

Little Blessings Preschool

Meeting Minutes

Monday November 24 6:30 pm

Madison Campus - Good Shepherd Room

Attending: Emily Thomson (Chair), Heidi Anderson (LBPS – Madison), Rick Blum (Staff), Paul Bekx, Deni Naumann (Board Liaison), Marie DeStadler (parent representative), Kelsie Rice (parent representative)

Via Zoom: Linda Hayes (LBPS – Verona)

Quick recap

The meeting began with introductions of key participants, including Emily Thomson and Heidi Anderson, who provided updates on the Madison campus operations and financial status. The group discussed marketing strategies and enrollment processes for Little Blessings preschool, including potential collaborations with the MOMCO group and plans for 4K registration. Financial updates and playground improvements were reviewed, with Rick reporting the program's financial status and discussions held regarding potential plans for surface replacement at Verona and Madison, addressing signage needs and strategic planning for future meetings.

I Welcome, Short Devotion and Prayer (Emily)

The meeting proceeded with a devotion focused on the Advent season and the significance of the birth of Jesus, emphasizing God's involvement in all events.

Rick noted that the meeting would be recorded for note-taking purposes, and introductions were made for new attendees including parent representatives and 2025/26 Board Liaison.

II Madison Campus Update (Heidi)

Heidi provided an update on the Madison campus, noting fluctuations in student numbers and upcoming holiday breaks. She also mentioned that the campus is currently losing money, though better than previous years. While Madison's operations broke even over the summer, overall expenses, particularly staff costs, continue to be a concern. They reviewed their social media efforts, led by Steve Ackermann (Media Staff), which include 2-3 posts weekly across Facebook and Instagram, with limited engagement of 108 Facebook followers and 52 Instagram followers. The team is exploring ways to increase their online presence and highlight their Christ-centered mission.

Little Blessings Marketing Strategy Shift

The group discussed marketing strategies for Little Blessings preschool, noting that word-of-mouth has historically been their strongest source of enrollment. Andrew DeStadler, the marketing director for Recovery.com, suggested pivoting from social media to Google and Yelp, as they have seen significant improvements in their Google ratings. Marie added that many families seeking Little Blessings are looking for part-time preschool options, which could be a focus for their search engine optimization efforts.

MOMCO Daycare Collaboration Discussion

Marie introduced the idea of working with the MOMCO group, a network of mothers with children aged birth to 5 years, and discussed potential collaboration with Heidi's daycare for short-term care needs during school breaks. Heidi explained that while they could accommodate alumni children during breaks, integrating younger children might require separate classrooms due to age differences. Rick emphasized the stability and progress of the daycare, noting that while it is not financially sustainable in the long term, it is not currently under threat.

III Verona Campus Update (Linda)

Verona 4K Registration Update

Linda provided an update on the 4K registration process at Verona, focusing on building the legacy list for current and former enrolled families. She explained that registration will ramp up soon, with parents receiving information on the registration process, which typically begins in late February. Linda has already secured commitments from nine legacy families and is working to finalize the contract for next year. She is scheduled to meet with Jennifer Skibba, who heads the Verona Public Schools 4K program, to address some questions and clarify potential changes to district open enrollment policies for 4K.

Early Childhood Enrollment Process Updates

Linda explained that enrollment for 3-year-olds at Little Blessings has improved this year, though the cause remains unclear. She noted a trend of delayed childbearing among young people, citing factors like rising costs of living. Rick inquired about the 4K placement process, and Linda clarified that while sites can sign up legacy families, the school district ultimately decides placements based on preferences and factors like transportation. Rick shared concerns about the process for his child's placement, and Linda outlined the steps, including registration through the district and placement announcements in June.

4K Program Feasibility Discussion

The group discussed the possibility of adding a 4K program in Madison, but Heidi clarified that it's not feasible due to lack of space and the inability to collaborate with the Madison or Verona school districts. Linda explained that the current classroom can accommodate up to 24 children, but maintaining a class size of around 20 is ideal for both teachers and students. Linda mentioned upcoming Christmas programs for the 4K classes, which will be held in the sanctuary and coffee bar area, and she also noted that registration for Little Blessings classes and extended days will begin soon. Kelsie inquired about the absence of a Christmas celebration in the 4K room, and Linda confirmed it's due to school district rules regarding religious affiliations.

IV Financial Update (Rick)

Financial Updates and Playground Improvements

The meeting focused on financial updates and playground surfacing improvements. Rick reported that including some unexpected state grants, the program is nearly break-even as of October. Linda and Heidi discussed potential plans to replace the playground surface at Madison and Verona with "Jellybean Non-Toxic Rubber Mulch." The group also discussed signage needs at both locations, with agreement that these should be funded by the church rather than Little Blessings, and planned to discuss the committee's strategic direction in their February meeting.

Next steps

- [Deni: Send Board member Spencer Johnson's playground surfacing information \(including contact details for GRG Playscapes and other vendors\) to Linda and copy Rick, Heidi and Emily.](#)
- [Linda: Send reminder to families about the playground fundraiser deadline \(this Friday\) and encourage participation in purchasing sweatshirts, t-shirts, and tote bags.](#)
- [Heidi and Linda: Review the playground surfacing options and information provided by Spencer Johnson, and consider next steps for playground surface replacement, including possible removal of existing pea gravel.](#)
- [Heidi: Once the staffing at Madison is resolved, send an update to the group with the resolution details.](#)
- [Committee: At the February 2026 meeting, discuss and review the purpose and goals of the Little Blessings program, including the church's goals for Little Blessings, financial support, and potential leveraging of HR Committee resources \(e.g., staff training, handbook updates\).](#)

- Rick/Facilities Committee: Consider signage improvements at both campuses (in coordination with Facilities and Communications Committees) for inclusion in future capital funding/budget discussions.
- Linda and Heidi: Continue to ask parents and grandparents to leave Google reviews for Little Blessings, and consider other review platforms (e.g., Yelp) as suggested.
- Marie: If appropriate, share information about Little Blessings with the MOMCO group to help reach families seeking part-time preschool/daycare.
- Next Committee meeting: February 23, 2026 @ 6:30pm at Verona

V. Closed with The Lord's Prayer

VI. Meeting adjourned at 7:15pm