



Diocese of Springfield in Illinois
Board of Catholic Education
Minutes
November 10, 2007

PRESENT: Kim Diaz, Kim Ferguson, Rev. Jeff Grant, Judy Kulp, Sr. M. Elise Mierendorf, Carolyn Stewart, Brian Sullivan, Bro. John Francis Tyrrell, Sr. JoAnn Volk, SSND, Fr. David Zimmerman

ABSENT: Rebecca Esselman, Sr. Geraldine Kemper

STAFF: Barbara Burris, Jean Johnson, Msgr. Carl Kemme, Marilyn Missel

Judy Kulp, President, welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. The Board of Catholic Education moved to committee at 9:05 a.m. Jean reminded everyone to use the committee worksheets and report forms that were distributed at the last meeting.

At 10:20 a.m. Judy reconvened the general meeting of the Board of Catholic Education. Carolyn Stewart led the opening prayer.

Judy requested a motion to accept the minutes for the September 8, 2007 Board of Catholic Education meeting as mailed. Fr. Zimmerman so moved and Br. John Francis seconded the motion. **The September, 2007 Board of Catholic Education meeting minutes were accepted as mailed.**

Jean noted that Chris was being evaluated at the hospital. The Board was asked to keep her in their prayers. Jean also highlighted the article Chris wrote for *Catechesis*, a magazine written for catechists, that works with Dayton University to provide a catechist formation series during each school year.

NATIONAL DIRECTORY FOR CATECHESIS:

The Religious Education Committee led the discussion of Chapter 4 of the National Directory for Catechesis (NDC). Kim Ferguson commented on how the elements in Chapter 6 could be incorporated into the classroom to aid in raising scores on the ACRE assessment. Jean stated that some education is in progress and needs to continue to occur at the parish and school level for them to become familiar with the NDC. The question was raised as to whether or not the Board should be making recommendations for the parishes and schools in this area.

Carolyn reviewed the purpose and process of the ACRE and assessment programs. She stated that the ACRE examines the content and methodologies in programs. The emphasis in this chapter is on "life in Christ" and living faith daily. Sr. JoAnn reported that her faculty took the ACRE in order to look at the results and better understand their meaning. Although the ACRE may reflect the knowledge of catechists, it is the curriculum alignment piece of the ACRE that is the most important tool to a full curriculum. Jean informed the group that a post assessment workshop would be held to assist the catechists in understanding and using the ACRE results.

Fr. Jeff believes that it is important that catechists understand the way Christ taught and to understand their individual roles as representing Christ. Sr. Elise believes this chapter is a valuable tool in expanding the range of how we teach by looking at the way Christ taught and by looking at God's methodology. Kim Diaz found the chapter to be very inspiring and challenging. It challenges us to teach critical thinking. The emphasis on Mary implies that teaching the faith starts in the home that acts as a bridge to the larger faith community. Fr. Jeff is reminded of shining the light of faith and parents being the primary educators.

Kim Ferguson sees lots of implications for the Board such as promoting conversion through doing and encouraging children, youth and adults to live their faith through works. We need to insure we are providing these opportunities. Kim Diaz believes the board can instill, foster and push for these values and facilitate recognition that catechesis is broader than a school and includes conversion in our mission. The *Why Catholic?* push is important but the big challenge is to get to the schools as well as parishes. Wording of our policies should be reflective of this broader reach. Faith conversion is an event which unfolds over a lifetime instead of a series of vents. Chapter 5 will be read and discussed for the January, 2008 meeting. Jean would like the board to come up with goals and strategies for implementation.

NCEA THUMBNAIL “WHAT DOES A CATHOLIC EDUCATION BOARD DO?”

Jean addressed the information on the purpose sheet which all members received. She would like to establish a nominating committee to begin work on filling upcoming vacancies. We are still missing area representatives. Consideration should be given to changing the methods used for recruiting. Suggestions included making recruiting continuous by utilizing a working committee. It was suggested that the meeting locations and meeting day might make it more difficult to get people to volunteer. Carolyn suggested consulting the last representative for recommendations and for insight as to what the difficulty might be in recruiting someone from that area. Msgr. Kemme related that other diocesan boards are also having difficulty filling spots. Fr. Zimmerman suggested that more effort might be directed at the parish level. Fr. Jeff believes that we will need to demonstrate to them what we can do. Judy recommended consideration be given to asking principals and DRE/CREs to serve on the board. Jeans reminded the members that they are the eyes and ears of the superintendent and the bishop and that they are ambassadors. She suggested that the Diocesan Board Members contact school members.

Fr. Zimmerman expressed the need to stress total catechesis in order to overcome the response that parishes without schools are not affected by the work of the Catholic Education Board. Jean noted that it has been recommended to her that meetings should be held in different parts of the diocese. She is requesting ideas to make Board service more attractive. Questions were raised about the productivity of the meetings and whether or not the cost of gas is an issue. Other members did not believe that gas is the problem.

Judy stated that there is a need to stress good things about the Board of Catholic Education. Questions were raised as to how others know what we are doing. Judy suggested an overview of the meetings could appear in the Catholic Times. Jean mentioned asking CT to do an article. Fr. Zimmerman feels more than one mention is needed. It was suggested that a small article in the monthly mailing with ongoing additional topics and a link to the website would be beneficial. Jean will contact Catholic Times. Sr. JoAnn commented on the fact that the unfilled spots make the committees small. The question was raised as to whether or not the committees should work together when one has low attendance.

Jean asked the members if they felt like they have a role. Some present expressed that they used to think they did not have a role but feel that is changing. Jean asked if Board members would like links to committee descriptions and a copy of best practices she received at a CACE meeting.

NCEA THUMBNAIL “Duties of an Education Board Member”

Jean provided everyone with samples of evaluation tools to be used at the end of the year to evaluate the work of the Board. Jean requested that the items be reviewed before the next meeting to prepare to make a recommendation. We could also develop our own tool. Barb suggested that everyone receive all Goals and Strategies reported on the worksheets. Jean believes the worksheets will provide a continuous record of committee work. In response to the question on the thumbnail, “Does your board follow a regular procedure in it’s decision making process?,” the consensus was that that everyone seems okay with the process.

The next thumbnail was distributed to all members. Jean would like the in-service next year to be more structured and has talked with a vendor about providing a speaker. Jean is striving for the end of this year or the beginning of next year to bring someone in for goal setting, process review, etc. The consensus was that a speaker should be sought for the beginning of next school year.

MSGR. KEMME:

Msgr. Kemme reported that a round of interviews for a new director did not produce any favorable candidates. He expressed appreciation that the Board focus was turning to catechesis as the bishop requested. In the future the diocese may have one board with multiple functions. It was encouraging to hear the catechetical focus expressed today as currently the focus is on one board with schools as a subgroup. Several members asked Msgr. Kemme how the policy document should look and he expressed that it should be the backdrop that enhances and aids the church in instruction for all on how to live.

Fr. Zimmerman noted that total catechetical instruction of a parish is important so there isn't a division of church and school. Kim Diaz commented that one board for both would seem most productive. Msgr. Kemme reported that ideally the new director will decide. Fr. Zimmerman recommended the committee look at all schools but especially schools with less than 100 students. The board should seriously look at what should be done in light of the possibility of a decreased number of schools in the near future. Fr. Jeff says this is the reason we should look at the roles of the committees and the function of the diocese.

The cost increase to the parish is more than the salary recommendation when you add in increased benefit costs and government payments. More assistance is needed with how to keep schools open and with how to get parents to commit to catholic education. Barb noted that Notre Dame suggested public forums and informational surveys to learn why parents do not send their children to Catholic schools. She also suggested that information from exit surveys be compiled in an attempt to determine the reason students are leaving Catholic schools. Fr. Zimmerman stated; and Fr. Grant concurred, that with smaller enrollments our schools could not provide the same level of services. Kim Ferguson noted that under achievers are not receiving the help they need. It was determined that an exit survey is not a part of diocesan policy. Brian suggests following up with families to try to discover why they left the school and whether or not they left the parish. Msgr. Kemme noted that would be something that as a pastor he would want to know. Fr. Grant feels this information would help identify what we should really be working toward.

PRESIDENTS REPORT:

David Reid, from CAPE, had asked through Msgr. Kemme to address the board today. His letter voiced concerns regarding the pay scale. Although Msgr. Kemme extended an invitation for him to speak, he declined. Bishop Lucas would like to have future Board of Catholic Education recommendations for salary increases made at the September meeting. The salary sub-committee recommends a 3% increase for the 2008-2009 school year. St. JoAnn Volk made a motion that the Board of Catholic Education accepts the recommendation from the sub-Committee for a 3% salary increase for the 2008-2009 school year. With 9 members in favor and 1 opposed, the **Motion carried.**

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Education Committee: The committee reviewed and finalized the salary recommendation. They discussed ways in which they can further assist the schools. It was suggested that a diocesan report card be developed and brought to the Board in the near future.

Religious Education Committee: The group combined with the policy committee to assist with work on re-organization of the Diocesan policy handbook. Chapter 9 of the NDC will be used in that process in order to incorporate aspects of the Catechesis in all areas. They would like to see the catechetical

mission imbedded in all policies. Concentration will center on the 1000-3000 policies. Kim Diaz will review diocesan policies on home school for structure and content.

Planning Committee: The need exists for a “big picture” marketing plan. The Springfield planning group is developing a marketing plan for Springfield. The group will be monitored to determine how we can assist this group and incorporate that into a plan to assist throughout the diocese. The Committee suggested seeking information from families in the parish schools of religion to see why they don't send their children to a Catholic school. Recommendations received for billboards should be part of a bigger plan. Fr. Grant would like additional information about any processes or plans in place to help schools begin a marketing plan. Barb reported she has a list of ideas she distributes to new principals and those seeking help and samples. She will continue to work with the principals through the regional chairpersons' meetings. She has requested ideas from that group and will raise the topic again at the next meeting. Jean noted that she has been approached regarding a diocesan-wide billboard program. She reported that the Springfield planning group has a five-year plan and the group is in the process of working on how to implement that plan. Brian Sullivan and Fr. Grant are concerned that a hodge-podge of things will be tried but no real plan will be developed.

Policy Committee: As they met conjointly with the Religious Education Committee, the Policy Committee report is as that committee reported previously.

SUPERINTENDENT/ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS' REPORTS:

Barbara Burris: The insurance committee is making recommendations related to dental coverage. Coverage will be increased to include major procedures. She is working with Effingham and Godfrey to address questions regarding middle school development. St. Anthony has a benefactor who will build a new school and as a part of that process will consider consolidating these schools. Parishioners will be surveyed to determine their support for consolidation. The Ursuline Academy Foundation has surveyed Springfield elementary school principals and will do a survey of parents of all elementary school students to determine support for re-establishing Ursuline. Barb reviewed the issues related to the Springfield school mergers. A meeting was held for parents to voice their opinions and concerns. Parents were also invited to provide further feedback via letters and e-mail. A final meeting with parents and pastors was held to announce that none of the schools would be closing. Bishop Lucas would like the teaching focus on Jesus and challenged people to support the Church. Fr. Grant asked if anything would be done to help Cathedral and St. Aloysius as there will be residual questions about longevity after the speculation of closing. Barb noted that the Bishop has recommended that the remainder of the plan developed be implemented. Fr. Grant questioned what the education office could do to help the two schools.

Chris Malmevik: As Chris was unable to attend the meeting due to medical reasons, her report stands as submitted. Deb noted the schedule for the upcoming *Why Catholic?* information sessions.

Marilyn Missel: The Terra Nova scores have been received and Marilyn is compiling a report for the next meeting. Regional reports will also be prepared. This information will influence development of the diocesan report card. Consideration is being given to writing curriculum development across the diocese and has had some principals volunteer to work on the process, which will probably begin after Christmas. The work will span a year or two.

Jean Johnson: Jean's report stands as submitted. A block grant is being pursued with the Catholic Conference in Illinois for e-mail safety education improvement. If the grant is approved, \$30 per student would be received. The Illinois Textbook Loan program is now on a 2-year rotation. Jean helped conduct the State recognition process of Ursuline's senior experience. March 2009 is being considered for an Educational Summit during the next school year. Bishop Lucas is recommending a Wednesday or Thursday. A statewide and pastors' summit may also be held. Decatur St. Teresa has asked Jean to work with their search committee to find a new principal. Jean distributed a handout on enrollment figures. It was requested that Jean be sent ideas of things the committees could be working on and she will forward to appropriate committee. Issues at the state level which may affect our schools include the

possibility that transportation may no longer be funded; the fifth grade physical may be moved to sixth grade; and, first time students may be required to have an eye exam.

January 5, 2008 Prayer Volunteer: Jean Johnson

Judy requested a motion to adjourn the November 20, 2007 Board of Catholic Education meeting. Fr. Jeff Grant so moved and Kim Ferguson seconded the motion. **Motion carried.** The November 20, 2007 Board of Catholic Education meeting adjourned at 1:00p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra
Recording Secretary

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