Minutes
6:30 p.m., Faller Training Room, GRACE Riverside Office

Present: Sue Amtmann, Nick Anderson, Mary Burich, Jim Christensen, Eric Guzowski, Ed Kippley, Chet Lamers, Marv Wall, Kelly Williams

Others Present: Kim Desotell, Sam Skifton, Maura Vazquez, Edgar Zaragoza, Sarah Sharkey, Lori Ashmann-Recorder

Not Present: Jessica Beauchamp, Dan Bins, John Peterson, Melissa Wolcanski

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

1. Online Exercise: An online social media exercise was conducted: “Write an Online Review”. An introduction to the exercise was provided by Nick Anderson. Technology Services Coordinator, Sam Skifton, assisted Trustees as needed with technical aspects.
2. Wisconsin Parental Choice Forum: Parent, Maura Vazquez was welcomed. Mrs. Vazquez has two children who are current students at St. Bernard Catholic School. One child will be progressing to Chesterton Academy of St. John Paul II Classical School in academic year 2024-25. Mrs. Vazquez provided feedback on her and her family’s experience with the school and system. The Choice program allows GRACE schools to be an option for those families seeking this education and educational environment for their children. Mrs. Vazquez cited the ability of faith expression in addition to safety, quality education, parent engagement, class size, and community. Discussion ensued. Edgar Zaragoza, GRACE Outreach Administrator, provided information on his experience with families as both home/school liaison and facilitator of aspects involving Wisconsin Parental Choice Program for GRACE families. The benefit of the Our Lady of Guadalupe (OLOG) workshops to support success of GRACE’s Hispanic families was further discussed with upcoming workshop topics including parental and family engagement. Discussion continued. Appreciation was extended to Mrs. Vazquez and Mr. Zaragoza for their participation in the forum and valuable insights and information.
3. Holy Family Catholic School: Principal Sarah Sharkey was welcomed. Introduction commenced. Principal Sharkey reported on positive aspects of the school community: strong relationship with parishes, positive connection with Little Saints Child Care including partnership to address before and after care staffing challenge, middle school student/child care reading program, quality/dedicated educators highlighted by teacher- Chrissy Kiefert- being selected as a Golden Apple Teacher of Distinction, strong family engagement, a redesigned annual fundraiser- Fall Fest- which promoted increased family involvement, exciting process involving Professional Learning Communities, and supporting staff development and leadership growth through acknowledging staff individual strengths. Principal Sharkey has navigated the primary challenge in getting to know the community, being newer to GRACE and new to the school. Discussion followed. Gratitude and recognition was extended to Principal Sharkey for her leadership and service. Her contributions to the school are providing for stable and steady progress supporting student success.
4. Minutes: Motion made by Marv Wall and seconded by Mary Burich to approve the December 12, 2023, Board meeting minutes and the presented Committee meeting minutes. Motion carried.
5. President’s Report: Kim Desotell presented her report and highlighted the following.
 - a. Enrollment: Enrollment for 2024-25 continues and is stable.
 - b. Principal Search: The search process is taking place for the Father Allouez Catholic School principal. Virtual screening interviews will be taking place.

- c. Professional Learning Communities (PLC): The professional development initiative was explained which emphasizes the “process of learning”.
 - d. Our Lady of Guadalupe (LOL) Workshops: The support workshops for Hispanic families continue which are funded through The Bradley Foundation grant. Four workshops will take place during spring on topics of faith, reading/literacy, volunteering in school, and healthy families.
 - e. Wisconsin Legislation: An update on the “decoupling bill” was provided and the testimony to the Assembly on Education. Discussion followed.
6. Board of Trustees Chair Report: Nick Anderson reported on the following:
- a. Write an Online Review: The social media exercise conducted today will be pushed out to the Site Advisory Councils (SAC). This is an important marketing and communications tool for recruitment, retention, brand awareness and overall promotion of GRACE mission.
 - b. Academic Calendar 2024-25: Appreciation was extended to the Trustees for prompt action in the electronic vote conducted in January of the 2024-25 academic calendar which was approved. The calendar has been posted and shared with current families.
7. Committee Reports:
- a. Governance: Mary Burich reported that the revised GRACE Constitution approved by the Trustees at the December meeting will be presented to the Board of Directors at its April meeting. The Committee is working through the GRACE Bylaws which will be brought to the Trustees at its April meeting. Site Advisory Council (SAC) Bylaws are being collected for review. The Committee is also evaluating a skill analysis to identify needed skill sets for the Board in addition to succession planning. Discussion followed.
 - b. Finance: Marv Wall reviewed the financials and reported on the reserve plan. The financials presented do not yet reflect the issued employee bonuses. To date there are no budget to actual surprises.
 - c. Facilities: Chet Lamers reported that each school site has been toured with a parish representative. The Committee is addressing the next cycle of GRACE/parish funding. Consideration is to be given to targeting common themes and prioritization of needs. The Committee is re-energized by the site visits.
 - d. Education: Sue Amtmann reported on the Catholic Identity Tool, Mass Booklet, Voice of the Customer (VOC) Survey and curriculum initiatives including PLC and math audit.
 - e. Development: Kelly Williams reported the development process steps that the Committee is working through for which transparency is integral. The Committee is addressing what excellence looks like at each step for which metrics per step will be established. Guiding principles were shared. The Committee is forecasting that a recommendation will be brought to the April meeting.
8. Other:
- a. Annual Appeal 2024: Nick Anderson announced that the 2024-25 Annual Appeal Weekend will be September 28-29, 2024. Discussion followed regarding the powerful impact of student/family testimonials. The impact of student-led Masses was further discussed with consideration of having these held at non-school site parishes.
 - b. Chesterton Academy: Question was raised concerning the specific enrollment-to date statistics for the classical high school which were provided and discussed.
9. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Next Meeting: April 9, 2024