



School Advisory Commission Agenda with Minutes

June 12, 2025

Members Present/~~Absent~~: Adam K., Kate J., Kim M., Rebecca M., Simon O., Travis G., (new)Jessica L., (new)Luke E., (new)Josh U., Fr. Dennis Saran

Members Absent: Rachel M., Rob D., Dan G.,Nate S., Bridget G., Principal Brita W., Teacher Representative Katie A.; PC Dan H., PC Chris M.

I. Opening Prayer

II. May Minutes: Approved via group email 6/5, posted to SAC webpage; added short term archive of minutes, rolling prior 3 month minutes; all meeting minutes available from Meg Piccolo at request

III. Reports:

a. Chair Report – Adam Keller

- i. Excited to welcome 3 new members to SAC
- ii. Secretary nomination during new business

b. Pastor Report – Fr. Dennis

- i. Seeking outside observation and consulting from Kathleen Sabelka.
- ii. Distilled parent frustrations down to 3 things. 1. Poor Communication style, 2. Decreased Catholic Identity and 3. Lower teacher morale.
- iii. Intends to work with Brita on improvement of learnings from past school year
- iv. Increased mentoring
- v. Not able to be in school more than currently. He is open to trying.
- vi. Intends to send letter to parents addressing what he can address from the past year and sharing of what to expect for upcoming school year.

c. Principal Report – Brita Willis – Not present, no report. Brita message to share was gratitude for SAC and the efforts for the past year.

IV. Committee Business – Committee Selection – New members decide committee by September meeting

- a. Catholic Identity – Simon, Dan
- b. Technology – Rob, Rebecca
- c. Marketing – Travis, Rachel
- d. Playground Project – Adam, Travis, Nate and Kim

V. Unfinished Business

a. New members for discernment (brought by Adam K.)

- i. Introduction and Review By-Laws, SAC purpose, etc.
- ii. Jessica Liesmeyer, term expiring 5/2028
- iii. Luke Eskau, term expiring 5/2028
- iv. Josh Umfleet, term expiring 5/2028

- 1. Took Luke and Jessica through discernment prayer and welcoming process. Both members accepted responsibility for 3 year term.

b. By-Law Updates for consideration – September



- i. Adam will work on improvement suggestions for by-laws based on perceived challenges from past year. Bring ideas to September meeting for discussion. Other members are encouraged to read the by-laws and provide additional ideas and changes.

VI. New Business

a. Secretary Nomination

- i. Travis G. was nominated to secretary for 2025-2026 year. Run was unopposed. Majority approval secured. Congratulations to Travis.

b. SAC Recommendations – School/Parish Leadership and Identity, Communication, Support for Principal and By-Law Modernization (brought by Travis G.)

- i. Travis compiled recommendations from SAC for parish leadership.
- ii. Thoughtful discussion and dialogue with Fr. Dennis and commission was accomplished.
- iii. These recommendations focused on improving communication from leadership, improving Catholic Identity within the school and strengthening morale for teachers.
- iv. Final edits will be provided to parish leadership for consideration. SAC seeks to provide majority approval in support of the recommendations in the coming days. Thank you Travis.
- v. Final edits at bottom of this minute summary. (see below)

VII. Announcements – Open Forum for SAC Members

- a. 2025-2026 meeting dates shared with commission

VIII. Adjournment – Summer Social

Have a great summer everyone!



Please Note – 2025/2026 Common Meeting Nights:

- Thursday September 18
- Thursday October 9
- Wednesday November 12
- Thursday January 15
- Thursday February 19
- Wednesday March 18
- Wednesday April 22
- Wednesday May 13

2025/2026 St. Dominic Catholic School – School Advisory Commission Roster

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|--|---|
| • Adam Keller (Chair), Marketing, term through 2026 | adam.keller@nm.com |
| • Rob Dillon (Vice Chair), Technology, term through 2027 | rdillon@kelloggalumni.northwestern.edu; |
| • Travis Gardner, Marketing, term through 2026 | gardner2472116@gmail.com |
| • Rachel Moore, Marketing, term through 2026 | moorefamily2840@gmail.com; |
| • Simon Orozco, Catholic Identity, term through 2026 | spporozco@gmail.com; |
| • Dan Gundrum, Catholic Identity, term through 2027 | dangundrum@yahoo.com; |
| • Rebecca Murray, Technology, term through 2027 | rlang2302@yahoo.com; |
| • Jessica Liesmeyer, term through 2028 | jessicabliesemeyer@gmail.com |
| • Josh Umfleet, term through 2028 | jumfleet83@gmail.com |
| • Luke Eskau, term through 2028 | luke.eskau@gmail.com |
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Our mission: To seek Christ, know Christ, and become Christ, each one for the sake of all. Our vision is to be a spiritual home that radiates the love of God, overflows with the power of the holy spirit and joyfully leads others to Christ. Our values are holiness, compassion, community, and witness.

Strengthening School-Parish Identity

Establishing an integrated approach between our school and parish is crucial for the family engagement, growth and vitality of our entire community. A consistent presence will help bridge the gap between formation in church and school creating a more cohesive environment.

Recommendations:

- School and parish leadership actively participate in school events (i.e. sporting events, scouting, plays, etc), attend school Masses, and interact with students and staff during the school day (i.e. recess, lunch room, drop off, pick up, etc).

Communication

Effective communication from the parish and school principal to families is paramount for a thriving school community. The **school principal** is ultimately responsible for ensuring clear, consistent, and timely communication with all school families. This responsibility is to be supported by **teachers** for classroom communication, **school office staff** and, for broader parish-related communications, in coordination with **priests and/or parish staff** responsible for communications (e.g., bulletin editor, website administrator).

Recommendations:

- **Centralized Communication Platform:** Implement a single, user-friendly platform (e.g., a dedicated school app, a robust parent portal, retooling the website for ease of use, etc) for all essential communications, including announcements, calendars, grades, and urgent alerts. This would reduce the fragmentation of information.
- **Family Folder:** A concise, well-organized weekly digital newsletter from the principal and parish leadership could summarize upcoming events, highlight key achievements, “priest noticing in school this week” or “student corner for sentence or two on catholic identity” and provide important school and parish reminders.
- **Consistent Communication Schedule:** Establish a predictable schedule for regular communications (e.g., weekly newsletter on Fridays, monthly memo or important alerts as needed, 24-48 hr response expectation). This helps families anticipate and look for information.
- **Feedback Mechanism:** Create an accessible channel for families to provide feedback on school and/or parish concerns to adapt and improve. Delineate emails and items that needs the priest, principal or office staff attention/response vs what can be delegated.
- **Parish Bulletin Inclusion:** Ensure key school events and achievements are regularly featured in the parish bulletin, reaching a wider audience within the parish community.

Demonstrate Grace to Our New Principal

As we welcome our new principal, it is vital that both parish leadership and the school advisory committee model grace and provide support during this transition.



Recommendations:

- **Listening & Patience:** Developing as a new leader takes time. Assume goodwill, and positive intent and offer constructive feedback rather than criticism.
- **Resource Provision:** Ensure the principal has the support, resources to succeed. Whether it's access to historical information, coaching/mentoring support or introductions to stakeholders and systems.
- **Collaborative Spirit:** Foster an environment of partnership to achieve shared goals for the school and parish reflected in our vision, mission and values.

Updating Bylaws for the School Advisory Committee

To reflect the evolving needs of our parish-school community and ensure effective feedback updating and reviewing the bylaws for the School Advisory Committee revision include

Recommendations:

- **Clearly Defined Roles and Responsibilities:** outline the scope of leadership and responsibilities of the committee, communication flow from parish to principal to minimize ambiguity (i.e. flow chart, etc).
- **Communication Protocols:** Incorporate specific guidelines for communication between committees (i.e. home-school connection 2-3x/yr), the principal, parish leadership, and the school community in light of feedback.
- **Clarify systems:** Clarify communication expectations (phone, email, in person) as well as complaint/concern protocol and addressing SAC. Outline decision-making processes, including voting procedures and conflict resolution mechanisms and pathways for parent voice.