

Columbus Catholic Schools Parent Association Meeting Minutes

September 11, 2019, 6:30 pm
Columbus Catholic Cafeteria



Attendance: Amanda Krautkramer, Michelle Maurer, Anne Rosicky, Kim Fieweger, Teri Wilczek, Asavari Krizenesky, Shirley Heise, Cindy Scharenbroch, Megan Kinning, Kris Nielsen, Laura Kibbel, Emily Callaghan, Keesha Adler, Jen Mueller

Opening prayer - Shirley

Treasurer's Report - Michelle

We currently have \$2262.34 in the account, however, not all expenses or income are currently represented. We have received \$1850 in dues so far for 2019-2020. 25% of families have paid (78 families).

There is a new policy due to a recent audit. Amanda explained that all purchases must have a prior approved purchase order in order to be reimbursed. If items are not approved prior to purchase, the school will not reimburse the purchaser.

Amanda moved to accept the treasurer's report, seconded by Emily. The report was approved.

Secretary's Report - Jen

Teri handed out some copies of the prior meeting minutes and the highlights (Open House nights, Parent Ambassadors, teacher appreciation were quickly mentioned as the main points of the last meeting.

There were no changes or corrections to the minutes.

Follow-Up: none

PA Structure & School Communication

With regard to minutes and getting our minutes and meeting notices into the principals' weekly emails to parents and guardians, Shirley suggested that we should send the meeting minutes to the principals within 1-2 weeks after the meeting. This would allow for the minutes to be reviewed, and then we can publicize the date of the next meeting at least 1-2 times.

Promotion & Membership

Shirley shared that we received many compliments on our presence at the Open Houses at all buildings. It was also nice to have a visual of the playground equipment that we donated to St. John's and OLP to show parents what we do.

Michelle mentioned that because parents could also enter through the back doors at St. John's, we may have missed some families. It was suggested that next year we have a sign at that door encouraging families to walk around to the front.

Teri reminded us all that we forgot to take pictures of the Open House tents... in the future, pictures are great publicity! Angie can post these to the Columbus Facebook page for us.

Appreciation

Teri shared that there were some thank you notes from the new teacher/staff gifts we gave in August.

Upcoming appreciation events: Parent/Teacher Conference meals (October at St. John's, November for OLP and MS/HS). Emily will create and send the Sign Up Genius links to Angie for placement on the website's volunteer page once we have confirmed dates. Then, the principals can link it in their weekly emails to parents.

Shirley mentioned that Grandparent's Day celebrations will happen on October 11. Thoughts for something low-key the PA could do: signs at each building and/or a photo prop/frame available at each building with a PA member present to take pictures. After much discussion it was suggested that the PA members simply take pictures with the grandparent/special friend's phone to keep things simple... plus, we can encourage them to share their pictures on social media to promote Columbus Catholic. Jen, Megan, and Asavari all mentioned they could help that day.

Staff anniversaries - Shirley said that nothing has been done recently to celebrate staff anniversaries, but that other schools do and it's something we could consider doing as well. Suggestions included writing a note, giving a small gift, or hosting a breakfast. This will be tabled until the October meeting.

Fundraising/Dues

FUNDRAISING: Cindy shared about MyHuttera, the fundraising app that allows you to scan receipts and a percentage goes to the school. Amanda can set this up for us and then we can encourage families to submit their receipts. She said that Washington Elementary has done receipt drives and it was suggested that we could do a parish receipt drive. There are restrictions on the date of the receipts but there is no limit to how many can be scanned.

Emily also mentioned that there was talk of a McDonald's night but was not sure which Columbus group it had been offered to. She will follow up on this.

50/50 raffles and penny wars were suggested as simple and easy fundraisers that perhaps the 4th and 8th grades could do to help pay for their buses to Madison and Valley Fair.

DUES: While 25% of families have paid their dues, Amanda said that it's possible some families never saw our request for dues as they pay their tuition in full at the start of the year. From the Google doc that was sent by Finance, only 101 of 342 families responded. It's unclear exactly how many families never saw the request to pay their dues. In addition, 40 families said that they would pay but now need a reminder to do so. 26 families chose not to participate, but are still members according to the Bylaws.

It was suggested that we send all families the PA membership form and use colored paper so it stands out. Shirley suggested that we encourage families to pray, volunteer, and

donate - some can do one or two, and some are able to do all three. We can add a note thanking families if they have already paid and encouraging others to join us in supporting the Parent Association. Teri will work on this and will contact Leah in Development to see how it gets distributed to all families.

One point that was also mentioned is that "Parent Association" tends to change by school... it can go by PTO, PTA, Home & School, etc. It's a good reminder for us to work on being clear who we are and what our mission and goals are.

Kris raised a point about the new FACTS/Parent Portal. We typically print and distribute the directories to all families who have paid dues. However, with the new system, any data that shows prints - or it must be hidden from view. So if a family would like their address hidden, their listing will not print at all. (This does not apply to the directory online). We discussed this at length and suggested that because of this change, we encourage parents to use the online portal instead. It will be very cumbersome for Kris to manually try to show/hide families' data.

Distribution of Funds

It's hard to build a budget without knowing what expenses we will have. Teri has already received two requests from teachers for help with busing for field trips or service trips. It was suggested that we ask all staff to submit their requests for field trips or other needed items by October 15 so that we can review, build a budget, and decide what to support.

Recruitment and Retention

The Parent Ambassador program seems to be working well and Kris stated that it's been very helpful for her to start connecting families. Asavari also suggested that as a new parent, it can be hard to know what to ask. Kris mentioned that she wanted to follow up with new families at the end of the year to ask what else we could have done to answer questions or ease the transition.

Thoughts/suggestions: a FAQ section for each school? Where would this go (social media, website, handout to families)?

Next meeting scheduled for Monday, October 14, 2019 at 6:30 pm.

Meeting closed at 8:00 pm.