

School Advisory Board Minutes
St. John Neumann Library
Thursday, March 19, 2026
Thursday, Feb 19, 2026 Canceled
4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Present: Andrea Gentile, Kelly Mechelke, Patrick Wade, Jessica Louthan, Ashley Allen, Alex LaFasto, William Silverberg, Erica Morales, Hiram Morales, Christopher Chandler, Rachel Heller

4:05 p.m. Prayer-Our Father lead by Jessica Louthan

- No Presenters/Spectators
- Review of Minutes (December)
 - Board approved minutes
- Update on Access Expectations for Shared Facilities when families are asked to leave
 - Board will make edits to the current document and discuss next month
- Summary of Bullying Policy & Growth Created on March 19, 2026 Action Items - Send consolidated slides to advisory board Compile feedback and send the revised slides and summary to the advisory board email so members and the board can review before the advisory deadline. feedback to be submitted by April 1 with advisory board review by April 3–4 and next meeting April 16.
- School Lunch Subcommittee Update (Alex LaFasto)
 - School lunch subcommittee reported many gluten-free options.
 - Parents and students expressed strong dislike at removal of Friday ice cream; requested dessert be restored once per week.
 - Students reported increased choices and improved main-dish taste; survey indicated occasional sweets were acceptable.
 - Meeting with Jayni Linderman Tuesday, March 24. Will have an update for April meeting.
- Send learning-methods summary (from pre-K through grade 8 subgroup meetings) electronically to the committee prior to next month's meeting for review.
- Enrollment/growth: current class-size caps and ratios highlighted (25 cap), constrained expansion unless major funding; middle-school expansion prioritized.
- Dr. Mechelke's Updates
- Mission and Catholic Identity, Academic Excellence, Governance and Leadership, & Operational Vitality
 - Academic Decathlon occurred on March 7; students performed excellently and results will be announced in church on Friday, March 20
 - Text book review at the Chancery for Language Arts was Jan. 15.
 - Starting to interview for positions. We have several openings. The admissions person is Michelle Dougherty.
 - Jan. 6 Defend Systems Active Intruder In-Service-Analysis of historical

mass shooting events and lessons learned, actionable steps during active violence, organizational preparedness methods. Self-defense strategies, pre-hospital trauma medical training. All classrooms received a first aid kit and tourniquet. We will conduct once a year back-to-school training to open and practice with each classroom kit, replace expired items, and manipulate equipment so staff gain hands-on familiarity.

- Following a comprehensive, nationwide search, the Diocese of Knoxville announced the appointment of Martha Mundine as our new Superintendent of Catholic Schools, effective April 13, 2026. Martha is currently the Deputy Superintendent of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Mrs. Mundine brings more than thirty years of experience in Catholic education, from classroom teaching to school leadership to senior executive administration. Her extensive experience overseeing secondary schools, supporting presidents, principals and pastors, and guiding system-wide planning uniquely positions her to lead our Catholic School's Office. She has successfully facilitated accreditation efforts, strategic planning grounded in national Catholic standards, and organizational restructuring to strengthen effectiveness and sustainability across diverse school communities. Education & Certifications: Doctorate in Executive Leadership (PhD), University of Holy Cross, New Orleans, LA (In Progress, est. 2027 – Doctorate Dissertation = *A phenomenological study of the lived experiences of elementary teachers who worked in Catholic schools and left before five years versus those who are seasoned veteran Catholic school teachers and what this may reveal about the growing teacher shortage*. Master of Education, Educational Leadership, University of South Alabama, Mobile, AL (2002) Bachelor of Science, Elementary Education, University of South Alabama, Mobile, AL (1992) Master Catechist Certification, Archdiocese of Mobile (1998)
- Large Kindergarten next year. Mitigations planned: increase full-time aide time in kindergarten and add aide time in first grade; presence of two adults in K lowers students-per-adult to about 14.5
- a) Update on the construction (1) Atrium construction is done. Students will be in the classroom Friday, March 27. (2) the building project portion completed approximately October 2026

5:40 Closing Prayer: Hail Mary led by Jessica Louthan