

January 04, 2016: 06:35 to 08:00PM

Attendees: Joan Arnett, Tom Jozwik, Delbert Slowik, Carole Poth, Michelle Hansen, Stephen Dodridge, Judy Ballard, Turquoise Loera, Eunice Friesseke, Paul Hohl, Melissa Karls, and Jim Ewig. Excused: Laura Abing, Margaret Wiemer

Opening Prayer – Del Slowik led the PC in prayer

School CAP Presentation by Paul Hohl

Paul began with a history of St. Sebastian’s participation in the Choice Program. St. Sebastian originally started with a cap limit on Choice students not to exceed 25% of total students. It was later raised to 30% due to a budgetary shortfall. In the last five years, the program has seen significant changes, specifically in the qualifying income limits.

Paul stated there has been much passionate discussion within the School Committee regarding possible expansion of the cap percentage. Paul said that St. Sebastian has benefited from other parishes not having a cap on Choice students, which dilutes the schools’ Catholic identity. There have been a number of student transfers to St. Sebastian School from other schools that increased their participation in the Choice program to or near 100%.

The School Committee has reviewed several cap options and voted in favor of the following:

No more than 30% of students at St. Sebastian will be Choice non-Catholics (i.e., from non-parish families).

Having presented this to the PC, Paul and council members first discussed several points before making a decision on the School Committee’s recommended option.

- Currently we are at 50% Choice students.
- The tuition rate was clarified for a non-parish family. They can pay either 5% or tithe. Income verification takes place.
- Paul states no student has opted out of religion classes or Mass.
- Paul believes with this new model, we will still have to manage and address annually the number of Choice students allowed. To an extent, we will need to react to changes in student demographics.
- Paul does not foresee a reduction in the Choice program. He believes there may be tightening or loosening of qualifying income limits, but not a decrease in the volume of students in the Choice program.
- St. Sebastian is currently experiencing a school budgetary shortfall of approximately \$43,000. This deficit is almost entirely due to six Choice students who had enrolled in St. Seb but did not end up attending our school. The Choice allowance per student is \$7200.00.
- The Choice dollar allocation per student sporadically changes.

- Post-year monitoring and adjustment will need to be made on an annual basis. Monitoring is crucial. When examining changes, Paul and his team will look at 8th grade grads first.
- The Choice waiting list was high this year (i.e., approximately 60+) but is currently down to 40+. There is no solid way to know what the list will be in the future.
- Choice families cannot be penalized if they opt out of participation in religious teachings.
- Paul indicated there are a number of Choice parents currently sitting on committees and participating in school programs and activities.
- How do we market the cap option we ultimately select? We'll want to do so before St. Seb's January open house.
- Jen asked if a pulpit pitch on educating the parish on new poverty guidelines could be shared.

After the discussion, the Pastoral Council was uniform in its support of Paul and the School Committee's recommendation of a 30% cap, agreeing to the need for annual review of the percentage.

Closing Prayer – All prayed the Our Father.

Next Meeting

St Seb's and Tri-Parish meetings at MGC on January 12th, 18:30 (individual councils to meet first, followed by tri-parish meeting)

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Ewig