

Summary Reports

February 13, 2023

**Middle School Exploratory Study Committee Meeting
Monday, February 13, 2023
6:30 pm – 8:00 pm
Novak Conference Room: Xavier High School**

Is it in the long term best interest for the metro Catholic middle schools to remain independent or become consolidated?

Greetings,

The Middle School Exploratory Study Committee meeting held its initial meeting on Monday, February 13, 2023. Below you will find a summary of the key aspects discussed during this time together.

- ❖ The group discussed the desire for an intercessor (Blessed or Saint) for the group. Beth Globokar shared Saint John Neumann for consideration. St. John Neumann is credited with founding Catholic education; we ask for his guidance as we embark upon the work of continuing to provide high quality Catholic education offerings in the Cedar Rapids metro area community.
- ❖ Beth Globokar, Facilitator and former Xavier Catholic Schools administrator, and Amy Conlon, Associate Director of the Archdiocese/CR metro area contact person, covered the following topics to create a solid foundation about the role of the exploratory committee, its charge, and the scope of the work.
 - The role of this task force is to study the possible ways to expand sharing among the schools up to and including the governance structure by answering the question, "Is it in the long term best interest of the metro area Catholic middle schools to remain independent or become consolidated?"
 - This is not a new conversation to area Catholic schools, discussion has been had over the course of the last 20+ years as it relates to the educational structure of the middle schools, until this point, there has been no forward movement.
 - The school administrators most recently recommended a study of a possible systemization for all metro Catholic schools to the local pastors in early 2022.
 - As a result, a task force was established to study possible systemization in August 2022. Their recommendation is expected in late spring, 2023.
 - Information regarding middle school planning was presented to each of the three school boards in late December/early January for the purpose of information sharing, while allowing each board the ability to indicate their interest in an exploratory study committee through an approved board motion.
 - The task force's charge and scope of work is to provide a written and oral report to the three school boards responsible for the metro Catholic Middle Schools, with information shared beyond with pastors, administrators, Pastoral Councils, all other School Boards, and the Xavier Foundation Board by summer 2023 with possible recommendations for local consideration.
 - The committee will work in an unbiased manner to determine if consolidation is necessary, possible levels of consolidation (specifically as to where, how, what this might look like), and the key advantages and disadvantages to remaining independent versus consolidation.
- ❖ The task force will meet on Mondays throughout the next few months (and beyond, if necessary).
 - Monthly updates following each meeting will be sent to leadership (pastors, administrators, School Boards, Foundation Board, Pastoral Councils) and families in an effort to keep all apprised of the discussions.

Please keep this process in your prayers. Questions about the exploratory study committee should be sent to Beth Globokar, Amy Conlon, or Fr. Dennis Miller.

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March 20, 2023

Middle School Exploratory Study Committee Meeting
Monday, March 20, 2023
6:30 pm – 8:00 pm
LaSalle Catholic Middle School

Is it in the long term best interest for the metro Catholic middle schools to remain independent or become consolidated?

Greetings,

The Middle School Exploratory Study Committee met on Monday, March 20, 2023 at LaSalle Catholic Middle School. This was their second meeting. Below you will find a summary of the key aspects discussed during this time together.

- ❖ The exploratory study committee approved the minutes from February 13, 2023 with one change being noted and updated.
- ❖ A tour of the LaSalle Middle School space was provided by Mr. Zach Zeckser, highlighting the facilities, as well sharing important components as it relates to the current structures at LaSalle. Upon completion of the tour, questions were asked of the group.
- ❖ Beth Globokar, Facilitator and former Xavier Catholic Schools administrator, and Amy Conlon, Associate Director of the Archdiocese/CR metro area contact person, shared the following data elements in an effort to continue providing information necessary to answer the essential question.
 - Enrollment vs Capacity
 - Much work has been done at the individual school level as it relates to capacity for each space. These numbers were reflected in this document as a way of understanding current enrollment vs capacity.
 - The average of all enrollment vs capacity numbers for Xavier Catholic Schools is 62%.
 - Enrollment vs capacity percentages range from 40%-75%.
 - Current sixth through eighth enrollment is 430 for this school year, 2022-2023; based on no increase or decrease in enrollment for next year, the sixth through eighth grade enrollment would be 446 for the 2023-2024 school year.
 - Middle School Enrollment Numbers
 - Data dating back to the 1995-1996 school year was presented illustrating the percentage of total sixth through eighth grade students at each current middle school: LaSalle, Regis, St. Joseph.
 - There was a noticeable change to these percentages during and after the 2000-2001 school year when Regis Middle School opened.
 - PowerSchool Family Data
 - The top three ways that families hear about Xavier Catholic Schools are: Church, family and friends, alumni.
 - Of those families that considered other educational opportunities, 70% of them considered their public school.
 - The top three reasons for attending Xavier Catholic Schools are: Catholic faith, small class size, and safe learning environment.
 - Number of Families in each Category
 - Approximately 20% of the middle and high school families have students in both a middle school and Xavier High School.
 - Additional documents provided to the committee related to school consolidation research, in addition to the Regis facility study and the St. Joseph classroom study.

The next meeting will be held at St. Joseph Middle School on Monday, March 27, 2023.

Please keep this process in your prayers. Questions about the exploratory study committee should be sent to Beth Globokar, Amy Conlon, or Fr. Dennis Miller.

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March 27, 2023

Middle School Exploratory Study Committee Meeting
Monday, March 27, 2023
6:30 pm – 8:00 pm
St. Joseph School

Is it in the long term best interest for the metro Catholic middle schools to remain independent or become consolidated?

Greetings,

The Middle School Exploratory Study Committee met on Monday, March 27, 2023 at St. Joseph Catholic School. This was their third meeting. Below you will find a summary of the key aspects discussed during this time together.

- ❖ The exploratory study committee approved the minutes from March 20, 2023 as provided.
- ❖ A tour of the St. Joseph Catholic School space was provided by Mr. Casey Kettmann, highlighting the facilities, as well sharing important components as it relates to the current structures at St. Joseph, specifically drawing attention to recent updates throughout the building. Upon completion of the tour, questions were asked of the group.
- ❖ Beth Globokar, Facilitator and former Xavier Catholic Schools administrator, elicited the following discussion:
 - Research
 - It was noted by multiple members that the amount of research and data available on a middle school consolidation is very limited and oftentimes, when information is found, it relates to rural and public school districts.
 - Additionally, conflicting information was found in a number of articles.
 - Identity was at the forefront of much of the research data; school identity would reference the individuality of each Catholic school in the Cedar Rapids metro area and parish identity was an area identified that needed to be at the forefront of any decision from this group, just as the Cedar Rapids metro task force is considering the same.
 - One research article described “ele-middle schools” as schools that hold K-8 students in the same building but operate as K-5 with a middle school concept. St. Joseph in Marion would be described as an “ele-middle school.”
 - System Synopsis
 - Information from five midwest system consolidations was provided to the group for review, including a similar format for the current Catholic school structure in the Cedar Rapids metro area.
 - Most similar to our current Catholic community would be St. Francis Xavier Educational System in Appleton, WI and Bishop O’Gorman Educational System in Sioux Falls, SD. Additional time was spent discussing these schools and their current structures.
 - Transportation
 - Transportation materials were provided with limited dialogue due to time constraints. This topic will lead the next meeting agenda. A very high level finding from the data would indicate the regionality of the current Catholic schools, having students from all across the city attending each of the schools; the geographical boundaries are very unclear.
 - The study committee was provided t-charts with key categories to begin the work of a SWOT analysis for the current structure and consolidation. The recommendation was to bring these documents completed to the next meeting so a group discussion could begin.

The next meeting will be held at Regis Middle School on Monday, April 17, 2023. Please keep this process in your prayers. Questions about the exploratory study committee should be sent to Beth Globokar, Amy Conlon, or Fr. Dennis Miller.

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April 17, 2023

Middle School Exploratory Study Committee Meeting
Monday, April 17, 2023
6:30 pm – 8:00 pm
Regis Middle School

Is it in the long term best interest for the metro Catholic middle schools to remain independent or become consolidated?

Greetings,

The Middle School Exploratory Study Committee met on Monday, April 17, 2023 at Regis Middle School. This was their fourth meeting. Below you will find a summary of the key aspects discussed during this time together.

- ❖ The exploratory study committee approved the minutes from March 27, 2023 as provided.
- ❖ A presentation was shared highlighting the current, regional geography of families enrolled in Xavier Catholic Schools with additional mapping relating to possible, future bussing transportation considerations.
 - Despite the perception that Xavier Catholic Schools are geographically based by region, the data indicates that many families drive across town and even past other Catholic Schools to attend a different Catholic School.
 - There are no true geographical boundaries created when mapping all K-12 student addresses.
 - Students with a Marion address are distributed across the Cedar Rapids area. As it relates to the middle schools, St. Joseph 6-8 has 12% of these students, Regis has 9%, and LaSalle 6-8 has 2%. Additionally, it's worth noting that 24% of families with Marion addresses have students currently attending Xavier.
 - Some Xavier Catholic School students, especially those that attend Xavier High School, travel quite a significant distance to attend. Area towns with Xavier High School enrollment include but are not limited to: Atkins, Keystone, Ely, Mt. Vernon, etc.
- ❖ A tour of the Regis Middle School space was provided by Regis principal Mr. Josh Gredys, sharing an overview of the space, showcasing enhancements that have been made over the course of the last few years, while also pointing out the structural concerns and areas in need of attention that exist throughout the space. Upon completion of the tour, the group was asked to jot down notes as it relates to the information gathered during the tour.
- ❖ A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis exercise was started to analyze pros and cons of middle school consolidation. The remainder of this meeting was spent listing and discussing the pros and cons of consolidation based on what has been learned thus far through Xavier Catholic Schools structures, as well as other Catholic School systems regionally and nationally. This process will continue at the next meeting and beyond, as needed, followed by pros and cons of the current structure.

Beth Globokar, Chair of the Committee, reminded the group about the need for continued due diligence in maintaining the integrity of the necessary work to seek the answer to our guiding question. All members of the group represent various elements of our local Catholic schools, allowing for any decision made (after all the work is completed) to be a local decision.

The next meeting will be held at the Toyota Financial Building on Monday, May 1, 2023. Please keep this process in your prayers. Questions about the exploratory study committee should be sent to Beth Globokar, Amy Conlon, or Fr. Dennis Miller.

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May 1, 2023

**Middle School Exploratory Study Committee Meeting
Monday, May 1, 2023
6:30 pm – 8:00 pm
Toyota Financial Services Building**

Is it in the long term best interest for the metro Catholic middle schools to remain independent or become consolidated?

Greetings,

The Middle School Exploratory Study Committee met on Monday, May 1, 2023 at the Toyota Financial Services building. This was their fifth meeting. Below you will find a summary of the key aspects discussed during this time together.

- ❖ A tour of the Toyota Financial Services space was provided by Jerry, the current maintenance director and caretaker of the space, assisted by Mike Esker and Joe Tursi who shared their real estate and school design/architectural knowledge with the group. An overview of the space was provided while showcasing enhancements that have been made over the course of the last few years, in addition to comments about possibilities as it relates to the transformation of an office building space to a school. Overall, the group generally agreed that it would be possible to convert a space like this into a well designed and suitable school building at a more affordable price than to build from scratch.
- ❖ A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis exercise was continued to analyze pros and cons of middle school consolidation. The remainder of the meeting was spent listing and discussing the pros and cons of consolidation based on what has been learned thus far through Xavier Catholic Schools structures, as well as other Catholic School systems regionally and nationally. This process will continue at the next meeting and beyond, as needed, followed by pros and cons of the current structure.

The next meeting will be held at Xavier High School on Monday, May 22, 2023. Please keep this process in your prayers. Questions about the exploratory study committee should be sent to Beth Globokar, Amy Conlon, or Fr. Dennis Miller.

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May 22, 2023 and May 30, 2023

**Middle School Exploratory Study Committee Meeting
Monday, May 22, 2023 and Tuesday, May 30, 2023
6:30 pm – 8:00 pm
Xavier High School**

Is it in the long term best interest for the metro Catholic middle schools to remain independent or become consolidated?

Greetings,

The Middle School Exploratory Study Committee met on Monday, May 22, 2023 at Xavier High School. This was their sixth meeting. Below you will find a summary of the key aspects discussed during this time together.

- ❖ Information was shared as it related to the most recent Cedar Rapids Community School District school consolidations; this included West Willow and Maple Grove. The two administrators who were a part of the West Willow and Maple Grove consolidations are part of our Catholic community and may be able to share some insight regarding their experience. Additionally, some estimates for the most recently built Cedar Rapids schools were shared with the group for comparison purposes.
- ❖ A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis exercise was completed on May 22nd to analyze pros and cons of middle school consolidation. The entire meeting was spent listing and discussing the pros and cons of consolidation based on what has been learned thus far through Xavier Catholic Schools structures, as well as other Catholic School systems regionally and nationally.
- ❖ A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis exercise was completed on May 30th to analyze pros and cons of the current Xavier Catholic Schools structure (St. Joseph's as a K-8, LaSalle as a 5-8, and Regis as a 6-8 building.) The entire meeting was spent listing and discussing the pros and cons of current processes and practices.

The next meeting will be held at Xavier High School on Wednesday, June 7, 2023. Please keep this process in your prayers. Questions about the exploratory study committee should be sent to Beth Globokar, Amy Conlon, or Fr. Dennis Miller.

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June 7, 2023, June 15, 2023, and June 22, 2023

**Middle School Exploratory Study Committee Meeting
Wednesday June 7, 2023/Thursday June 15, 2023/Thursday June 22, 2023
Xavier High School**

Is it in the long term best interest for the metro Catholic middle schools to remain independent or become consolidated?

Greetings,

The Middle School Exploratory Study Committee met on the following June dates at Xavier High School. This was their eighth, ninth, and tenth meetings. Below you will find a summary of the key aspects discussed during this time together.

Wednesday June 7, 2023

Thursday June 15, 2023

Thursday June 22, 2023

- ❖ Information was shared as it related to the most recent work of the Cedar Rapids Metro Task Force. The task force and this group, the middle school exploratory study committee, operate independently of one another; however, it was important for each entity to be apprised of the work being completed by the other group. The Cedar Rapids metro task force has finalized a recommendation that is being shared with the community in the coming months.
- ❖ A summary of costs were provided in an effort to better understand the costs associated with remodeling a current space versus the costs to build a brand new space. Assumptions were made to make both spaces as similar as possible. This summary was also broken out to allow for the option of a theater.
- ❖ Beth provided a recap presentation to summarize where this group started back in February, what was the task at hand, and talk through key elements of the ten meetings together. Discussion was had during this presentation with a final vote being taken at the completion of the meeting.

The next meeting is to be determined. Please keep this process in your prayers. Questions about the exploratory study committee should be sent to Beth Globokar, Amy Conlon, or Fr. Dennis Miller.

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