

**Diocese of Kansas City – St. Joseph
Southwest Pod Joint Task Committee
4th Meeting Summary – Thursday, June 4, 2009**

Opening Prayer:

Steve McClain opened the meeting at 7:05 PM with a prayer.

New Member:

Tom Nickel of St. Peters Parish joined the committee. Welcome Tom!

New News –

Diane Blanck reported (via Stephanie Axe) that the diocesan-wide Marketing task force had their first meeting the week of May 25th. The newly formed group includes various leaders in the diocese who will be working on a recommendation to the Bishop, in August, around branding and communications for the schools. It is one of several committees formed in the last few weeks as reported in recent columns in the *Catholic Key*. Diane will continue to update the group on the developments of this group

Revised Timeline and Milestones:

The group agreed that we need to accelerate our previous timeline to remain coordinated with the recommendations that will be forwarded by the other committees in August. The following timeline was proposed and accepted by the group.

| Date* | Targeted Milestone* |
|---|---|
| June 4 | Review baseline economics; Review ideas submitted by each parish |
| June 18 | Form the structure/outline of our recommendation |
| Jul 1 (Wed) | Review preliminary draft of our recommendation |
| July 16 | Complete draft of our recommendation & confirm economic assumptions |
| July 30 | Targeted Checkpoint with David Woolwine and/or Marlon |
| Aug 7 | Address remaining open issues and gaps in our recommendation |
| Aug 12 | Review/refine final draft recommendation with task force committee |
| Aug 18 | Review draft recommendation with SW Pod Pastors/Parish Leaders |
| Aug 27 | Present recommendation to Bishop Finn and diocesan leaders |
| * Dates and targeted milestones are subject to change | |

Results of Brainstorming by Each Parish in the SW Pod:

As a follow-up to our last meeting, each Parish in the SW Pod held a separate 'brainstorming session' to help the SW Pod task force collect ideas for addressing the challenges we face in our parishes/schools. We used the majority of the meeting reviewing the highlights of these sessions with the task force members. Several good ideas were shared and may be incorporated into the final recommendations to the Bishop. It was also acknowledged that a

consistent approach in philosophy and policies within the SW Pod, along with a sincere commitment to supporting each other will drive an important impact on the viability of our schools. This will likely mean some changes in policies/practices for individual parishes (i.e. eliminating verification, bolstering transfer policies, etc...) but will also lead to the sharing of best practices. Having said that, each parish has unique challenges (i.e. school enrollment, smaller parish base, etc...) that will need to be addressed at the parish level.

The following are just some of the examples of the 'brainstorming' highlights discussed:

- ✓ Drive a long-term cultural transformation to true stewardship by **establishing a 'stewardship' playbook or road map for each parish to follow**. The playbook will provide guidance on educating parishioners, implementing a stewardship committee, utilizing stewardship coaches/advocates, increasing transparency of financial issues/capital needs, acknowledging gifts, etc...
- ✓ Reduce the impact of cyclical demographic trends by **strengthening and broadening the base of the parish** and driving greater engagement of its members.
- ✓ **Broaden the responsibility of funding** the school ministry beyond the school families by educating parishioners of the cost and seeking financial support/sponsorship of students needing it most
- ✓ Consider **establishing a "flexible" fee** where any projected gap in school funding is closed by a per student fee/assessment that is applied as necessary.
- ✓ Consider universally and consistently **increasing the per student fees** (from ~\$400 to ~\$800 or ~\$1,000 per year) over the next three years. Publish the schedule to prepare parents and provide liberal discounting policies for those in need.
- ✓ Establish a SW Pod Planning team that will lead the effort to **encourage cooperation and coordination** among the parishes. Pooling/sharing of resources and policies will be addressed by this team.
- ✓ **Jointly promote** the importance and quality of our schools within our community through coordinated PR/Communications/marketing efforts that encourage enrollment and financial support by the community.
- ✓ **Modernize parish/school communications and development efforts** through greater use of technology (websites, e-communication, parish member databases, fund-raising software, etc...) to effectively manage time, talent and treasure within a parish.

Next Steps:

- **The next meeting will be held Thursday, June 18th, 7:00 PM, at Christ the King.**
- Steve McClain will provide a working draft outline for the August recommendation and submit to the team prior to our next meeting.
- Each member will ensure that information is consistently shared with their communities. Various parish-specific communication mediums (bulletins, newsletters, email, special meetings, etc...) will be used to distribute this information in a timely manner.

Closing:

The meeting was adjourned with a prayer by Angie Meyer at 9:00 PM.