

**St. Ambrose Catholic School
School Advisory Council Meeting
Wednesday, January 14, 2026
6:00pm – Pastoral Center**

MINUTES

Members Present: Erin Kochan, Ashley Lack, Kathy Wittich, Mark Terry, Stephanie Monroe

Ex Officio Members Present: Bob Baird, Deacon Jay Wackerly, Father Steven Janoski

Others Present: None.

Call to Order: Chairperson Erin Kochan opened the meeting at 6:02 p.m.

Opening Prayer: Opening Prayer was led by Deacon Jay Wackerly.

Committee and other reports submitted are included after the board minutes. The following notes are from discussion during our meeting about those reports.

Approval of November Minutes: A motion to approve the Minutes from the November meeting as previously distributed was made by Mark Terry and seconded by Kathy Wittich. The motion was carried with unanimous approval.

Standing Committee Updates:

- Executive Committee (Erin Kochan/Justin Lacy/Ashley Lack): No report.
- Policy/Planning (Erin Kochan reporting for Justin Lacy): Work continues on the Athletic Handbook updates.
- Development (Mark Terry): See the attached SAPA report. The Cash Bash fundraiser is ongoing. The first early bird drawing was January 12th.
- Public Relations (Stephanie Monroe/Bob Baird): See the attached Principal's Report.
- Building/Grounds (Bob Baird reporting for Carmen Serio): Steve Blair is leading this committee. Planning continues to address drainage issues on campus and parking lot updates. Carmen Serio emailed parking lot proposals and highlights from the last committee meeting.
- Athletics (Bob Baird reporting for Bob Baird/Justin Johnson): Basketball is mostly wrapped up; still upcoming are regional games for the 8th grade boys the week of January 26th. Girls basketball is completed. Volleyball games begin the week of January 18th. KC Free Throw Contest is scheduled for January 29th.

IT Update (Deacon Jay Wackerly): See attached report.

Principal's Update (Bob Baird): See attached report. New math intervention: the Freckle app which allows for individualized lessons at the students' levels.. MAP testing is scheduled for the week of April 20th.

Additional Discussion: No additional discussion items were brought forward.

New Business: The Family School Agreement will be addressed soon by Father, with the reminder to families that the agreement is for FAMILY attendance at Mass, not just the parents.

Adjournment: At 6:34 p.m. Stephanie Monroe motioned to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded by Mark Terry.

The next meeting is February 11, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. and will be held in the Pastoral Center.

REPORTS

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

CALENDAR

1-17-26	SAPA Skating Party at the Loading Dock, 9:00-11:30
1-19-26	Martin Luther King Jr. Day, NO SCHOOL
1-26-26	Catholic Schools Week
2-1-26	Open House 11:30-2:00
2-4-26	SAPA Meeting, 6:00
2-6-26	7th Grade to LCCC STEAM Fair
2-11-26	1:30 Dismissal, School Advisory Council Meeting, 6:00

2026-2027 Registration

Registration for the 2026-2027 school year will open on March 1. Budget projections and tuition rates are being determined and will be shared soon.

Religion Curriculum

We continue to work through the evaluation process of the available curriculum.

Catholic Times Article and PR Focus on Accelerated Math and Science

In past years, the *Catholic Times* would create a small article focusing on the good news at each of our Catholic schools in the Diocese of Springfield. With the recently announced restructuring of the *Catholic Times* they will now publish once a month and are no longer creating an article on each school. They will accept articles from schools focusing on positive happenings throughout the year. We are working on an article highlighting the positive outcomes of our accelerated math and science curriculums and the continued growth we have achieved in both areas.

Grant Application Updates

Recently St. Ambrose Catholic School applied to receive grant funding from different sources. The first application was from the Alton Foundation. The foundation generously donated \$3,000 to support our ongoing Science curriculum needs. We also applied to the Madison County Green Grant to receive up to \$1,750 for expansion of outdoor garden space in the playground.

Safety and Security Committee Meeting Recap

A summary will be provided from the Safety and Security Committee meeting held on Monday Jan. 12.

PR Focus

- Saints Spotlight : This feature has been well received and we continue to provide it as a means of sharing information.
- Open House Publicity : The Open House has been running on the Billboards and on Facebook for some time.
- Catholic Times Article on Accelerated Math : Our Accelerated Math and Science programs will be featured in the August edition.
- Catholic Schools Week Promotion: We are promoting our upcoming activities. I will be visiting local media outlets, WBGZ and the Daily Show to highlight Catholic Schools Week.
- Promotion of upcoming registration: Very soon we will begin running advertisements for our upcoming registration. I will return to the local media outlets in late February to promote registration.
- Local billboards continue to display our information regularly.

SAPA REPORT

St. Ambrose Parents' Association
SAPA Meeting: January 7, 2026
Location: St. Ambrose Community Center

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chris Varady, President.

OPENING PRAYER: Jesus, our friend and our brother, please guide us with your wisdom and love today. Help us to do your will and to be open to hear your voice as we speak and listen to one another. Amen.

PRESIDENT REPORT- Chris Varady

- No report.

VICE PRESIDENT REPORT- Joy Stanton

- Cash Bash
 - SAPA officers will be selling tickets after each Mass through February 8th.
 - Banners have been placed at the intersection of Godfrey Rd and Stamper, in front of the school parking lot and downtown at Flock.
 - Yard signs are available to take tonight
 - Currently 98 tickets have been sold.
 - First early bird drawing is Monday, January 12.

SECRETARY REPORT- Ashley Lack

- Approval of Minutes from the December 3, 2025 meeting
 - A motion was made by Susan Kasten and seconded by Chris Varady to approve the Minutes as previously distributed.

TREASURER REPORT- Susan Kasten

- Checking account balance: \$25,075.82
- Expenses: Football payouts, Toys for Tots purchases, Christmas Feast
- Income: Toys for Tots donations \$882

PUBLIC RELATIONS REPORT- Marli Nixon reporting for Tenisha Phelps & Marli Nixon

- Saints Spotlight Update: Features of each class will be scheduled throughout the rest of the year. Custodial Crew will be highlighted soon.
- An article in Catholic Times is upcoming and will highlight our math and science programs.
- Billboard Update: Robinson Outdoor will be sending the invoice for the new contract. Cash Bash is being marketed.

- Current events being marketed: Cash Bash, Family Ice Skating at the Loading Dock

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES REPORT- Kylie Gregory

- Completed Events:
 - **Cardinals Calendars**
 - Susan Kasten reporting for Chair: Paige Dawdy
 - There has been a shipping issue; the calendars are still not here. We have received no updates; it is likely that refunds will be issued.
 - **St. Ambrose Community Christmas/Toys for Tots Drive**
 - Chair: Susan Kasten
 - Huge thank you to the Godfrey Knights of Columbus for their very generous donation.
 - **Family Movie Night**
 - Chair: Chris Varady
 - There was a large turnout this year.
 - We will try to have a sign up next year to be better prepared with snacks, etc.
 - **Christmas Feast**
 - Sue Stirnman reporting for Chairs: Lauren Hoefert & Sue Stirnman
 - The kids really enjoyed it!
- Upcoming Events:
 - **Family Ice Skating**
 - Chair: Chris Varady
 - Date: January 17, 2026
 - Location: Loading Dock
 - **Cash Bash**
 - Chair: Joy Stanton & SAPA Officers
 - Date: February 14, 2025
 - Tickets on sale beginning January 1st
 - **Sleep in Heavenly Peace Bed Build**
 - Saturday, March 28, 2026 9am - 12pm
 - Flyer is being finalized
 - Perfect opportunity to get 3 service hours, but space is limited (20), so sign up to reserve your spot.
 - Sign up at: <https://x.gldn.io/e/fV5uuVN9HWb>
 - **Spiritwear**
 - Chair: Mel Bechtold
 - ~ December totals \$764
 - **Football Raffle**
 - Chair: Matt Bechtold

- ~ Final totals / End of raffle around \$5000

- **Basketball Raffle**

- Chair: Matt Bechtold
- ~ Dates / Preliminary status
 - March 15-April 6
 - Will be advertised on the billboard

DEACON JAY'S REPORT- Jay Wackerly

- Recently twelve 3rd graders were trained as altar servers.
- The Parish Stewardship report is finished and is available online.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT- Bob Baird

CALENDAR

1-5-26	School Resumes
1-7-26	SAPA Meeting, 6:00
1-9-26	2nd Quarter Report Cards Open
1-12-26	Safety and Security Committee Meeting
1-14-26	1:30 Dismissal
1-17-26	SAPA Skating Party at the Loading Dock, 9:00-11:30
1-19-26	Martin Luther King Jr. Day, NO SCHOOL

Catholic Times Article and PR Focus on Accelerated Math and Science

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Grant Application Updates

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Catholic Schools Week 2026 January 25-Feb. 1 - *United in Faith and Community*

Each year during the last week of January we celebrate Catholic Schools week. This nationwide celebration highlights the connected focus of our schools; to spread the Gospel and teach our students to live as witnesses of Christ and to provide an environment that is like a second family to all that emphasizes spiritual, academic, and extracurricular growth. This year the continued nationwide theme for the Catholic Schools Week is *United in Faith and Community*. During this week there are extra school

wide activities that provide opportunities for spiritual growth and as well as an opportunity to participate in activities that foster our connected sense of school community. Some of the scheduled activities include;

- Eucharistic Procession
- Eucharistic Adoration
- Communal Rosary
- Faith Family Candlemas Activity
- School Mass
- School Wide Spelling Bee
- Faith Family All School Trivia Game
- Knights of Columbus Free Throw Shooting Contest
- Teacher Appreciation Luncheon
- Creation of Valentine's Day Cards for Nursing Bound
- Student Activity Day
- School Wide Pep Rally 8th Grade Parent/Teacher Volleyball Game

Catholic Schools Week Open House 2-1-26

As always we are looking forward to Catholic Schools week in late January. This year Catholic Schools week is scheduled for Sunday Jan. 25, 2026- Sunday Feb. 1, 2026. Our Catholic Schools Week Open House is set for Sunday Feb. 1, 2026. This event culminates Catholic Schools Week and is an opportunity for both current as well as new and prospective families to visit us for an Open House, and see the spirit of Christ alive at St. Ambrose.

School Wish List

Recently St. Ambrose Catholic School has updated the school wish list to include a few items. These wishes include;

- School Laminator \$2,000 (The previous laminator had been fixed a few times, but is no longer functional)
- Math Supplement Renaissance \$2,000 Freckle Math - This math supplement would support and enhance teacher instruction. Our students and classes have experienced significant gains/growth in Math and we are looking to continue building on this success.

Updating Aesthetics

Plans are underway to paint images/decoration on the panels on the doors at the main entrance to the school. If you are interested in helping with this project, please contact Mr. Baird.

New Students

A few new preschoolers have started school for the 2nd semester.

NEW BUSINESS

- A question was asked about a new social studies curriculum. Mr. Baird states that there have been no updates from the publishers.
- Mother/Son Dance tentative date February 21--will check gym availability to finalize
- Bowling tentatively scheduled for March 15--date will be finalized soon
- Book Fair May 1-5

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION- Open Forum

- No additional questions were raised.

CLOSING PRAYER: We give you thanks, Lord, for helping us to learn more and how to love one another. Please help us to always be instruments of your perfect peace in our school. Amen.

With no further questions/discussions, the meeting was adjourned at 6:32 p.m. by Chris Varady, President.

Next meeting: February 4, 2026

Respectfully submitted by Ashley Lack, Secretary

THANK YOU TO OUR SAINT SPONSORS!

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF THE AND OF LINCOLN CHARITABLE FUND	ST. AMBROSE WOMEN'S GROUP	GODFREY KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS	J.A.D.
DEACON BILL & PAT KESSLER	DEACON JAY & KIM WACKERLY	LIBERTY BANK	MARY RAWE
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THOMAS BECHTOLD & CYNTHIA GELSTHORPE	MORGAN & KRISTINA	DAVID & MARY ECKHOUSE	
JOHN & SUE STIRNAMAN	MATT & MEL BECHTOLD	MORGAN & KRISTINA UPTERGROVE	
JOHN HOEFERT, TARRANT AND HARMAN, REAL ESTATE & AUCTION CO.		GEORGIA VANWINKLE	

ATHLETIC REPORT

No report.

IT REPORT

1. UDM Pro Max Gateway/Router/Firewall – Installation is proving to be more time intensive than expected. The plan is to have the new system installed by the end of January. The new system replaces the existing Sophos equipment firewall/router which has a yearly license fee of > \$3,000. For the Ubiquity UDM Pro Max the “license fee” is part of the hardware.
2. With the UDM Pro Max our network security will be enhanced.
 1. Subnets LANs for Admin, Staff, Students, Guests, Security Cameras, Shared, Maintenance (e.g. Gym HVAC), Internet of Things (IOT) (e.g. other cameras, door access).
 2. Personal devices (e.g. teachers’ phones) will need to use the Guest network.
 3. The Church Sound Assist/WIFI access will change.
 4. Will request review of design by Tristan B. and/or Mark T.
3. VPN Remote login (ticket - 899) – This will be completed along with the UDM Pro Max install.
4. Work started on the E-Rate grant for the 26/27 Fiscal Year. ClearWave has been requested to provide a quote.
5. Our Internet Service Provider (ISP) contract with Spectrum ends in June.
6. Chromebooks - 4 returned from repair, 8 still out, 2 teacher Chromebooks need repaired. Student Chromebook warranties expire this year. Teachers’ Chromebook warranties have already expired. Chromebook refresh needs to be assessed. A rough plan would be to get 50

Chromebooks per year. Assuming \$200 per Chromebook that means we need to plan for \$10,000 per year.

7. Gym audio/video system documentation in work. The system is up and running. Connected the display in the cabinet to the Dell PC. Connected the Ethernet Rx Audio output Chromebook audio and the main audio output to the audio switch. Last piece of equipment to be installed is the door-mounted monitor.

8. Mr. Baird's door monitor & access control is installed.

9. Elementary wing cameras have been installed.

10. Back shed camera ethernet connector needs to be replaced. Need to order a soldering station to facilitate the repair.

11. Outside upper gym door camera is installed.

12. Security camera capture license plate (ticket - 924) upper parking lot. Determined that to capture a license plate at night a spot/night light is needed. Is this worth the cost?

13. The lower parking lot camera needs to be adjusted. Eli plans to do this today 6 Jan.

14. KnowBe4 Status – Training still needed Allison Kain, Pat Jun, and After Care staff.

15. Update/Clear voice messages to x103 the IT office.

FATHER STEVE'S REPORT

No report.

DEACON JAY'S REPORT

- Stewardship report 2025 is being printed.
- Altar Server Training for 3rd Grade Complete (12).
- SE/CMG – Safe Environment
 1. Church has 145 Active users with 1 action needed (Background Check Expires Within 60 Days).
 2. St. Ambrose School 95 (-1) Active users with 0 action needed.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS REPORT

Just a recap and a few action items from our meeting [the Building and Grounds Committee meeting]

- 1 We will order Phillips LED lights non dimmable as a trial to see if they perform better. Pat will track the location. Make sure you get the right color or K value. If you are not sure let me know.
- 2 Pat will pursue another quote or two for the new front sign.
- 3 Pat will get Fathers approval to repair the two outside lights.
- 4 Pat, Steve and Carmen will reexamine the drainage issues in the parking lot next week when the weather improves so we can get quotes to get this issue resolved.
- 5 Pat will let the group know when he gets a commitment for a visit to look at the playground.
- 6 Agreed to continue to use Joehl to do snow removal.
- 7 Work to install the steeple and resurface the parking during the summer break.

8 Steve explained to the group that his role is to help facilitate the larger projects, communicate with the finance committee but not to approve projects as that is Father Steve's sole responsibility.

Carmen Serio also forwarded Council members copies of the current estimates for parking lot repairs.

Respectfully submitted by Ashley Lack, School Advisory Council Secretary