

LUMEN CHRISTI CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL
School Board of Directors Meeting
March 21st, 2023

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Michelle Hajdukovich at 6:01 via Zoom. Members immediately went to break out rooms (Finance, Marketing/Retention, Lumen Forward.)

The meeting was reconvened at 6:20p.

Present: Michelle Hajdukovich, Fr. Tom Lilly, Aaron Sperbeck, Marcy Adkins, Audrie Williams, Marcus Holmquist, Deacon Dave Van Tuyl, Anne Gore, Brian Ross, Shane Locke, Daniel George, Jim Seeberger

Absent: Liz Loeffler, Kevin Jones, Kathy Gustafson, Daniel George

The meeting opened in prayer led by Father Tom.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Michelle Hajdukovich made a motion to approve the agenda with one change, namely to move Aaron Sperbeck and the “Lumen Forward” subcommittee report up. The agenda as amended was seconded by Deacon Dave and approved.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Michelle Hajdukovich made a motion to approve the minutes from February 21st as written, it was seconded by Aaron Sperbeck and approved.

MISSION MOMENT

This month’s “Mission Moment” was provided by Emily Ross and Natalie Grubba, both seniors and co-captains of the Girls Basketball Team. They joined the meeting to celebrate the team’s Championship win at the State 1A Tournament! Both girls noted that over the course of the season the team really gelled which was fantastic to be a part of. They loved the crowds and the support from Lumen and St. Benedict families as well as the Boys Team. Winning the championship was so fulfilling and both loved that the community was brought together through sports. Both girls gave a shout out to Board Chair Michelle Hajdukovich for igniting a passion for the game back in Junior High! Next year will find Emily playing Division III basketball and studying civil engineering at Milwaukee School of Engineering. Natalie hasn’t yet decided on a school but will be attending college out of state.

Deacon Dave Van Tuyl noted that what the team had accomplished was a very big deal and something to truly celebrate for the rest of their lives. He reminded them to cherish the joy that they brought to others. Marcus Holmquist wanted to give special recognition to the effort of supporting their opposing teams throughout the tournament - a very classy way to end the season. All Board members agreed the girls were excellent examples of leaders within the school and greater community.

ARCHDIOCESAN PERSPECTIVE

Liz Loeffler was unable to attend, but Michelle noted she has received an email from her, congratulating the Girls on their Championship win and for being such excellent examples of young women of faith!

WORDS FROM OUR SISTER SCHOOL

Kathy Gustafson was unable to attend but an email from her was also shared. Congratulations to the Girls, it was a proud moment for the Lumen community. SEAS is looking to hire 1st and 3rd grade teachers and is considering moving their spring break to coincide with Holy Week in 2023-24. Might Lumen consider the same? (If so, spring break would be two weeks later than ASD's Spring Break.)

LUMEN FORWARD SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Aaron Sperbeck noted that the Spring Speakers Series (College & Voc-Tech planning) was coming up a week from today, on Tuesday, March 28th. Aaron will be recovering from surgery and so will miss the event but will be coordinating night of logistics with Michelle and Anne. Michelle will be MC'ing in Aarons stead. Aaron has no doubt it's going to be another fantastic event!

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

As written and attached.

Brian notes that he's obviously very proud both as a parent and Principal of the Girls Championship win. He wanted to give additional recognition to the team for receiving the Tournament Academic Award in having the highest cumulative team GPA - for certain Lumen Christi epitomizes the term 'student athlete.'" With the exemplary leadership and discipline shown by Natalie and Emily throughout the season, there will clearly be great things for them in the future. Brian closed by joking he'd be remiss in not noting what great school advertising the Championship win was!

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Marcy Adkins states she's been gone most of the month so offered thanks to Brian and Bill Arnold for getting the budget for next year started. There will be a surplus in the budget this year and Marcy recommends not spending it all - let's save some for the things that make our school great!

Marcy is working with Matt Meggs at the Archdiocese to get this smoothed out as far as timing for payroll and personnel operations. She looks forward to meeting with the Board in person next month.

COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORTS

Marketing/Development/Retention

Shane noted he didn't have much to report on, other than wondering how this group can help and support the upcoming Speaker Series event on March 28th (he was encouraged to reach out to Anne/Michelle.)

He wondered if there were any planned spring events that the Board can help with for recruitment. (Per Anne, nothing planned at this point.)

Finance

Bill Arnold noted that he and Brian had started budget discussions and they had a first rough draft. Things to be considered include tuition increase next year? With an increase in student numbers, what do we need to do with classroom space? The question of how to best utilize the surplus for this year will also need to be addressed - concession stand update; seed an endowment; new science tables? Bill notes it's all good news and good problems to have and looks forward to more discussions in April.

Lumen Forward -

As above.

DEVELOPMENT/ADVANCEMENT

Anne starts by noting that fundraising numbers continue to look great. There are small random donations that continue to come in for the LUMENary Drive and final invoices and sponsorships are in the process of clearing for the Gala. Enrollment numbers continue to climb - overall the school is in great shape with regard to fundraising and students!

BOARD CHAIR COMMENTS

Michelle notes that Spring Break was busy with basketball and other activities for all! The Family Partnership Allotment letter from Brian (draft attached) hasn't gone out yet, but will, as well as results from the recently conducted parent survey. Due to end of the year activity (Fr. Tom, Brian and Anne will all be gone) the May meeting will be rescheduled from May 16th to May 9th.

PASTOR'S COMMENTS

Father Tom noted he was literally bursting with joy and excitement. He's grateful for the dedication from each of the school board members; he's joyful following basketball season; there are new members completing the RCIA process (including one Lumen parent) - the Lord is blessing the school and all of us beyond measure. He is so thrilled to be a part of the school and this mission.

He notes that several members of the Board will be completing their terms and so he's actively recruiting new members. Nancy Wingate and Chris Tzvetcoff have expressed interest. Another parent recruit would be great! Non-parents and industry folks would also be welcome and also bring a good 'outsider' perspective. Please forward any suggestions to him.

CLOSING PRAYER // ADJOURNMENT // NEXT MEETING

The meeting concluded in prayer to St. Michael the Archangel and adjourned at 7:04p. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 18th in person.

*St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle;
Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the devil.
May God rebuke him, we humbly pray;
And do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly Host,
By the power of God,
Thrust into hell Satan and all the other evil spirits
Who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls.
Amen.*

Principal's Report March 2023

Academics

- Junior High PSAT is on Wed, April 19th.
- Class of 2023 Baccalaureate Mass is on Wed, May 10 and Graduation is Thurs, May 11.
- Dr. Antje Carlson, Mr. Mike Bauzon, and Mrs. Sierra Zorea will step away from teaching at the end of this school year to pursue retirement, nursing, and law, respectively. We will miss them dearly. We have posted the job vacancies and have already received 4-5 applications. We will hold an all school "Farewell" party on Friday, May 5th from 1-3pm. Details to follow.
- Mr. Maka Black Elk came to Lumen on Wed, Mar 1 to talk to our students about the canonization of his grandfather Nicholas Black Elk. Many thanks to Dr. Kevin Jones for setting up this opportunity.
- Several members of the crew from the USS ALASKA (SSBN-732) will be here to talk with our students from 9-10am on Thursday, March 23rd.
- Dr. Chris Baglow will be here on Tuesday, April 11 from 1-2pm to talk to our students about the connections between faith and science. Again, many thanks to Kevin for setting this up as well!

Safety/IT

- We conducted an unannounced fire drill on January 25th and an announced walk through/talk through of school lock down procedures.

Campus Life

- For Lent, our students have been challenged to participate in the "40 Cans for Lent" canned food drive and the Catholic Relief Services "Rice Bowl" fundraiser. -Each week, the students have been walking the Stations of the Cross throughout the school building on Monday afternoons.
- The students were on Spring Break from March 10-19.
- School Board Spring Speaker Series event scheduled for Tuesday, March 28 at 7pm.

Recruitment/Retention/Marketing/Advancement:

- Current Enrollment Update: 97 -2023-24 Projected Enrollment: 121 7th: 20 7th: 20 (plus 2 possible) 8th: 19 8th: 25 (plus 2 possible) 9th: 25 (dropped one student) 9th: 22 10th: 18 10th: 27 (plus 1 possible) 11th: 10 11th: 17 (plus 4 possibles) 12th: 5 12th: 10 (plus 2 possible)

Athletics

- HS girls basketball team won the Peninsula Conference championship for a third year in a row. Girls competed at the 1A State Basketball Championships from March 15-18 and defeated Akiachak (opening round), Shismaref (quarterfinal), Buckland (semifinal) and Shaktoolik (final game) to win the championship for the first time in our school's history! Seniors Emily Ross and Natalie Grubba and Sophomore Amara Warren were named to the All State Tournament team. And the entire team took home the Academic Award for the highest GPA among all teams!
- HS boys basketball team earned 2nd place in the Peninsula Conference and earned a spot at State but unfortunately lost two games and were knocked out.
- JH volleyball team wrapped up its season at the end of last month and junior high Futsal indoor soccer practices start up in earnest this week. HS track and field will also begin practice on Tuesday, March 21.

DRAFT

March 6, 2023

To: Lumen Christi Catholic High School Families

From: Principal Brian Ross and Father Tom Lilly

Re: INTERIM POLICY ON THE USE OF PUBLIC CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL ALLOTMENT FUNDS AT LUMEN CHRISTI

I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In December 2022, the Lumen School Board formed a subcommittee to study the public correspondence allotment funds process from a variety of angles to fully understand the nature of the program. With an increased focus on this issue in recent months, Lumen Christi sought to develop a clear answer as to whether or not Lumen would actively participate in the allotment programs. Historically Lumen has not actively participated in this program while other private schools currently do.

Over the course of two months, the subcommittee, comprised of eight Board members and interested Lumen parents with a diverse background of experiences and viewpoints, closely examined these issues. The subcommittee met in small groups with representatives from Family Partnership, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School, Monroe Catholic (Fairbanks), and the Archdiocese of Anchorage Juneau. The subcommittee also reviewed pertinent materials related to the issue, including the July 2022 *Alaska Department of Law's Opinion on the Use of Correspondence School Allotments*¹ and applicable opinion editorials like Clint Champion's "*Student Allotments to Private Schools Remain as 'Clear As Mud.'*"² Concurrent with the formation of the board Subcommittee, in late January 2023, the Alaska chapter of the National Education Association (NEA) brought suit against the State of Alaska over the constitutionality of using the State's allotment monies for private school classes. This active lawsuit is expected to wind its way through the judicial system and most likely will be appealed to, considered by, and decided by the Alaska Supreme Court no earlier than 12-24 months.³

Additionally, in recent weeks, the Archdiocese of Anchorage-Juneau has published interim guidance to Catholic schools discouraging the use of public correspondence school allotment funds for tuition purposes. However, this Archdiocesan guidance does clarify that allotment funds can be used for other extracurricular activities at diocesan schools, pending the lawsuit by the NEA.

After these fact-finding sessions and review of materials and guidance, further discussion ensued with the full School Board, Father Tom, and school administration during the February 2023 Board meeting. We appreciate the work of the Board subcommittee and the advice and counsel of the full School Board in examining this issue.

II. OUR INTERIM POLICY FOR 2023

Given the current "muddy waters" surrounding the constitutionally questionable use of allotment funds for private school tuition and the direct recent guidance from the Archdiocese discouraging this practice, Lumen Christi will not participate in the use of allotment funds to reimburse the tuition cost of attending Lumen and taking any (or all of our) classes to fulfill the public correspondence school Individual Learning Plan (ILP). In practice, this means that Lumen Christi will not seek to be a vendor for any public correspondence program (e.g. Family Partnership, MatSu Central, etc.) nor will we provide class and course curriculum materials (textbooks, lesson plans, assignments, etc.) to these programs to assist parents whose students are dual-enrolled (full-time at Lumen Christi and full-time/part-time through a public correspondence program).

However, Lumen Christi will assist parents whose students are dual-enrolled (full-time at Lumen Christi and full-time/part-time through a public correspondence program) and who seek to be reimbursed from their allotment funds for **certain and distinct** services and materials provided at Lumen. These services and materials include:

¹ See https://law.alaska.gov/pdf/opinions/opinions_2022/22-002_2021200228.pdf

² See <https://aasb.org/student-allotments-to-private-schools-remain-as-clear-as-mud/>

³ See <https://alaskabeacon.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/2023.01.24-Complaint.pdf> and <https://alaskapublic.org/2023/01/25/lawsuit-says-alaska-statute-allowing-public-funding-to-go-to-private-schools-is-unconstitutional/>

- Lumen sports or extracurricular activity fees (assuming the student is enrolled in an appropriate Physical Education class or extracurricular activity in his/her public correspondence program ILP)
- University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) eCampus Advantage Program college-level courses (again, assuming the student is enrolled in this UAF course as part of his/her ILP)
- North Dakota Center for Distance Education (NDCDE) or SAT prep classes (again, assuming the student is enrolled in this NDCDE or SAT prep class as part of his/her ILP)

Lumen Christi further encourages dual-enrolled families to consider using other more appropriate ways to use their public correspondence school allotment funds for non-tuition services and materials external to Lumen Christi. These other services may include (but not limited to):

- Computers, calculators, and other technology to support your student's ILP
- Non-Lumen extracurriculars (swimming, music, or art lessons, competition hockey and/or soccer programs, etc.)
- Home internet fees
- Private tutoring or assistance
- Student attendance on educational trips e.g. CLOSE UP

III. THE PATH FORWARD

Since 1996, Lumen Christi has taken pride in our mission of providing a rigorous Catholic education in a Christ-like environment for grades 7-12 and fulfilling our Core Values of Faith, Family, and Excellence. Our goal is infuse the Catholic faith into all of our classes, including math, science, social studies and language arts. As the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools directs, *"All curriculum and instruction in a Catholic school should foster: the desire to seek wisdom and truth, the preference for social justice, the discipline to become self-learners, the capacity to recognize ethical and moral grounding for behavior, and the responsibility to transform and enrich the world with Gospel values. The Catholic school should avoid the error that its distinctiveness rests solely on its religious education program"*⁴ Lumen Christi commits to staying true to our mission and Core Values throughout this entire process.

The school further commits to support and assist any families who may be impacted financially by this interim policy. We understand that some families may see the possibility of using public correspondence school allotment funds as critically necessary for providing a Catholic education for their children. For over 25 years, however, thanks to generous donors and supporters from around the Great State of Alaska and the United States, Lumen Christi has a sound and proven process in which families can seek additional tuition financial assistance and scholarship funds based on demonstrated need. Families impacted by this interim policy, and who feel that additional financial aid is necessary to support your child's Catholic education, are encouraged to contact the Principal directly (bross@lumenchristiak.com) or go to: <https://lumenchristiak.org/tuition-discounts/>.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we navigate these muddy waters. We will continue to provide updates as more information becomes available and intend to reexamine and renew this policy at any time pending changes in Archdiocese guidance, further clarification of the constitutional question, and/or results of the ongoing NEA lawsuit.

⁴ See

https://ncea.org/NSBECS/The_Standards/Defining_Characteristics/NSBECS/Standards/Defining_Characteristics_of_Catholic_Schools.aspx?hkey=36193389-1a3c-4736-b212-332906083fd1