SAINT JOHN NEUMANN CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Advisory Board Agenda
Thursday, October 15th, 2026
St. John Neumann Library
4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Present: Sabrina Talley, Kelly Mechelke, Patrick Wade, Chris Chandler, Brett Thompson, Shannon Thompson, Andrea Gentile, Rachel Heller, Hiram Morales, Tyra Mattingly, Michelle Dougherty

Absent: William Silverberg, Ashley Allen, Father Mark

I. Call to Order (4:00pm)

II. Opening Prayer lead by Kelly Mechelke

III. Presenters / Spectators: None

IV. Old Business:

A. September meeting minutes were approved without objections and will be filed.

B. Policy Updates:

Registered Sex Offender Policy / SJNCS Confidential Administrative Checklist

- A new checklist was developed to guide the school's response should a situation involving an adult on the sex offender registry arise in the future. Although SJN has encountered this situation only once in its 29-year history, the checklist helps ensure we are prepared to respond thoughtfully, consistently, and with appropriate safeguards to protect our students and families
- There are currently no individuals on the school's list.
- The document is intended as guidance.
- The checklist includes:
    - Sources of information and dates received.
    - Required administrative actions.
    - Written agreements regarding campus access.
    - Annual reviews and documentation in leadership files.
    - Individual access requests for each event rather than blanket approval.
- The diocese reviewed the draft and supports having a written process.
- Confidential information should be shared appropriately among staff who need it to support affected students, while preserving dignity and privacy.
- Previous collaboration with Officer Holland and local parole/prison contacts was noted as helpful.

Dress code and school culture

- Teachers reported a positive change after introducing positive reinforcement tickets for dress-code compliance.
- The initiative encouraged teachers to focus on positive behavior and had benefits beyond dress-code compliance.
- The school plans to simplify dress-code rules for next year using teacher experiences and board feedback.
- Staff are emphasizing modesty, calm communication, respectful interactions, and a safe learning environment.

SJNCS Garden Addition presentation from September meeting

Care & Creation- A committee created at SJN that will include the desires of this garden initiative in time.

Planning process

1. Survey teachers and parents after Christmas.
2. Identify teacher interests, existing projects, and available time.
3. Assess costs, materials, sustainability, and volunteer capacity.
4. Determine what support to request from parents, such as donations, building assistance, supplies, or volunteer hours.
5. Start with manageable pilot projects before committing to a full garden.

Key consideration: The committee should align projects with teacher capacity, curriculum needs, and available resources.

Possible projects

- Classroom plant-growing projects connected to science curriculum.
- Small take-home planters for preschool students.
- Recycling initiatives proposed by student leadership.
- Collaboration with teachers already leading related activities.

Tyra Mattingly said she would be a part of the committee and can provide garden design ideas and use wholesale nursery contacts to help obtain plants and materials at reduced cost. When we get to that phase.

V. New Business:

A. SJNCS Student Leader Updates

- Two candy-gram sales are planned: One for Veterans Day & one for Christmas.
- The annual spirit week and canned-food drive will continue.
    - The food drive runs until the Friday before Thanksgiving.
    - Food will be delivered after Thanksgiving to support December distributions, with students helping load and deliver donations.
- Spirit week activities include:
    - Matching day. Teachers are asked ensure students have a group for matching activities.
    - Costume day with limitations.
    - Team jersey day.
    - Favorite color day
    - Green out Elementary, Black out Middle School

B. Dr. Mechelke's Updates

1. Mission and Catholic Identity

- All School Rosary-8th grade led in the gym
- 8th grade had an in-house retreat day. High school students came to help. It was beautiful.
- Father is blessing all the rooms in the new addition on Saturday, Oct. 17
- Crucifixes and Sacred Heart of Jesus' have been ordered for the addition.

2. Governance and Leadership

- Fire Marshall's were here October 13 and we had a fire drill.
- Eighth graders received their annual special personalized hoodies.

3. Academic Excellence

- Staff are encouraged to model calm tones and respectful behavior to maintain a safe, positive learning environment.
- Modesty and positive reinforcement remain key areas of focus.
- Kindergarten are piloting a new standards-based report card with Diocesean approval. The pilot uses language such as meeting expectations, approaching expectations, and

needs support.

4. Operational Vitality

a) Update on the construction.

- Interior construction completed

The interior work is complete, and the school has passed inspections. Awaiting occupancy permit. The school is waiting for the Town of Farragut occupancy permit. The goal is to begin using the spaces promptly once it is issued.

Remaining work

- Exterior landscaping and final site work remain.

A second set of lockers is expected around Christmas or January–February, ensuring all eighth graders have large lockers. A ribbon-cutting celebration is planned for spring.

Admissions and Staffing

Admissions

- Approximately 9 families have completed applications for the 2027–2028 school year.
- Shadow days are scheduled.
- A three-week promotional series in the school bulletin is planned.
- Promotion will focus first on pre-K3 and pre-K4, followed by kindergarten and other grade levels.

Staffing

- Two teachers are pregnant: one in preschool and one teaching middle-school Spanish.
- A staff member recently got married; the new Director of Religious Education (DRE) and she teaches 7th grade Religion.

The meeting closed with Kelly Mechelke leading Our Father and an invitation to tour the new school space.

Left for tour at 4:48