

To: St. Ignatius School and Parish Communities
From: Fr. Tom Lucas S.J., Pastor
In re: FAQ, Principal Search, St. Ignatius School, 2025

March 11, 2025

This FAQ is designed to provide information about coming changes at St. Ignatius School. But before we get into those details, I want to begin by recognizing Ms. Patty Lane, who has served as principal of our parish school for 25 years. During her time as principal, Ms. Lane guided and shaped the school to become one of the top schools in the diocese in both academics and extracurricular activities, and her efforts have left a lasting impact on hundreds of students and our parish community. For her dedication and tenure as principal we are all grateful.

Where are we today?

As everyone is aware, Ms. Lane recently announced her intent to retire from her role as principal. While I had initially hoped that she would stay on in her current role as principal through the end of the 2025-26 school year, to allow plenty of time for the transition, Ms. Lane has informed me that she has decided to begin her retirement at the end of the current school year. This news has caused us to accelerate the search process for a replacement, with the goal of identifying a candidate who can take on the role of school principal starting with Academic Year 2025-26. A job description for the principal's position has been posted and widely publicized.

See: <https://scd.org/employment/st-ignatius-parish-school/principal>

What has happened so far?

On March 4, Ms. Janet Nagel (Assistant Superintendent and Regional Director with the diocesan Catholic School Department) and Mr. Henry Garcia (Director of Mission Engagement for the School Department, who assists with principal hirings), had meetings with Ms. Lane, with the school's faculty and staff, with members of the parish's Catholic Schools Advisory Board (CSAC), and with interested parents. The purpose of those meetings was to receive input on the transition and principal-search process from those various perspectives. At those meetings a wide variety of opinions and views were expressed, including a concern that parents and faculty be represented in the search process.

The Search?

I have heard and I acknowledge the concerns expressed by the stakeholders in the search for a new principal. Although the typical diocesan process limits membership on the search committee to certain School Department staff, I have asked the department to expand the committee. They have agreed. Here are more details regarding the membership of the search committee:

The committee will be chaired by **Mr. Garcia** and **Ms. Nagel**. It will include **Ms. Meghann Bauer** sitting principal of Notre Dame School, Vacaville, and **Ms. Anna Schiele**, diocesan director of Human Resources.

To join those members of the committee, I have named the following representatives from our local school and parish community:

Ms. Katrena Paine, long-serving teacher and present vice principal. Her children attended the school, and her grandchildren are presently enrolled at St. Ignatius;

Ms. Susannah Nelson, former principal of St. Ignatius School. She served as principal of Catholic schools in the Dioceses of Fresno (St. Anthony) and Sacramento (St. Ignatius and Sacred Heart, Red Bluff), and on the staff at Christian Brothers, Loretto, (Sacramento) and De La Salle (Concord) High Schools. She is an active parishioner who is co-chair of the parish's Mental Health Ministry, and her grandchild is presently enrolled in our school;

Ms. Barbara Ching, a school parent serves on both the CSAC and the Executive Committee of the Parents Club (daughter enrolled); and

Mr. Michael Fazio Esq., chair of CSAC and member of the Knights of Columbus (two daughters).

Having served on many academic and leadership searches in my 25 years as a university professor before becoming your pastor, I know that best practices dictate that search committees must be widely representative but not too large to be efficient. It is also vitally important that the committee conduct its work with confidentiality, professionalism, and fairness. I believe that with the members identified above, our search committee will be well positioned to do an effective job.

The Search Process?

As far as the actual search process, it will follow these regular steps. First, Mr. Garcia will do an initial screening of all applicants to determine qualifications. He will pass along the applications of qualified applicants to the search committee, which will be charged with narrowing the selection pool to two or three finalists after the committee conducts in-person interviews with each. The finalists will be asked to provide a video for the community's consideration as has been done in other recent diocesan searches. The search committee will welcome written comments from viewers. Finally, after considering the recommendations of the search committee and the input of the larger community, Dr. Katie Perata (Executive Director/Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the diocese) and I will conduct personal interviews with the finalists and make a final hiring decision.

I thank everyone for their interest, and I ask for your prayers that our efforts will deliver a top-tier principal to our school and community.

Fr. Tom Lucas S.J., Pastor

Relevant Contact Information:

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