

Minutes of Catholic School Council

December 8, 2025 - 6:00 pm

Attendees:

Present: Helen Biggs, Cathy Blanchard, Stacy-Ann Brown, Debbie Cheretas, Christine Curtis, Sheila DeSousa, Melanie Facca; teacher representative, Sunny Francis, Principal Mark Freeman, Danielle Good, Luke Lillicrop, Marysia Papagianis, Naida Rahma, Kristen Runciman-Bentivegna, Elizabeth Stepanic, Julie Tippet, Reannah VandenBerg, Tiffany Young,

Absent: Brian Aldwell, Vice-Principal Vanessa Aquilina, Kim Bevington, Vice-Principal Natalie Cook, Chaplin Dunn, Donna O'Connor, Alfredo Pulido

1. Opening:

The meeting of November 10, 2025, was cancelled. Principal Freeman opened with prayer, and we partook of the food organized by Sheila. Sheila opened with words of encouragement for the upcoming season.

2. Corrections from Previous Minutes:

Correction to Attendance - Kim left early instead of Cathy at the Oct. 6, 2025, meeting.

Correction to Elections (item 3) - Reannah VandenBerg will be co-fundraiser representative with Julie.

3. Student Update:

Principal Freeman reported on behalf of the student representatives.

Enchanted Forest Dance - November 27, 2025 - Principal Freeman mentioned that the dance was good, but senior students are not well represented at this dance. Thoughts to make some changes and have a homecoming week with pink day and other activities on different days during the week and move the dance to this week and move the junior dance to the spring.

ND Christmas Concert, Craft and Bake Sale - will be on November 10 from 6 to 9 pm. Entry Fee \$5.00. Crafts made by the students of the different departments/programs at ND. All monies raised go to the Angel Campaign which benefits those in our community who require assistance during the Christmas season. Julie will post on Burlington sites for further promotion. Sunny inquired if volunteers are needed, but it looks like there is going to be enough help.

Cocoa and Study Session - the Prefects are putting on cocoa and study sessions again at exam time. The exam percentage is weighted differently so the mark is not as important, but exams are still important to help prepare students for post-secondary education by creating good study habits and develop the study skill. It was noted that L2L is different from these study sessions.

Spirit Week - will be the last week before Christmas break. First day is the only day where uniform is required. The rest of the days are civies days.

Monday - Accessories with uniform * **Tuesday** - Blizzard Day - dress in white *

Wednesday - Festive Sweater Day * **Thursday** - Cozy Day * **Friday** - Green and Red Day - early dismissal 12:50 p.m. * Also on the Friday will be the Christmas Staff Concert where any student may perform and Candy Grams will be going out that week as well.

Coat Drive - is finished this coming Friday.

4. Principal Update:

Showcase Night - was well attended.

AP and IB - ND does not have Advanced Placement (AP) as other schools even though we have much of the same classes/programs as AP schools. ND trades and athletics are better than any other school in the board. 40 to 60 of "our" students went to other schools as the assumption is that AP schools are better. Principal Freeman would like to see International Bachelor (IB) and/or high-performance sports programs at ND which would also bump up attendance numbers. The director has been very receptive to the idea, of IB at ND. This will come up at the senior meeting on Monday. It would be a two-year process to get IB at ND. Staff would have to have additional training as part of the process. Right now, we are at 1000 students and would like to see an ideal number of 1200-1400. University level is possible with AP as well as IB.

HOSA SHSM - Melanie Facca has spearheaded the government application process for starting the HOSA Specialist High Skills Majors (SHSM) at ND. The HOSA SHSM would start in grade 11. Co-op training options would also be possible as part of the program. If the Ford Government approves it this year it could start in September. This would bring the SHSM total to 7 at ND.

November Remembrance Day Ceremonies - went well

School Play - The production of The Outsiders was a success. Noted that there will be a senior play in the spring for one night only

STEAM - Applications for the next year closed last Friday. Last year there were 200 applicants and this year there are about 100. Now that the program is more established students know if they will fare well in the program, that is why the numbers are less. (Grade 9 and 10 each has 2 cohorts of 50). STEAM and STEM are not huge draws for cross boundary students, but it is still important for the students in the ND community.

PD Day for Staff - The topic of Artificial Intelligence (AI) was discussed. There has been exponential growth in the sophistication of AI. Students are using it, so the board has okayed some licensed AI programs for the students to use. Also, teaching how to use AI

and where it belongs in their life. Teachers have also started assigning assignments using pen and paper as a double check method, so the students' actual levels can be assessed.

Renovation Completed - Fences are up so the flow will not damage the new area. Some of the fencing at the rear of the school will be changed. Culinary and Cosmetology renovations to start next semester.

5. Budget Update:

- Currently there is \$9,100.00 in the account. Principal Freeman has received quotes for having the sound system changed (\$22,000.00), and a long throw laser projector (\$32,000.00 plus), and a portable projector that is good for full daylight (\$5,000.00) to put on a cart to be able to use in more than one location as needed. More inclined to put the money into something like this. Suggested to possibly rent some of the sound equipment as needed. Improvements to the theatre is a big-ticket item that is on the radar as well.
- Thank you to the Council as all the cafeteria tables are now replaced and for the provision of food for staff at the parent/teacher interviews and the brand new 21-foot-long player benches for the field.
- The New-2-You uniform sale and loot-in the boot are great fundraisers. We would still like to purchase a new barbecue, possibly to be used for the homecoming. Suggested to team up with St. Timothy's Elementary School. Also interested in AV items. Will need to discuss what we want to do with the \$9,000.00 or if we roll some over for a larger project to come. Noted that there will be some requests for the next semester for student events, like security for the spring dance and support of the business leadership conference as well as sports events.
- Also suggested was a fun fair - noted that it was a lot of work. Possible to build some of the elements from a fun fair, like food trucks, into spirit week. Also, when they have buyouts for football games, including some other options like break out rooms for crafts or have a small-scale theatre production and work multicultural day in as well.

6. Chaplin Updates:

Chaplin Dunn provided a calendar with the Christmas Events and an update in writing. Principal Freeman reported the following on his behalf.

Halloween for Hunger - was successful. There was some competition from the Jays Games this year, but the kids did canvass on Thursday and lots of food was collected for Jamaica hurricane relief.

Irish Cares - Helping families in need in the ND community at Christmas through the Angel Campaign. Proceeds from the Concert Sale on December 10 will go to the Angel Campaign for this cause. The need in our community is real and makes this a necessary concern.

7. Parish Reps Updates:

St. Paul's - refer to email of December 1, 2025, sent by Reannah to all council members.

St. Gabriel's

- Sunny reported that the Parish Bazaar was held on November 22, 2025, to raise funds for the renovation of the parish hall
- The Filipino community of St. Gabriel's is organizing a Christmas Mass for December 15 to 23 at 7:30 p.m. each evening. All are welcome.
- Youth group meets on Wednesdays and Young Adults Group meets on Thursdays.

8. OAPCE Update:

Alfredo could not attend the meeting, so there was no OAPCE update today.

9. Fundraising Update:

Cobs - Julie going to post reminders for the Cobs fundraiser again.

Loot-in-the-Boot - Julie looking at the end of May with a rain date of first week of June.

New-2-You - Noted that McCarthy does not have the 3-quarter zip available anymore. If we want this item back on the menu, we will need to approve it again as Council. Principal Freeman to request a sample so we can approve it at the next meeting. Also, suggested to do a mid-year sale, asking for donations the same as we do at the end of the year.

ACTION REQUIRED.

10. New Business:

Postings - It was noted that there were some discrepancies or unclear postings on school cash-on-line and ND communications platforms. Reference Pink Shirt Day and an incorrect date for the Concert. Principal Freeman noted that they are committed to making the communication clearer and having Student Council also seek approval so there are no contradictions with chaplaincy postings etc.

Bishops Dinner - has been going on since 2010 and is an imperative fundraiser and benefits ND as if/when we need it, the money can be used for the students of the ND community. Further discussion at next meeting.

To Be Added to the Agenda for the Next Meeting in February

- discuss another uniform sale and have samples at the next meeting - better pants were mentioned and removing the rugby shirt and perhaps having a full zip available as well
- discuss bishop dinner on February 2026 agenda

11. Upcoming Meeting(s):

February 2, 2026 * April 13, 2026 * June 8, 2026 - Year End Social

12. Motion to Adjourn and Closing

Sheila thanked all for attending. Motion to adjourn made by Julie and seconded by Danielle. Motion carried. Stacey-Ann closed with prayer.