



Board meeting minutes for February 17, 2026

Board of Education Meeting

5:00 p.m. Opening Prayer by Fr. David Esquiliano

Board members present - Fr. David Esquiliano, Joe Malsam, Fr. Brad Pelzel, Dan Kriener, Jessica Felix, Ben Uhl, Jacki Kelly, Fr. Randy Schon, Rhonda Bridges and Jennifer Rose Bass

Absent - Brent Olson and Fr. Tim Friedrichsen

Staff present - DJ Faller and John Flanery

Guest - Melissa Flynn, BHCS teacher, observer for a class she is taking at Morningside University

With Marisa out, John Flanery will be taking notes.

* Approval of January Board Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve - Dan Kriener

Seconded by Fr. Brad Pelzel

All in favor - Aye

Abstain - Fr. David Esquiliano

Rebekah Armstrong, presenter, BHCS Director of Communications and Marketing

- PowerPoint presented and available in print
- She has been here just over a year - finding her roles and defining duties
- Social media presence and engagement are substantially up.
- Data examples provided - expanding content to cover more than one aspect of the school
- Joe asked about how engagement is measured - Rebekah said it depends on the platform
- She is working for brand consistency
- Storytelling and alumni engagement a focus
- Read with a Crusader program - 54 children ages 3 to 5 participated. 20-25 had no prior connection to BHCS.
- Local media - creating partnerships
- Some challenges - timing, capacity, internal communication and alignment
- Annual report completed in the summer of 2025 - first since 2014
- High quality photos have been a focus with a new camera
- Working towards one united system rather than a collection of schools - one identity
- Giving Tuesday success - communication plan aided in the results
- Increase visibility
- Goal - all experience a sense of welcome with the BHCS
- Ben - who monitors grade school accounts? Principals, Rebekah as well as some admin assistants
- Jessica - boot camp for the elementary accounts? Rebekah will work towards it. Discussion over how to look at the schools and social media - who posts and how is it monitored?
- Rebekah just launched a book!

Committee reports

A. Academics - Joe Malsam

- a. Provided a data sheet
- b. Should teachers be notified of the goals prior to testing? Yes they will be going forward.

- c. Joe reviewed some of the numbers and talked about goals in the testing. Reading – many grade levels went down. Math – saw better growth in the lower grades. Spring testing will be reviewed again for both subjects.
 - d. Review of the bylaws with good discussion over responsibilities. A few suggestions and recommendations are coming. Jody Ferris will continue to work on the revision.
 - e. Extensive discussion on the implementation of STEM at the middle school level. A couple of parents with some concerns.
 - 1. Jessica articulated about the Governor’s STEM-UP program.
 - 2. Our schools know about the grant and have received some funding recently.
 - 3. Concern is over staffing rather than materials.
- B. Catholic Identity – Jacki Kelly**
- a. Decided to update bylaws. Will get that information to Jessica soon.
 - b. Worked on job description for Director of Faith and Mission.
- C. Enrollment & Marketing – Jennifer Rose-Bass, see minutes attached**
- a. Highlight the enrollment campaign - \$13,000 to revamp focus on PK/K.
 - b. Attendance at open houses was just ok. Except Holy Cross was great.
 - c. New bylaws updated and sent to Jessica.
 - d. ESA – new approach on how to spread the word? Worried about the future of ESAs.
- D. Finance – DJ Faller, Brent Olson and John Flanery**
- a. Tuition receivables – both reports attached.
 - 1. Blackbaud report - \$16.8 million
 - 2. ESA amount up \$2.7 million over last year
 - 3. Consequently the tuition assistance dropped about \$1 million.
 - 4. From Ben - are we using all our scholarships? Yes, some are being divided more.
 - 5. Delinquency is up \$30,000 from last year.
 - 6. Infinite campus report – very little activity. \$1,500 for us after payment to Noll.
 - b. Parish receivables – see attached. All paid in full except for Cathedral – down \$66,000.
 - c. Financials
 - 1. Through September is in the packet. DJ has them completed through November but wants to confirm/review before sharing.
 - d. Audit report
 - 1. Met yesterday with Becky from KRP to review.
 - 2. Met today with Diane and Jill from the Diocese.
 - 3. Went well except we are over \$750,000 from federal dollars due to the lunch program and safety grants. We must add an additional component to the audit but not a concern. KRP will have to audit either the safety grants or the lunch program. It will add a few pages to the audit. Not sure how long it will take.
 - 4. Expensive food costs? Met with Lunchtime Solutions this week. Commodities aren’t always added back in the review. The goal of the lunch program is to break even. We do buy lunches for our teachers that come out of our general fund. We are considering an RFP. The ala carte items are pricey but we don’t lose money on those items. What does Morningside and BCU use? Different situation for them.
 - e. Parish Finance meetings
 - 1. Would we provide that interest back to the parishes? July 1 through January would be about \$13,000 total for all parishes.
 - 2. Motion by Fr. Brad to include interest in the payments for the capital expenses to the parishes. Jessica seconds the motion
 - a. All in favor – aye

- b. Opposed - none
 - c. Motion carries
- f. 2026-2027 Line of Credit with Central Bank
 - 1. 2024-2025 - \$3.5 million
 - 2. 2025-2026 - \$2 million
 - 3. 2026-2027 - continue with \$2 million - no change, no motion needed.
- E. Leadership & Governance - Jessica Felix
 - a. Ben forwarded committee things and she dug into information from the Diocese to make progress. Please provide committee bylaw suggestions to Jessica. She is confirming interest from committee members and might need to add 1-2 members. One question has come up - what do we want in the bylaws versus what do we want as policy?

President's report

- A. Advancement 2025-2026 - see documentation.
 - 1. Scorecard - lybunts and sybunts should increase this month due to a mailing.
 - 2. Auction update - Friday, April 10. Board is strongly encouraged to attend and will be recognized. "Fiesta of Faith, Family and Friends"
- B. Pink house - 1213 Grandview Blvd - purchase price of \$150,000 - June 1 possession. Free demolition plus \$2,000 dump fees.
 - 1. The owner was in a nursing home but recently passed away. Does this put our purchase at risk? It will go into a trust and hopefully we can close on June 1.
- C. North lots - going out for RFP soon from the city.
 - 1. Mike Neswick is working on a drawing.
- D. Fence update
 - 1. Cease building the fence from the city on 11th street. John is working with Councilman Bertrand.
 - 2. Put in our request to vacate the alley
 - 3. Not in the long-term comp plan to put the street through there.
 - 4. Ask to vacate and then to purchase - Jennifer will work on this.
- E. Enrollment update
 - 1. First registration window opened February 2
 - 2. See report attached - over 850 registered already.
 - 3. ESA conversation - concern over upcoming election. How do we address this?
 - 4. Open houses - PK and K, Discover Heelan reviewed.
 - 5. Hold numbers - started at 73 families and 143 students. Significantly less than previous years but little movement so far in two weeks.
- F. *Marian Hall - discussion and possible vote on purchase, another 1-year lease or release it
 - 1. There was much discussion over the value of the property and what it is worth to BHCS. How do we proceed with the Diocese to get the best value for our money as well as provide to adequate an offer?
 - 2. Jennifer discussed providing a BOV. Do we consider an appraisal?
 - 3. How is the roof? General condition? Is there any asbestos?
 - 4. It is ADA compliant.
 - 5. Motion from Fr. Brad for Jennifer to discuss BOV with Diocese. Ben 2nds. All in favor - aye. Opposed - none. Motion carries.
- G. Lunchtime Solutions concerns - new RFP going out this spring perhaps. Lunchtime is revisiting some of their prices for 2026-2027 to prevent an RFP.
- H. First Student busing - update on the new app that allows parents to follow the progress of buses at all times. The app follows the bus, not the student.
- I. Committee started reviewing next capital campaign plan met February 12. They have two additional meetings lined up at this time and will report to the board at the appropriate time.

J. St. Michael's South Sioux City has announced they are closing and not fundraising further.

1. John and Laurie met with the faculty and staff. John has emailed all open BHCS positions to their building principal for sharing.
2. Student recruitment
 - a. March 16 we will be on site at their parish center to meet with families.
 - b. Open houses at Mater Dei, Sacred Heart and CDLA will occur the week before. Holy Cross will be by appointment due to poor proximity.

K. Recess update from the January school board meeting

1. Clarification from Joe from the last board meeting – in the public schools, lunch rolls right into recess.
2. John will update the board later in the spring on progress for 26-27.

L. Marisa update – she has had an infection and is still in quite a bit of pain. Her return is delayed until at least March 9.

Other business – Board opening

- 2 nominations at the last board meeting – both were nominated and received a second.
- Jennifer Hernandez was nominated by Jacki Kelly. She is a member at Cathedral Parish, 1 child at CDLA, bilingual, very connected in the parish and Hispanic community.
- Ben Uhl nominated Julie Lohr who is an alum, small business owner as a dentist, this role includes HR, social media, IT as well. Her husband Chris serves as business manager. 4 kids in our schools. Member at Holy Cross. Volunteers a lot including FIRE Foundation board, several youth athletic programs and our school community.
- Because a third nominee was not a part of the original nomination process, they will not be considered at this time. They will serve on leadership and governance committee instead.
- Discussion over both candidates.
- Roll call vote by paper ballot
- Jennifer Hernandez is the new board member.

Motion by Fr. Schon to move to executive session and seconded by Jessica Felix at 6:41 p.m.

Motion by Fr. Brad to move out of executive session and seconded by Ben Uhl at 7:01 p.m.

Motion to adjourn by Ben Uhl and seconded by Fr. Brad at 7:02 p.m. All in favor – aye.

Next Board meeting on Tuesday, March 17 at 5:00 p.m.

* Indicates anticipated vote