

**Diocese of Kansas City – St. Joseph  
Southwest Pod Joint Task Committee  
Meeting Summary - Sunday, April 19, 2009**

**Opening Prayer:**

Marilyn Keller opened the meeting at 5:05 PM with a prayer.

**Introductions:**

Representatives from each parish within the Southwest Pod (St. Thomas More, Christ the King, St. Elizabeth, St. Peters, and Visitation) were present at the meeting. The members of the newly formed task force introduced themselves to the group. They are as follows:

Mike Chalmers, St. Thomas More  
Randy Grindinger, St. Thomas More  
Marilyn Keller, St. Thomas More  
Paul Donovan, Christ the King  
James Mead, Christ the King  
Deborah Hall, Christ the King  
Vicky Kinney, St. Elizabeth  
Steve McClain, St. Elizabeth  
Matt Prusa, St. Elizabeth  
Maureen Elder, St. Peters  
Bob Healy, St. Peters  
Angie Meyer, St. Peters  
Karen O'Boyle, St. Peters  
Stephanie Axe, Visitation  
Diane Blanck, Visitation  
Paul Blanck, Visitation  
David Kies, Visitation

**Sharing Information and Finding Common Ground:**

The group proceeded with an open and candid discussion of the circumstances (i.e. parish census, % active membership, % of school families, challenges, etc...) of each parish in the Southwest pod. With that discussion, it was clear to the group that these circumstances have led to both common and unique practices (tithing policies, tuition, fee structures, fund raising, etc...) While the current funding practices vary slightly from parish to parish, it was agreed such approaches to funding our school ministries are more similar than different.

It was also clear that we all share a common interest and passion for fostering a culture of true stewardship (time, talent and treasure) in the diocese, pod, and parishes. There is a strong sense of confidence that our parishioners continually answer the call in a time of need, but we must seek more effective means of strengthening the life-long commitment of stewardship among our parishioners.

We also share a more immediate goal of preparing a joint recommendation to Bishop Finn in the next 4-6 months. This recommendation will serve as a viable alternative to those recommendations put forth by Meitler Consultants, Inc. We will focus our recommendations around the most pressing concern of properly funding the parish schools in the Southwest Pod.

**Next Steps:**

- The group will meet at least once each month through September to prepare the alternative recommendation. **The next meeting will be held Sunday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, at Visitation's Tighe Hall at 5:00 PM.**
- To minimize speculation and rumors within our community, each representative has committed to informing their respective parishioners through regular updates on the progress and planned next steps of this joint task committee. Meeting notes may be used by the members to ensure that information is consistently shared with the communities. Various parish-specific communication mediums (bulletins, newsletters, email, special meetings, etc...) will be used to distribute this information in a timely manner.
- Each parish task force member will provide suggestions for common data variables that will be gathered from each parish in the SW pod. Each parish business manager will submit the actual parish data to Mike Chalmers in the next several days. These data variables will supplement information provided by Meitler and will be used in more robust financial modeling that will be specific to our pod. The financial model will be used in preparing our recommendations to Bishop Finn.
- Members will consider and suggest key topics that should be addressed in our recommendation. Suggestions submitted will be used to build a 'strawman' or structured outline for the recommendation.
- Each member will review the various documents shared by Marilyn Keller – particularly the Fordham and Notre Dame studies, as well as the proposal from Vista Connections.
- Relevant information gathered from the Wichita Diocese will be shared with the group in a future meeting

**Closing:**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.