

WEST CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

September 24, 2025

West Catholic High School

MAK Board Room

Mission: To form disciples of Christ through a dynamic, excellence-driven Catholic education

Attendees: MK Britenfeld, Dan Byers, Suzette Colon, John Frey, John Kesterke (late), James Leonard, Molly Nawrocki, Jenny Pudelko (late), Dave Veneklase, Jeanne Walch

Absent: Fr. Anthony Russo

Resources: President/CEO Jill Wierzbicki, Principal Tony Fischer, Communications Director Natalie Scalabrino, Admissions Director Julie Herdegen

Agenda Item	Discussion/Conclusion/Action	Responsibility
<u>Opening</u>		
1.1 Call to Order & Welcome	Frey called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.	John Frey
1.2 Opening Prayer	Opening prayer led by Byers	Dan Byers
1.3 Roll Call	8 out of 11 present at the time of roll call (Kesterke and Pudelko arrived after the initial roll call)	James Leonard
<u>Comments from the Floor & Community Topics</u>		
<u>Presentations</u>		
3.1 Mission Reflection Moment	While the freshman retreat was taking place at the Franciscan Life Process Center, Herdegen was processing a third transfer application in as many weeks. Each of these three referrals came from Rockford by way of a friend who transferred to WC from Wyoming HS. While all the stories from these transfers were unique, all were looking for "more" (academics, opportunity, faith, etc.). Herdegen mentioned that our students are always striving for and achieving "more" each day, and she thanked the WC School Board for providing "more" to WC than could be imagined.	Julie Herdegen
3.2 Annual Report	Wierzbicki reviewed the financial numbers included in the 2025 Annual Report while taking time to note the comparisons between the years were "apples to apples" comparisons, while additionally highlighting major changes. The highlighted changes included an increase	Jill Wierzbicki

	<p>in endowment, additional gifts to the WC Legacy Funds, and four new named scholarships/funds.</p> <p>Leonard inquired about the amount of money required to start a Legacy Fund. Wierzbicki shared that it takes \$25,000 over a span of 5 years and that there are a number of additional scholarships in the works as well.</p> <p>Wierzbicki noted that the amount of money raised by booster programs went down. However, the school started pulling more items/expenses into the budget, which required teams/groups to raise less. General athletic income has increased, as well as the athletics budget, which compensates for team needs and, therefore, requires less fundraising. Nawrocki noted that it never hit P&L as it doesn't run through revenue. Money is taken out of "held for" accounts, and unspent money rolls over.</p> <p>Kesterke inquired about 4% revenue increase but 8% expense increase (before amortization and depreciation). Nawrocki noted that kitchen expenses, which should be an income offset, impacted the budget. Safeguards have been implemented to ensure losses don't continue. Nawrocki shared that this question came up during the last finance committee meeting and they were looking into other items of note. Wierzbicki highlighted that three years of data are being reviewed by the committee so anomalies can be identified.</p> <p>Veneklase noted an over 6% increase in total gifts contributed. He applauded the increased engagement, which led to an over 8% growth in endowment. Wierzbicki shared that endowment gifts in particular have been targeted to ensure sustainability.</p>	
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Approvals & Discussions

4.1 Review & Approval of June 25 Minutes	Motion: Kesterke; seconded: Byers. Unanimously approved.	John Frey
4.2 Financial Update	<p>June 30, 2024, the audit was just finished. A meeting was held with Doeren Mayhew, where they presented results. Meredith Weathers is on top of the auditors to ensure financials are submitted sooner moving forward. In their findings, they noted concerns with internal controls as there was not a lot of segregation of duties with the last controller. Weathers is committed to utilizing her team more to correct this. The next audit may also have these comments, but Weathers' work will be reflected in the 2026 audit.</p> <p>A separate audit will be completed for West and CC next year as the schools are two separate entities. Walch inquired why this hasn't happened in the past. Nawrocki noted fees/costs and the additional work needed to separate the two could have impacted this decision. Veneklase suggested that the proper systems might not have been in place to do two separate audits. All expressed that she's looking forward to the split to get even more</p>	Molly Nawrocki

	<p>clarity on processes and areas for improvement.</p> <p>The second column in the financial summary has been changed, but it is still unaudited. Surplus is significantly higher than initially projected – approximately \$539,000. Some of that money went into a “rainy day” budget, but some was used for capital expenses, which totaled around \$300,000. WC may not have hit their reserve goal, but that money went into assets to better the school. Weathers is pulling that information.</p> <p>Since the school year has begun, there have also been variances in the budget. New numbers show approximately \$128,000 more in expenses. Wierzbicki sent out an email to department heads, communicating changes and asking them to be conscientious of spending to help avoid going over the budget this year.</p> <p>Leonard inquired about where the All A's money goes. Wierzbicki explained that the raised All A's funds go toward the Falcon Annual Fund, which provides tuition assistance to families who need it.</p> <p>The next WC Board meeting in November will review enrollment projections, salary increases, budgeting, etc.</p>	
4.3 Board Member Updates	<p>Frey shared that the executive committee had discussed five names to potentially add to the Board. He reviewed the process of adding new members to the group. The Board can have between 9 and 17 members, so there is room to grow. Frey asked the Board for additional suggestions if anyone is aware of someone they think would make a good Board member. Wierzbicki noted that diversity should be considered (different professions, parishes, etc.) and where there might be gaps. Wierzbicki also asked the Board to consider their committees when looking to identify new members that would be good to recruit. Such new and active committee members might end up being excellent replacements for departing Board members when their terms end.</p> <p>Veneklase provided historical information regarding past Board interest events. Previously, West has invited individuals to a Board meeting to see if they would like to join. This has been successful in the past.</p> <p>Walch asked if all Board members were serving on a committee. Wierzbicki shared that, while no one is forced to join a committee, most do. Principals and clergy have not been required to do so due to the other obligations/duties they must fulfill for their own boards.</p> <p>Kesterke inquired about diversity, asking if the Board has ever considered bringing in someone from the outside who doesn't have a strong affiliation with West Catholic. He</p>	John Frey

	<p>asked if the Board has blinders as a group that is so passionate about the school. Leonard shared that he joined the Board as an outsider with no previous affiliation or children in the school.</p> <p>Byers added that it's important to have someone who can expertly step in for Board members as they roll off. Veneklase and Frey additionally noted the importance of this strategy.</p>																									
4.4 President's Report	<p>Count Day was Friday (Enrollment as of 9.19.2025)</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="654 424 1436 873"> <thead> <tr> <th>Grade</th><th>Domestic</th><th>International</th><th>Total by Grade</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>9th</td><td>129</td><td>1</td><td>130</td></tr> <tr> <td>10th</td><td>132</td><td>11</td><td>143</td></tr> <tr> <td>11th</td><td>105</td><td>4</td><td>109</td></tr> <tr> <td>12th</td><td>105</td><td>9</td><td>114</td></tr> <tr> <td>Totals</td><td>471</td><td>25</td><td>496</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Wierzbicki noted that she has recorded detailed notes regarding the capital campaign. This is to keep historical data on how we conducted this campaign so we can replicate it, if desired, in the future.</p> <p>Walch inquired about the survey, which was low in faculty results. Wierzbicki clarified that the staff scored the school low in faith formation opportunities for parents, but every adult in the building supports the faith life of students.</p> <p>Leonard asked about accreditation and the scoring process for advancement/development. Wierzbicki stated that she would share those standards and benchmarks with him. Evidence for scores should be collected by Christmas, but most work is done internally; however, committees will be called upon to assist. Frey asked to add an accreditation discussion to the November Board meeting to ensure the group is doing what they need to in order to support the school/staff.</p>	Grade	Domestic	International	Total by Grade	9th	129	1	130	10th	132	11	143	11th	105	4	109	12th	105	9	114	Totals	471	25	496	Jill Wierzbicki
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	<p>Fischer praised WC's three new teachers (Michael Albert, Spanish; Adam Bocian, Math; and Megan Kelley, Math) as strong additions to the school academically and in their Catholic faith.</p> <p>Priestly Discernment Group changed its name to Men's Discernment Group, which led to a significant increase in participation.</p> <p>West Catholic held its first pep rally in years and the rally was very successful. Fischer wants to capture this momentum, and the same group will be running the school's homecoming assembly.</p> <p>October is set to be a busy month. Testing is on the calendar and seniors are applying to colleges.</p> <p>Byers inquired about recruiting substitute teachers. Fischer explained that shared-time programming requires WC to go through EduStaff to hire subs. It's a difficult process, which has been a turnoff for new potential substitutes to be added. West Catholic reimbursed substitute teachers who had to be fingerprinted again and paid for each of the substitutes to complete the coursework and paperwork necessary to join EduStaff, a professional substitute teacher contractor. This process was necessary so those individuals could sub for shared-time teachers and be paid by the contractor rather than WC. Many subs are also choosing other schools due to pay, but the core group is very mission-fit.</p> <p>Wierzbicki noted that more people are taking their respective time off (vacation days, sick days, etc.) due to transparency and clarity in time-off policies, so more money is being spent on subs.</p> <p>Walch inquired about shared time. Fischer clarified that WC can hire whoever the school wants, but must be cleared through Brighton.</p>	
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Organization Minutes & Reports

5.1 Finance Committee	No additional updates from what was already presented earlier in the agenda.	Molly Nawrocki
5.2 Development Committee	Leonard noted that the Development Committee is light on members as three rolled off. He asked for prayers and recommendations.	James Leonard
5.3 Facilities Committee	Colon asked about upgrades for security in the press box. Wierzbicki clarified that cameras were important to keep eyes on the crowd in case an incident were to occur, as well as protecting the press box. There is heavy traffic in/out of the pressbox throughout the week, so key fobs were also an important addition.	John Frey

5.4 Catholic Culture Committee	Walch clarified that the Catholic Culture Committee would be meeting on Oct. 9, not in November (incorrectly noted in the agenda).	Jeanne Walch
5.5 Marketing Committee	No additional updates provided.	MK Britenfeld
<u>Unfinished Business</u>		
	<p>Committee meetings were added to the list of “dates to remember.”</p> <p>Frey emphasized that Board presence was important at major events, like Falcon Awards Night, Celebrate West Auction, and Graduation. He asked that Board members mark their calendars and plan to attend if possible. Wierzbicki especially noted the importance of attendance at Falcon Awards Night.</p>	
<u>Adjournment</u>		
7.1 Closing Prayer	Closing prayer led by Britenfeld	MK Britenfeld
7.2 Adjournment	Frey adjourned the meeting at 8:03 p.m.	John Frey

DATES TO REMEMBER:

- Sept 29 - Facilities Committee Meeting
- Oct 3 - Homecoming
- Oct 9 - Development Committee Meeting
- Oct 9 - Catholic Culture Committee Meeting
- Oct 13 - Junior Retreat
- Oct 14 - Marketing Committee Meeting
- Oct 15 - Finance Committee Meeting
- Oct 20-24 - JPII Feast Week
- Oct 22 - Falcon Awards Night
- Oct 24 - First Quarter Ends
- Oct 27 - Sophomore Retreat
- Nov 4 - Alumni Memorial Mass
- Nov 12 - Finance Committee Meeting
- Nov 19 - Next Board Meeting
- Apr 17 - Celebrate West Auction
- May 19 - Graduation