

**St. Ambrose Catholic School
School Advisory Council Meeting
Wednesday, March 11, 2026
6:00pm – Pastoral Center**

MINUTES

Members Present: Erin Kochan, Ashley Lack, Carmen Serio, Mark Terry, Justin Lacy

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 6:00 p.m.

Opening Prayer: Opening Prayer was led by Father Steven Janoski.

Guest Speaker: Lisa Hayes was unable to attend tonight's meeting to discuss the capital campaign.

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 February Minutes: A motion to approve the Minutes from the January meeting as previously distributed was made by Mark Terry and seconded by Carmen Serio. The motion was carried with unanimous approval.

Standing Committee Updates:

- Executive Committee (Erin Kochan/Justin Lacy/Ashley Lack): No report.
- Policy/Planning (Justin Lacy): A draft has been started with updates to the Athletic Handbook. The new Athletic Director for the 2026-2027 school year (Jamie Burns) is planning a meeting soon to review the handbook and discuss suggested changes. The school handbook will also be updated with a policy regarding artificial intelligence. Staff will attend a professional development regarding AI in schools on March 13th.
- Development (Mark Terry): See the attached SAPA report. Cash Bash went well. The next big fundraiser is the Golf Tournament. The SAPA officers are still looking at ways to improve Cash Bash for next year, possibly changing the date of the drawing or extending the ticket sales window.
- Public Relations (Bob Baird reporting for Stephanie Monroe/Bob Baird): Registration promotion videos were filmed last week and are being released.
- Building/Grounds (Carmen Serio): There was a building/grounds meeting on 2/25/26. They continue to look at many projects for our campus, including parking lot resurfacing and the feasibility of playground improvements.

- Athletics (Bob Baird reporting for Bob Baird/Justin Johnson): See attached report. Jamie Burns has created a Google calendar for the gym use schedule.

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

Principal's Update (Bob Baird): See attached report.

Additional Discussion: No additional discussions were brought forward.

New Business: Erin Kochan, Chair appointed Justin Lacy as Nominating Committee chair to fill the 2 open Council seats. Erin Kochan will assist. Council members are encouraged to email Justin Lacy names of people they would recommend for the Council and he will reach out to them to ask them to apply.

Adjournment: At 6:26 p.m. Mark Terry motioned to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded by Carmen Serio.

The next meeting is April 8, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. and will be held in the Pastoral Center.

REPORTS

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

CALENDAR

- 3/13 End of 3rd Quarter
12:00 Dismissal for Teacher Professional Development
- 3/15 Family Bowling Day @ Bowl Haven 1:00-3:00
- 3/20 Report Cards Open
- 3/23 MCHS Sr. Mission Week
- 3/28 SAPA Sleep in Heavenly Bed Build
- 4/1 SAPA Meeting
- 4/5 Easter Sunday
- 4/8 School Advisory Council

- **Proposed Fundraising Change from SAPA**

It was proposed at the SAPA meeting on 3-4-26 to change the dates of 2 fundraisers for the 2026-2027 school year. The suggestion was to move the Cash Bash drawing to November 2026 (exact date TBD) and have ticket sales August-November. The feedback was that a longer time for ticket sales and asking for money prior to Christmas would be more successful.

With the potential move of Cash Bash to November, the Trivia Night fundraiser would be moved to February 2027, with a proposed date of February 6th.

- **Personnel Update**

We are pleased to announce Mr. Stephen Noud as our new maintenance employee for St. Ambrose Parish. Mr. Noud is a St. Ambrose parishioner and is retired military. Recently he had been working for the Catholic Charities food pantry and will now join our staff.

- **ACRE Testing Completed**

The annual ACRE (Assessment of Catholic Religious Education) test was completed for 5th and 8th graders last week. Each year in the Diocese of Springfield students in grades 5 and 8 complete testing. This year's results were very positive and group summaries will be posted soon.

- **St. Ambrose Welcome/PR Video**

On Friday March 6, we filmed short video clips in each class promoting our students and school. This is to coincide with our registration and will be posted to welcome all new students to St. Ambrose. A special thank you to Mel Bechtold and Marlie Nixon for coordinating and choreographing the video.

Annual Virtus Program - Empowering God's Children, Coming Soon

An annual expectation in the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois is the presentation of the program Virtus - Empowering God's Children. Please see the parent letter and materials posted to the school website and please note that in this year's cycle we will be presenting Lessons 1 and 2. If you choose to opt out, please complete and return the opt out form by Friday March 13. Lessons 1 and 2 will be presented in classes during the last two weeks of March. Please also note that there are 3 lessons for PreK. All of the lessons, the parent letter, and materials are posted on the school website under the "Academics" section and "Virtus - Empowering God's Children."

- **2026-2027 Registration Information**

Important information for the 2026-2027 school year is now posted under the "Enroll Online" section of the school website. Newly posted information includes; the tuition sheet for the

2026-2027 school year, the new Family School agreement, as well as a registration letter. Please remember that registration opened Sunday March 1 and runs through the end of March. It is important to have all those that will attend St. Ambrose registered by the end of March so that we may effectively plan for the upcoming school year. If your child/family will not return, please let us know as soon as possible. Thank you for your support of Catholic education and GO SAINTS!

- **Madison County Green Grant**

Recently St. Ambrose was awarded more than \$1,700 for a continuation of the Green Grant project. Funds will be used in the back playground/garden area to extend the retaining walls, add planters, purchase organic material, along with other supplies. Students in Character Counts will work with Mrs. Farniok and Mr. Robertson to help organize and lead our first planting. A big thank you to the Madison County Green Schools organization for supporting our efforts!

SAPA REPORT

St. Ambrose Parents' Association
SAPA Meeting: March 4, 2026
Location: St. Ambrose Community Center

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 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

- Welcome to our meeting!
- Introduction of Board Members, Event Chairs, and guests

VICE PRESIDENT REPORT- Joy Stanton

- Confirmed cash bash winner checks were printed and mailed the week of February 16th.
 - Profit this year was \$24,114.23
 - Last year's profit was \$30,430
 - Michelle Pulaski will have a list of families who did not purchase/sell their required 2 tickets ready tomorrow. Those families will be invoiced for their remaining requirement.
 - Based on previous years' models, Cash Bash drawing would be February 6, 2027. We don't sell tickets or do the drawing during Lent. Ash Wednesday is February 10 2027.
 - It was proposed to move Cash Bash sales to August-November 2026. Also proposed to then move trivia to February 6, 2027.

SECRETARY REPORT- Ashley Lack

- Approval of Minutes from the February 4, 2026 meeting
 - A motion was made by Joy Stanton and seconded by Chris Varady to approve the Minutes as previously distributed.

TREASURER REPORT- Susan Kasten

- Checking account balance - \$47,645.73
- February Income - Cash Bash & Golf (\$17,360)
- February Expenses - Cash Bash (\$17,500 in payouts)

PUBLIC RELATIONS REPORT- Tenisha Phelps & Marli Nixon

- Golf billboard advertisement up and running

- Basketball billboard is up and running
- Family Bowling Day flyer has been created and shared on Facebook.
- Golf flyer has been created and shared on Facebook.
- Mel Bechtold will be taking photos at school on Friday March 6th to help amp up our PR for school enrollment.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES REPORT- Kylie Gregory

- Completed Activities
 - **Mother Son Event**
 - Chair: Marli Nixon
 - Date: February 8, 2026
 - Good turnout; everyone had a lot of fun!
 - **Cash Bash**
 - Chair: Joy Stanton
 - Date: February 14, 2026
 - Successful event but not all families bought the required 2 tickets
 - **Dine to Donate at McDonald's**
 - Date: March 3, 2026
 - Chair: Natalie Gordon
 - Profit: \$729
 - This is \$176 more than last year!
- Upcoming Activities
 - **Family Bowling Event**
 - Chair: Sue Stirnaman
 - Date: Sunday, March 15, 2026
 - Time: 1:00-3:00 pm
 - Soft drinks will be provided from a donation from Sue Stirnaman
 - Cost: \$12.00 for 3 games, including shoe rental. Extra games cost \$3.00 each.
 - Flyer has been created and shared to Facebook. Marli Nixon will have Jean Connoyer print the flyers and send them home with the students.
 - **Sleep in Heavenly Peace Bed Build**
 - Saturday, March 28, 2026 9am - 12pm
 - Sign up is full; there is a waitlist
 - Sign up at: <https://x.gldn.io/e/fV5uuVN9HWb>
 - **Alton City-Wide Litter Clean Up**
 - Chair: Ashley Lack
 - Date: Saturday, April 11, 2026
 - Time: 9:00a-12:00p
 - This is a student-only service hour event
 - All students must be accompanied by a parent/guardian

- You are free to volunteer as long as you are able; you don't have to commit to the entire 3 hours
 - Sign up here: <https://signup.com/go/BJZgPxo>

- **Basketball Raffle**
 - Chair: Matt Bechtold
 - Date: Begins March 1, 2026
 - Selection Sunday is March 15th
 - Random assignment of codes/teams; similar to Football Raffle

- **Father Daughter Event**
 - Chair: Megan Baiter
 - Date: April 18, 2026
 - Time: 6:30-8:00 pm
 - Flyer has been created and will be shared.
 - Sign up will be created soon.

- **Scholastic Book Fair**
 - Chair: Joy Stanton
 - Dates: May 1-May 5, 2026
 - delivery window is 4/23, 4/24, 4/27-4/29; pick up window is 5/5-5/8 5/11
 - Online sales available 4/30 - 5/13 (we earn 25% in scholastic dollars from online sales)

- **Golf Tournament**
 - Chair: Katie Krueger
 - Date: Saturday, May 2, 2026
 - Location: Rolling Hills Golf Course
 - 2 tee times: 8:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.
 - Catering: Fema's
 - Total teams registered to date: 28; goal is 30 teams for 1st flight and 30 teams for 2nd flight
 - Profit goal: \$40,000
 - Sponsorships to date: \$16,100 (cash in hand)
 - Flyer and registration forms to be sent home with students this month. Katie Krueger will email Jean Connoyer the flyer. Katie Krueger will speak at Mass asking for teams and donations.
 - Volunteer sign up will be coming soon.

DEACON JAY'S REPORT- Jay Wackerly

- Penance Service March 22nd
- Catholic Campaign survey request was emailed to parishioners

- Meeting on survey results is Thursday, March 5th at 6:00 p.m. All are welcome.
- Safe Environment: 3 actions needed for school, 2 actions needed for church
- 7th graders are to be volunteering at the KC Fish Fry to receive a donation towards their Camp Ondesok class trip
- Clearwave is being researched for possibly replacing Spectrum as our service provider
- Firewall being replaced soon
- VBS needs volunteers for group leaders. They don't want to turn away children from registering due to not having enough adult volunteers. Contact Kim Wackerly to volunteer.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT- Bob Baird

- **Athletic Director**
We are pleased to announce that Mrs. Jamie Burns will become our new Athletic Director for the 2026-2027 school year. A big thank you to Mrs. Monica Ellebracht and Mr. Justin Johnson for serving as Athletic Directors in the past few years! Mrs. Burns is already working on the 26-27 school year. Some of the ongoing preparations include team schedules, gym schedules, new uniforms, and so much more. Another big thank you to Mr. Kevin Roberston who will serve as an assistant AD to Mrs. Burns and will help with supervisions and more.
- **Personnel Update**
-We are pleased to announce Mr. Stephen Noud as our new maintenance employee for St. Ambrose Parish. Mr. Noud is a St. Ambrose parishioner and is retired military. Recently he had been working for the Catholic Charities food pantry and will now join our staff.
- **Main Entrance Door/Wall Art**
Updated proposed main entrance artwork will be shared at the meeting.
- **ACRE Testing Completed**
The annual ACRE (Assessment of Catholic Religious Education) test was completed for 5th and 8th graders last week. Each year in the Diocese of Springfield students in grades 5 and 8 complete testing.
- **St. Ambrose Welcome/PR Video**
On Friday March 6, we will be filming short video clips in each class promoting our students and school. This is to coincide with our registration and will be posted to welcome all new students to St. Ambrose. We would like for everyone to wear St. Ambrose red next Friday and be in their best St. Ambrose clothing.
- **Annual Virtus Program - Empowering God's Children, Coming Soon**
An annual expectation in the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois is the presentation of the program Virtus - Empowering God's Children. Please see the parent letter and materials posted to the school website and please note that in this year's cycle we will be presenting Lessons 1 and 2. If you choose to opt out, please complete and return the opt out form by Friday March 13. Lessons 1 and 2 will be presented in classes during the last two weeks of March. Please also note that there are 3 lessons for PreK. All of the lessons, the parent letter, and materials are posted on the school website under the "Academics" section and "Virtus - Empowering God's Children."
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know as soon as possible. Thank you for your support of Catholic education and GO SAINTS!

NEW BUSINESS

- Board voting to add Hospitality Officer position for the 2026-2027 school year
 - Susan Kasten made a motion to add this position and Chris Varady seconded the motion. This was unanimously approved.
 - Chris Varady noted that a job description will need to be created and suggested that it include this officer representing SAPA at some school events, such as the Backpack Blessing, Open Houses, etc.
 - Deacon Jay noted that there is a Hospitality Committee for the Pastoral Council and that the SAPA Hospitality Officer should connect with this committee.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION- Open Forum

- No additional questions or discussions 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 7:21 p.m. by Chris Varady, President.

Next meeting: April 1, 2026

Respectfully submitted by Ashley Lack, Secretary

THANK YOU TO OUR SAINT SPONSORS!

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ATHLETIC REPORT

- **Athletic Director**

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- **Volleyball Competes in the Conference Tournament**

Congratulations to all of our volleyball teams for having successful seasons. Our 8th grade volleyball team is the last competing and will finish their season in the conference tournament, which begins this evening.

- **Track Registrations Complete**

As we move into the Spring, track is the final athletic activity. Thank you to East Alton-Wood River HS for the use of their track for practices.

IT REPORT

Addition to Handbook: Artificial Intelligence

Excerpts from - MagisAI.com: “AI handbook for catholic school”

5. ****Responsible Use Policies****

- Implement clear policies governing AI usage to ensure it supports students' faith, intellectual formation, and moral development.

- Safeguard students from privacy violations, excessive screen time, and potential ideological biases by continually monitoring AI tools and maintaining human oversight.

- Train teachers and administrators in the ethical use of AI and in counseling students to balance technology use wisely with personal and spiritual growth.

JWW AI (Artificial Intelligence) is a research tool, and when AI is used it shall be noted for school assignments. Teachers will decide when using AI is not appropriate.

****Summary:****

A Catholic school AI handbook should articulate that AI, while powerful, is a limited technological instrument that lacks the divine qualities of human intellect and free will. Its integration into education should enhance, not replace, human creativity, moral judgment, and spiritual formation. Catholic schools have a unique mission to guide students in the ethical and responsible use of AI, grounded in the Church's intellectual tradition and social teaching, advancing both academic excellence and the primary objective of fostering a living relationship with God through Christ.

Tasks/Status update from IT meeting

1. Router installation issues are being resolved. UDM Pro Max Gateway/Router/Firewall – For the grant two additional quotes are needed for the equipment. This is a high priority task. Remote login (ticket - 899) – This will be completed along with the UDM Pro Max install. Estimated Completion: 3/16/26.
2. Universal Power Supply (UPS) in the Community Center has been replaced.
3. Michell reported a scan the diocese sent to verify PCI (Payment Card Industry) compliance failed. As part of the router update this issue should be resolved. Estimated Completion: 2/17/26
4. Work on the E-Rate grant for the 26/27 Fiscal Year. ClearWave quote is about \$400 less than the current Spectrum \$1,000 cost. Spectrum has not responded to our request for a quote. Estimated Completion: 5/30/26
5. Gym audio/video system documentation in work. Need to update the instructions on the front of the control box. Estimated completion 3/31/26
6. A soldering station was received but needs to be set up. Estimated Completion: 3/31/26
7. Stored the Pastoral Center PC in the work room closet. Needed to make the workroom wheelchair accessible. Connected the phone to the switch in the workroom, but it doesn't work need to figure out why. Estimated completion 3/9/26.
8. 7 Chromebooks have been received from repair. 2 need to be sent out for repair.

9. Clever Single Sign On quit working. A solution is being investigated.

FATHER STEVE'S REPORT

No report.

DEACON JAY'S REPORT

No report.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS REPORT

No report.

Respectfully submitted by Ashley Lack, School Advisory Council Secretary