

Lumen Christi High School

School Board Meeting Minutes – December 17, 2019

Members Presents:

Fr. Tom
Greg Gallagher
Lea Bouton
Principal Brian Ross
Kathy Gustafson
Danna Hoellering
Jim Seeburger
Bonnie Bezousek
Fr. Arthur Roraff
Kara Moriarty
Michelle Hajdukovich

Meeting Commenced:

Greg called the meeting to order at 6:04pm.

Opening Prayer:

Fr. Tom opened the meeting with a prayer.

Approval of Minutes and Agenda:

- Agenda approved: motioned by Jim, second by Shane, approved by unanimous vote.
- Minutes approved: motioned by Lea, second by Kara, approved by unanimous vote.

Mission Moment:

- Teachers Antje Carlson and Megan Spillers spoke about their love for Lumen Christi and how they enjoy coming to work each morning. Being in a faith-based environment is wonderful.

Words from our “sister school” :

- Auction was a great success. No final “number” yet, but everyone was happy that 100% of the proceeds went directly to the school, as there were no “commission” items.

Archdiocese:

- No comments offered.

Board Chair Comments:

- Passed out thank you cards for Board members to write to those faculty and staff who had already supported the Lumen-ary Drive.
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Principal's Report:

- Five year E-Campus Advantage Program. UAF is 1 of 14 schools with this program. Our students could graduate with 12-18 UAF credits to transfer to the UA system and beyond. This will help address parent desires for "AP classes," as colleges outside may put more stock in a student actually taking a college course, rather than an AP course in high school.
- Signed a sports cooperative agreement with Dimond H.S for baseball.
- Letter of agreement with ASD is in the final stage for Lumen students to be able to play sports at other Anchorage public high schools that are not offered at Lumen, without the student needing to take five additional online classes.

Recruitment and Retention/Development:

- Lea provided an in-depth review of the data collected by Nikelle in her conversations with families who have left Lumen Christi. She reviewed parent comments within the greater context of previous feedback shared via exit interviews (Survey Monkey) and student comments on climate surveys. Three themes noted: math curriculum, homework, and Catholic identity. Full report attached.
- Principal to follow up with faculty and staff as to how to better address students concerns and parental complaints. Some students commented they felt "shot down" when approaching the teacher with a complaint.
- Lea suggested a review of how the school communicates with families. Can we do better and talk with both students and parents in a more Christ-like environment? Continue to stress our core values of faith, family, and excellence.

Finance Report and Accounting Update –Danna Hoellering: –

- Danna discussed the Statement of Activities. Expenses in line with budget.
- Lower student count than anticipated has put additional pressure on Saint Benedict Parish.
- Board has close to 100% participation in the Lumenary drive.

Old Business:

Pastor's Comments:

- Thank you to the board.
- Gym renovations coming along. 100% of the repairs are covered by FEMA.

Closing Prayer:

Meeting Concluded:

- Greg adjourned the meeting at 7:50pm

The next school board meeting will be on January 28, 2020 at 5:30pm, prior to State of the School.

Methodology Overview

Conversation began at the Fall School Board retreat regarding a decline/drop in enrollment. Though Exit Survey's had been completed by many families, discussion ensued regarding whether families had fully disclosed their reasons for leaving as major trends could not be deciphered. Nikelle volunteered to individually contact families and follow up with personal discussions.

Nikelle successfully contacted 8 of the 11 departing families, and all conversations were an hour or more in length. Initial data analysis presented three themes: math curriculum, homework, and Catholic Identity. Nikelle's data is included in the following report in its entirety.

Lea then commenced a larger data review in light of those themes. All exit survey data, Parent and Student Surveys from Spring 2017 and Spring 2018, the LCHS Climate and Culture Student and Parent Surveys from 2018-2019, and the Catholic Identity Defining Characteristics Student and Parent Surveys Spring 2019 were reviewed. Two meetings were held for data review and conversation – 12/6 with Nikelle and Father Tom, and 12/11 with Brian, Greg, and Kara.

Data Analysis

The exit surveys and follow up conversations are well aligned. Concerns voiced in person echo comments made through the anonymous Survey Monkey. There does not appear to be any hidden information. An additional theme presents itself through the follow up conversations, and is labeled "Student/Parent/Staff Interactions."

The data that is attached to this report is largely negative as it was a challenge to present all comments (positive and negative) in a succinct manner. Prior to data review the following should be noted: a) this data was collected and is presented verbatim from families who have chosen to leave Lumen Christi, approximately 11-13 in total. Other data reviewed is more concise due to the collection device – AdvancED surveys, completed by 53-55 students and 36-48 parents. In many instances, there is ample support for the specific items that some families complained about. To some degree, this is expected as communities are rarely in full agreement. Specific curriculum/content questions (ie: math) are not asked in the survey.

AdvancED Survey Data (highest scores):

- Our school has high expectations for students in all classes.
- My school gives me multiple assignments to check my understanding of what was taught.
- My school provides me with challenging curriculum and learning experiences.
- 68% Agree/Strongly Agree: "All of my child's teachers work as a team to help my child learn"
(22% neutral)
- 78% Agree/Strongly Agree "All of my child's teachers use a variety of teaching strategies and learning activities"
- Top 4 words to describe interactions between parents and staff: Respectful, Supportive, Comfortable, Helpful
- Top 4 words to describe how students feel when trying to complete assignments while at school: Usually enough time, Calm, Relaxed, Patient
- Top 4 words to describe how students interact with adults at the school: Respectful, Helpful, Supportive, Trusting
- Top 4 words or phrases to describe what students most often DO in class: Listen to teachers, Think, Work with others, Complete worksheets
- ALL Catholic identity questions per AdvancED are well above the network average, as the lowest scoring items are also above the network average.

Exit Survey and Follow on Conversations Data

Homework

- Shocked in the amount of homework – the amount of homework was busy work and not quality. It seems like the school is big on the quantity of homework vs. the quality of the work of the students. This particular student's homework was downloading a bunch of pictures from the internet and pasting on a board. There seemed to be a lot of projects like this that were concerning with what the students were getting out of it. Curriculum not up to par.
- All research done on internet without the direction of the teachers discussing the primary sources. The lack of direction in these areas made homework a lot on the parents.
- Many hours of homework. Not healthy for a good work/life balance. "If this was my job, I would be looking for another one."
- When parents go to the teachers they get immediately shut down and say it is the lack of attention from the student or that homework is homework.

Curriculum

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- Concerned about teachers getting course materials from just internet – no good lesson plans.
- Language arts needs to have better source material and the books they are reading.
- Big trend from multiple sources that math is a struggle. This particular teacher does not teach from own materials. Only goes out of the book and does not explain or make sure the entire class is moving forward at the same speed. Another trend is the response they received went approached the teacher. Kids' fault, not teacher. No game plan when we left the meeting just blame on child.
- Exit Survey: "Math curriculum is lacking in soooo many ways. Besides having too much info, there seems to be a deficit in those who present the material. Too much." Also "Math department is terrible."
- Exit Survey: 40% (6 of 13) indicated main reason for leaving was Academic Progress/Curriculum Concerns
- Comments include:
 - lack of opportunities, electives, activities, AP, honors classes (echoed and expanded upon in other comments)
 - wanted to try out a bigger school/student is following big brother to the "large school" and its sports offerings
 - no career specific choices/wanted to attend King Tech for the Culinary Program
 - parent felt child needed more exposure to different cultures and children. Student also had more classes to pick from.
- Exit survey: The jump from sixth grade to seventh Curriculum and teaching children how to study was a weakness
- Exit survey: Teachers need more oversight. Problems with teaching strategies and classroom behavior not being addressed. Teachers making cynical or overly sarcastic comments to students. Have noticed discipline drop dramatically over the last couple of years.

Catholic Identity

- Religiously becoming too strict. Heard this from three sources (one said it was the comments the kid would come home and say about the pressure to be Catholic). When asked for details, the other two sources said it was not so much in the curriculum as the overall requirements of the students to look a certain way. The school previously let the students have facial hair, jewelry, shoes and socks that they would choose and not be uniform. It is becoming an army on those types of things now. If I wanted this for my kid, I would go to Holy Rosary. I was drawn to LCHS because it was the more diverse school for private schools.
- Exit survey: Rigid rule interpretation and lack of flexibility when dealing with mitigating factors.
- Exit survey: When asked to rate the following categories 12/12 rated Catholic Faith Life Opportunities as "good, very good, or excellent"
- Exit survey: strengths of Lumen Christi include: Catholic environment, family atmosphere; Religious foundation – outstanding community of students and Staff who go the extra mile for Catholic education; appropriate class size to encourage learning. The ability to provide education while also encouraging the growth of a student's morality and spirituality. The supportive community setting that student and families become a part of; Catholic participation and development

Student/Parent/Staff Interactions

- Treating the students like they are children that don't have a say. When approaching the teacher, they get shot down and told that the teachers make the decisions even when the issue is reasonable to be approached by the student. Doesn't teach the student to try and deal with an issue on their own, just tells them they need their parents for everything. Argument: possibly not a good reaction from the student, then the kid needs to know why they are getting "shot down" and to improve attitude or approach before requesting a change.
- The drama department pulling out at last minute. The school leaving the decision up to the children without any parent say before the decision was final. Not appropriate.
- Cell phones are a total distraction – not professional. (We dealt with that issue). Exit survey: Too much cell phone use in the classroom.
- Not encouraging the students to act on ideas but rather just shoving them off that they cannot do them.
- One particular teacher telling the students that sports don't matter if you are not going to be a professional in them.
- Exit survey: Block scheduling is a weakness, for some teachers there was inconsistencies with students and parents. I would encourage faculty to increase awareness of the need for implementation of accommodations for their student's individual learning needs in an effort to provide the same service for those students who may benefit from either higher level of study or additional support while receiving services through a required general credit course.

Other reasons:

- Construction on Jewel Lake and logistic issues getting kid to Dimond for activities.
- Friend circle is at public school
- Child's choice given their maturity and decision by the parents.
- No fine arts at the school with drama department leaving. Public schools have much more to offer.
- Cost was too much for what they felt they were getting out of the school. Upset with the steep increases in such a short amount of time.

Personal inquiries:

- Not offering a class to satisfy student's schedule because teachers had a period off. Therefore, student needing to pay (extra- on top of tuition) because the school did not offer a class to satisfy the student's required course.
- Student wrote to teacher after receiving an A on the cumulative final and receiving a %89.5 percent in the course (B). Had the student received an A that student would have received a GPA for the semester of 4.0. The student wrote to the teacher and the teacher declined to do anything. (see email)