

GEHLEN CATHOLIC SCHOOL BOARD MINUTES

Thursday, June 12, 2025

The Gehlen Catholic Board of Education met on Thursday, June 12, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in the Kolker Library/Media Center. The following members were present: Dr. Amanda Anderson, Mrs. Andrea Loutsch, Mr. Bryan Paulson, Fr. Doug Klein, Mrs. Kara Hitchler, Mrs. Peggy Sitzmann, Mr. Todd Ellensohn, Mrs. Nikki Conger, Mr. Jose Munoz, Mrs. Kelsey Langel, Mr. Joe Pohlen, and Mrs. Kathryn Langel. Also, in attendance were Mr. Matt Schilling, Mrs. Amy Jungers, and Deacon Dan Goebel.

Mr. Ellensohn called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

Mrs. Kathryn Langel led the opening prayer at 6:02 PM

Public Forum -None

Mrs. Sitzmann motioned to approve the May School Board meeting minutes. Mrs. Kelsey Langel seconded the motion. All board members approved, and the motion carried.

STANDING REPORTS

- **President** – Dr. Anderson stated that the highlight of her month was meeting with most teachers 1-on-1.
- **Principals-**
 - Mrs Loutsch is reviewing the ACRE Assessments and said that the most important thing to look at is that is deficiency is down. Growth is in a positive direction. Some of the new kids coming in had lower proficiency. The 5th, 8th, and 11th grades took a Catholic assessment. Non-Catholics scored better than our Catholic students. Mrs. Loutsch mentioned that we don't want to teach to the test and that we don't necessarily want to rely on the textbooks. Teachers have suggested a new curriculum, but they have already been bombarded with new curriculum. She also stated that next year, TK will be required to take FastBridge testing because they are considered kindergarteners for ESA purposes. Deacon Dan said that each grade received a 40-page document and manual on how to read the test.
 - Mrs. Loutsch said that she has only had 1 candidate for the second-grade job opening. She was at her admin. meeting in Storm Lake, and all schools are looking for teachers at this time. Many have applied for ELL, but all are from the Philippines.
 - Mr. Paulson stated that private schools are now allowed to participate in activities at public schools if they aren't offered in the next two years at our school. Wrestling has a large interest, followed by possibly by soccer. Every sport is eligible except football.
 - FastBridge Results are reviewed by Mr. Paulson: 8th graders dropped down to 60%. Teachers thought that students may have checked out by the time they took the test. Math was good, but comprehension was not this year. This year's 7th graders who were high-risk scores weren't a surprise, but they did improve on the tests. SIAC goals were 70%. We fell a little short on it.
 - Mr Paulson discussed employment openings. There are no teaching jobs open. Speech and Golf coach openings do have people interested in them.

- **Finance** - Mrs. Conger mentioned that CFO Next coming in to help wrap up the fiscal year. There will be a Diocese audit again this year. There will probably be an audit for the next two years because we haven't been able to rectify the issues found in last year's audit. We need to go through and start a depreciation on every single item in the school, and this is a federal requirement. The Diocese has focused on asset depreciation, and they have not offered assistance.
 - Dr. Anderson interviewed a business manager candidate.
 - Mr. Ellensohn is recommending possible financial compensation for Lindsey Schaecher for the additional work she is putting in in the interim.
- **Development and Enrollment Management** - Mrs. Jungers is asking for help with the ice cream days parade.
 - She mentioned that they are on a good timeline with fundraising for the capital campaign. The cabinet had an orientation that went well. The appeal will be in the mail within the next month. This includes the amount we are requesting.
 - Mrs. Kathryn Langel asked about how to deal with the dollar amount that is being requested from donors because it has not been well-received at RSM. Mrs. Jungers ensures that Steier has taken in all data from us based on past donation information, giving capacity, and Steier has put the information into a wealth accelerator. They also take dollar amounts that were stated on surveys and in-person interviews. People will be trained on how to answer for the dollar amount that is being asked for. We are reaching for a high dollar amount, so we are asking for high dollar amounts. Mrs. Kelsey Langel stated that the dollar amount that she was asked for was higher than what she stated. Mrs. Jungers said yes, the number will be higher than what they stated in the interview. The campaign is currently in the silent phase. In the fall, it will go to a giant public phase. A trailer video was shown. This will also be shown on June 24th at the launch event at the KC Hall.
- **Technology** – Mr. Schilling reported that video boards will go up next week.
- **Campus Ministry** - Deacon Dan didn't have anything to add to the report aside from debriefing on ACRE reports with religion teachers.
- **JClub** - no updates
- **Fine Arts Boosters** – Mrs. Jungers stated that the turkey dinner is October 26, tentatively. Dining in might be possible this year, depending on what the new chairpeople would like to do.
- **Standing Committees** -
 - Buildings and Grounds discussed gym progress.
 - Catholic Identity - They held their first meeting in a while, but it went well.
 - Finance - We are sitting well at this point.
 - Academic still needs to meet.
 - Governance hasn't met recently.

OLD BUSINESS

- Hiring Policy-third read

- **Add to Policy: paragraph 2:**
Per diocesan procedure, a job offer is contingent upon applicants submitting an application with references, participating in a personal interview, and completing a background check (and credit check if applicable).

Mrs. Kelsey Langel motioned to approve the Hiring Policy after adding the diocesan procedure to policy paragraph 2. Mrs. Conger made a second motion. All board members approved, and the motion carried.

- Expense Approval Policy- second read
 - Add a level for the business manager to approve purchases
- Capping Classes
 - Dr. Anderson cited numbers included in the packet. Teachers generally thought that the perfect class number was 15-20. It's hard to define when student aides are needed. Mrs. Kathryn Langel suggested having an aide who follows the class instead of individuals.
 - Mrs. Kelsey Langel asked when looking at expansion, capping each grade size at 60, but at what number triggers a 3rd section?
 - Mrs. Conger mentioned that if student numbers go up, your costs go up, but so does your income. She said that we want to do a cap based on the current space. Mr. Ellensohn said that things get tricky based on expansion moving forward.
 - Dr. Anderson stated that Loi has ideas on temporary building expansion in the PK playground.
 - Fr. Doug tells us that Heelan has capped out and closed some classes. Heelan has 6 weeks to apply for school.
 - Mrs. Kelsey Langel said that Kuemper has a 2-week window for current families. Mrs. Jungers said this would help encourage families to enroll quickly.
 - Capping classes was tabled until August.

New Business

- Officer positions- President and Vice President

Mrs. Sitzmann nominated Mr. Todd Ellensohn for School Board President for another term. Mr. Ellensohn accepts. All board members approved, and the nomination carried. Mrs. Kelsey Langel nominated Mrs. Peggy Sitzmann for School Board Vice President for another term. Mrs. Sitzmann accepts. All board members approved, and the nomination carried.

- Certificate of Attendance Policy- first read
 - Dr. Anderson said that she reached out to other schools about this. Garrigan will need this for a 7th grader.. Heelan is doing a diploma with an asterisk of an accommodated curriculum diploma.

- Mr. Paulson stated that a student we have takes classes but has major modifications. He cited some examples of teachers who have come to him about next year and how they would like to have this student in their class since they can make modifications for him.
- Mrs. Sitzmann said we need to make sure that there is an assessment/documentation completed by a doctor to state that there is a disability diagnosis.
- ScoreVision quote
 - Mr. Schilling went through the quote, line by line. J-Club and the school would split the initial cost. The following year will be discussed. A question from Mrs. Kelsey Langel about potential future funds to be raised.

Fr. Doug motioned to approve the payment of the ScoreVision quote. Mrs. Sitzmann made a second motion. All board members approved, and the motion carried.

- Naming Rights in Legacy Campaign

Mrs. Jungers reviewed the naming rights for individual rooms. Costs for each project are: \$160k for Art, \$451k for 1st grade, and \$563k for PK, TK, and K each. Donor naming rights would have to be a project that's over \$500k, and the donor would have to give 50% of the funds. The multipurpose room comes in at \$2.6m. General conversation is a yes.

Mrs. Conger motioned to follow policy and allow the capital campaign to pursue qualified naming rights. Mrs. Kathryn Langel made a second motion. All board members approved, and the motion carried.

- Hentges Family Fund

Mrs. Jungers noted that the Diocese said that there needs to be approval for the start of the restricted fund for this, then submit a resolution. This lets the family know we are ready to start the process.

Fr. Doug motioned to approve the start of the restricted fund for the Hentges Family Fund. Mrs. Sitzmann made a second motion. All board members approved, and the motion carried.

- 2025-2026 Fundraising Plan

Mrs. Jungers went through the funding requests that were provided to the board.

 - Mrs. Sitzmann discussed limiting Mission Honduras to two jean days, which is in alignment with every other group.
 - CLT is requesting two jean days and one Saint dress-up day for 7-12.
 - There were approximately 18 paid Jean Days recorded last year.
 - A jean day event is expected to generate around \$500 in revenue.
 - The board discussed whether or not to allow grade levels to request jean days for special trips. 5th-6th grade goes to the State Capitol and is requesting a jean day.

Currently, some student groups conduct fundraisers such as pastry sales to support school trip expenses. There have been private donors in the past. Mrs. Jungers will ask the 5th-6th grade to define expenses better.

- A special dress calendar will be created for families by Mrs. Jungers.

Mrs. Conger motioned to approve the 2025-2026 Fundraising Plan. Mr. Munoz made a second motion. All board members approved, and the motion carried.

- Resolution Items- Tuck Pointing and Junior High Science Lab
 - Dr. Anderson is reviewing the Tuck Pointing estimate for the school.
 - The junior high science room renovation includes new cabinets, countertops, and a sink. The board has been provided with estimates.

Fr. Doug motioned to approve the Tuck Pointing and Junior High Science Lab renovation. Mrs. Kelsey Langel made a second motion. All board members approved, and the motion carried.

- Administrators and staff - board attendance.
 - Dr. Anderson mentioned that other schools only require these positions to attend the board meetings twice a year unless it is necessary.
 - Mr. Ellensohn stated that everyone can attend in August, but moving forward, we can just limit it to a few in-person reports a year.

No Executive Session was held.

Closing Prayer was led by Fr. Klein.

Mrs. Peggy Sitzmann made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:48 PM. Mr. Pohlen made a second motion. All Board members approved, and the motion carried.

Next Board Meeting (optional): July 10th at 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.- Four Brothers

Allie Freking
Recording Secretary