

Board of Advisors Agenda
Monday, June 30th, 2025
7:00 p.m. / Aquinas Conference Room

Aquinas Catholic Schools Mission Statement:

Provide a Christ centered learning environment where we develop individuals to be disciples of Christ in all areas of their lives.

Opening Procedures

1. Welcome & Call to Order (Austin Witmer- President)
 - a. The meeting was called to order at 7:03pm.
2. Opening Prayer (Father Ventre)
3. Roll Call of BOA Members (Kelly Koranda- Secretary)
 - a. Members present: Katie Smith, Sandy VanCura, Philip Zegers, Brian Birkel, Trent Jakub, Kyle Eller, Melissa Yindrick, Alina Strong, Austin Witmer, Fr. Ventre, Michaela Moravec, Ron Mimick, Jodi Pelan, Ryan Meister, Christina Podolak, Kristy Andel, Kelly Koranda, Fr. Connor
4. Approval of Previous Board Meeting Minutes (Austin Witmer- President)
 - a. Philip Zegers made a motion to approve the minutes and Brian Birkel seconded it. The minutes were unanimously approved.
5. Amendments to the Agenda (Austin Witmer- President)
 - a. Austin noted that he would give an update on the Pillars if time allowed.

School Reports

6. Chief Administrator Report - Fr. Michael Ventre highlighted the following items from his written report:
 - a. Many projects have been completed throughout the summer, including painting the last 4 classrooms so that the whole building will have been painted over the past few summers.
 - b. Tillotson came to work on some of the roofing and tuck pointing and John Svec has been painting the west side. Tillotson suggests pressure washing as well – if anyone has a pressure washer the school could borrow, please let Fr. Ventre know.
 - c. Sara, Tessa, and Gabi have been organizing the stage, which was a much-needed project.
 - d. **Christenson** Cleaning, based out of Grand Island, will give bid on deep cleaning.
 - e. The Ag Advisory Board met again to continue discussing work on the ag building project – so far they have received \$124,500 in pledges; the goal is \$200,000, which will include the renovation of the building, curriculum, books, and some money for the account, to be used for fees for various competitions and events they attend.
 - f. He met with the priests who will be teaching this year, and many of them will take Mondays off this year. Plans are in the works on ways to cover the Monday religion class time.
 - g. Fr. Ventre will begin working on the Annual Report soon, as well as financial reports for the diocese.
 - h. The ICLE national conference will be hosted in Lincoln July 15-18. ICLE is classical-based education, which is part of Bishop Conley’s vision for diocesan education; it includes more seminar-based classes. Fr. Ventre is looking forward to gathering information to see how the ICLE vision can be implemented in our schools.

- i. We have received 2 bids for our roof, from Tillotson and Armour. Both estimates are near \$500,000 – the cafeteria, front, and high school wing are the most urgent. Tillotson wants to give a second bid. A decision should be made within about a month if we hope to get it done in the fall.
 - i. The finance committee would like to know if there is any possibility for a matching donation from some donors in Lincoln? They also request that Fr. Ventre get a bid that would factor in removing the rock on our own. The committee will meet with the 2 company representatives before our next meeting, and bring a recommendation to the next meeting after reviewing financials again.
 - ii. As there will be other facility needs that will likely emerge each year, Fr. Ventre would like to put together a committee that could help him to assess and seek bids for the buildings' maintenance needs as they come up.
 - iii. Fr. Connor suggested conducting a mailing campaign to ask for donations because people understand the need for a strong roof in order to continue providing education in these buildings and not incur further expenses.
7. Aquinas High School/Middle School - Sandy VanCura highlighted the following items from her written report:
- a. She reviewed enrollment numbers for the coming school year.
 - b. She and Katie Smith attended an Administrators' Retreat focused on classical learning and strategies
 - c. They are also continuing to move forward in implementing the Boys Town Education model, beginning with forming a committee to help with implementation.
 - d. They also attended a Crisis Response Training held in Lincoln. There will be more drills this year, and Sandy will make it a point to communicate to parents before doing the drill for sensitive drills like lockdowns.
 - e. She has met with the English department several times to update cheating/plagiarism/AI policies, and to discuss the goal of increasing reading in Middle School.
 - f. Plans are underway for student orientation and new teacher orientation.
 - g. We will also have a couple of student teachers from Concordia during the first semester.
8. Activities Report - Ron Mimick discussed the following items:
- a. He gave Fr. Ventre their budget for the year, which totals around \$85,000.
 - b. The Monarch Classic fundraiser has gone well so far.
 - c. He described the situation facing the softball program – Aquinas has had a team since 2010; they anticipate having 11 girls this year, but might not have enough girls next year (only about 8 intend to play as of now); he has looked into lots of options for co-ops including Schuyler, Scotus, Blue River, and others; no one has taken this.
 - i. The timeline to make a decision will be around February.
 - ii. His goal is to keep the program alive; other Catholic schools our size are able to sustain both volleyball and softball programs, so he sees it as a possibility.
 - d. He also spoke about the future of the football program – we are second smallest school in C-2, 11-man.
 - i. The new NSAA number for 8-man will be 55 instead of 47. We'll be at 42, but we currently opt up to be able to play 11-man.
 - ii. St. Cecelia school is the only school smaller than us, and they will likely switch to 8-man in the future.
 - iii. We are still getting about 60% of our boys to go out for football, which has been consistent for decades; we expect about 30 boys out this year.
 - iv. He spoke about the pros and cons to staying 11-man vs. switching to 8-man, including maintaining tradition and more kids having the opportunity to play on the one hand, and a

possible safety advantage as well as better chances to be successful on the other hand. Gate-wise, many of the small schools travel well, so he does not think that a switch to 8-man would harm the financial side of the program.

- v. We have to declare by November 30th and it is a 2-year commitment
- vi. Ron would like to discuss with the families to let them know where we're at to get their input, take a ballot and get their feedback, bring it to the board at the October/November meeting. He is willing to coach 8-man or 11-man football. It was recommended that he speak to the younger kids' parents as well.

9. Aquinas Elementary - Katie Smith reviewed the following points of her written report:

- a. Mrs. Rachel completed Catechesis of the Good Shepherd training and they continue to discuss what this will look like for the preschool program. They are still seeking another catechist to teach the kindergarteners.
- b. Bone Creek will have opportunities for students to tour fall and spring exhibits along with an activity; they are also willing to come into the school for older grades to teach an art lesson.
- c. Some trainings that have occurred over the summer include the crisis team training and Sunday program training, which were both very helpful.
- d. She discussed the Robotics program; with Mrs. Zook leaving, there will be some challenges in the transition, but she sees the importance of continuing the program.
 - i. She is seeking someone who can really take charge and run the program.
 - ii. It was suggested to have some of the older students help lead the younger kids, though a hurdle would be preparing for competitions because the elementary and middle school participate in separate competitions requiring different preparation.
- e. They have been updating some spaces, both interior and exterior, over the summer, and plan to have a couple of campus clean up days this summer.
- f. Supply drop off will be combined with the ice cream social so there is just one event at the beginning of the year.
- g. She is continuing discussion regarding installation of the gym floor – Jared DeWispelare has reached out to Scheele's to see if they can help out and possibly donate to the cause and there are discussions of other fundraiser opportunities.
 - i. Could be a good goal for the parents to see their fundraiser money going towards
 - ii. New bids for the installation of the floor range from about \$45,000-\$60,000.
- h. She plans to begin a volunteer program at elementary school.
 - i. Fremont Bergan and Wahoo Public both have "dad days" where the dads come in for a day to help. She likes this idea and hopes to have a concrete plan by the end of July.
 - ii. One volunteer opportunity is a weeding/cleanup day this Wednesday.

10. Holy Family Early Learning Center - Kristy Andel reviewed the following items:

- a. The kids have done lots of field trips, pool days, water days at the daycare, and library days.
- b. The older classes have rotated visiting the Villa for about 45 minutes once a week throughout the summer, which is great for the residents and the kids.
- c. There are 60 part time kids this summer and 22 full time kids.
- d. We have been selected for the LEAF research program, which will provide an outdoor classroom and Professional Development for the teachers to use it well. It will be on the west side of the building.
- e. Katie Smith noted that Communities for Kids will be coming to Butler County this August; this could help give Kristy and Chloe an extra boost. It is a way for county members to work together to support daycares.

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| Subcommittee and Pillar Reports |
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- f. Finance reports - There was no finance committee report.

11. Catholic identity reports - Melissa highlighted some items on her written report.
 - a. This year's theme: "Unite. In His Heart, We Are One" The focus will be on unity and the Sacred Heart of Jesus.
 - i. Verse: "I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled."
 - b. A UNITE night will be held for parents on August 6th; it will include adoration and a chance for the new principals to share their plans and vision.
 - c. She has been planning for retreat dates as well.
12. Community outreach reports
 - a. Alumni and Foundation (Michaela Moravec)
 - i. Reunions are going great. The Class of '65 was here, which was very enjoyable, and a few more are coming up.
 - ii. She has a Pickleball alumni tournament idea for the winter, which could be enjoyed by all ages of alumni.
 - iii. She is also working on a color run or bubble foam idea – she'd like to do an event that kids and families could enjoy.
 - iv. The foundation board will meet at the end of July.
 - v. She is also working on scheduling a time for Catholic Foundation to come and share ideas.
13. Exceptional Learning Environment Pillar - Jody Pelan reported:
 - a. Craig Foreman and Cory Vandenberg came and looked at the Ag building; they also looked at David City HS to get ideas for the building, and Craig will come back again tomorrow.
 - b. Some of the bigger corporations are waiting for a pamphlet, which is in the works, to determine their donation amounts.
 - c. There is a possibility of a Peter Kiewit matching grant of up to \$100,000, so they are looking into this.
 - d. They also are working on putting together a wish list of what tools are needed, and other wishes for those who might like to donate individual items.
14. Enriching Student Life Pillar (Sara Miriovsky sent in a report)
 - a. They are currently in the process of reassessing membership on their pillar and then will be setting a meeting schedule for the pillar so that they can continue to make progress on their goals.

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| Other Items |
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15. Austin Witmer reported on the Pillar leaders
 - a. He and Fr. Ventre met with leaders and set expectations for what the pillars' work will look like moving forward – the current goal is to reassemble their teams by the beginning of school, so they can start tackling projects. The leaders are as follows:
 - i. Mike Moravec/Philip Zegers – Finance Pillar
 - ii. Melissa Yindrick – Sacred Catholic Foundation
 - iii. Ryan Meister/Austin Witmer – Dynamic Community Partnerships
 - iv. Sara Miriovsky – Enriching Student Life
 - v. Jody Pelan – Exceptional Learning Environment
 - b. All board members are expected to serve on one of the pillars.
16. Handbook Review and Discussion
 - a. Elementary School
 - i. Katie Smith reviewed the changes to the handbook.
 - ii. Brian Birkel moved and Christina Podolak seconded the motion to approve the elementary school handbook, and it passed unanimously.
 - iii. One change for the future is to disband the Elementary Council – the Board agreed with Katie's proposal to just stick with the Board of Advisors rather than doubling up with an elementary council as well.
 - b. Middle School/High School
 - i. Sandy VanCura reviewed the handbook changes.
 - ii. Trent Jakub moved and Brian Birkel seconded the motion to approve the MS/HS handbook, and it passed unanimously.

17. Schedule of Meetings Review

- a. Katie Smith reviewed the schedule of meetings for the upcoming school year, which has been set to help pillars, committees, and board members plan ahead.
- b. An additional meeting will be added for a state-of-the-school address after the Finance Committee discusses the timing of this.
- c. Philip Zegers moved and Ryan Meister seconded the motion to approve the schedule, and it passed unanimously.

18. Austin Witmer reviewed some By-Laws updates

- a. The mission statement has been added.
- b. The list of membership was updated.
- c. There will be a set process for someone who desires to speak at the Board meeting.
- d. The expected Conduct of Meetings was updated.
- e. Fr. Ventre or the Board president will have the ability to close a meeting if needed.
- f. Trent Jakub moved and Kyle Eller seconded the motion to approve these updates, which passed unanimously.

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| Closing Procedures |
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19. Next Meeting – July 21st, 2025 @ 7:00 p.m. Adoration @ 6:30p.m.

20. The meeting adjourned and Fr. Ventre led a closing prayer.

Listing of Board of Advisors

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| 1. Father Michael Ventre | Chief Administrative Officer |
| 2. Austin Witmer | Board President |
| 3. Maggie Miratsky | Board Vice President |
| 4. Kelly Koranda | Board Secretary |
| 5. Sandy VanCura | Middle/High School Principal |
| 6. Katie Smith | Elementary School Principal |
| 7. Kristy Andel | Holy Family Early Learning Center Director |
| 8. Alina Strong | Business Manager |
| 9. Melissa Yindrick | Campus Minister |
| 10. Michaela Moravec | Alumni and Foundation |
| 11. Laura Adair | Marketing and Enrollment |
| 12. Ron Mimick | Activities Director |
| 13. Michael Moravec | Board Member- Finance Committee Chair |
| 14. Christina Podolak | Board Member |
| 15. Colleen Storm | Board Member |
| 16. Brian Birkel | Board Member |
| 17. Jared DeWispelare | Board Member |
| 18. Trent Jakub | Board Member |
| 19. Philip Zegers | Board Member |
| 20. Kyle Eller | Board Member |
| 21. Ryan Meister | Board Member |
| 22. Father Brian Connor | Dean, David City Deanery |