

St. Luke School Commission Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, November 4, 2014, 7:00 PM

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

In attendance: Andy Bauer, Matt Behringer, Andy Borland, Beth Leffler, Sue MacGill, Wendy Mehringer, Tim O'Brien, Eileen O'Brien–Metzger, Phil Poirier, Teresa Schutzman, Jen Schaefer, Suzanne Sherby, Rob Shumaker, Steve Weber;

The October 7, 2014 meeting minutes were approved with no dissent.

Principal's Report – Steve Weber

Open House Notes: Our fall Open House was held on October 30. Twenty-eight new families were represent counting forty-two students. Many came for the 8:15 Mass and were impressed with the children, and it didn't hurt that our kindergarten "saints" were there too. The student council members took the parents on tours of the building. The anecdotal comments from parents indicated that they were impressed with their tour guides. Ten families requested applications that day.

Curriculum and PR Materials: We have completed the update on our marketing materials and curriculum guides. I will have hard copies at the School Commission Meeting for review. We are currently printing in-house but will send out for professional printing once final edits are made.

SGO Donations: Now that the parish stewardship month is over, it is time to aggressively push for contributions to our Scholarship Granting Organization. We gave out \$52,250 in tuition aid to school families. I will push with Quick Note reminders but your support is needed. Here is a quick summary of benefit to donors. A donor to the St. Luke SGO fund helps us provide tuition support for income qualified families and can receive a 50% Indiana Tax Credit, in addition to the normal federal charitable deduction. Here is an example that you can use to explain what this means.

1) \$1000 donation to the St. Luke SGO fund means a \$500 CREDIT on Indiana income taxes. Any amount can be donated but his makes for simple math.

2) The normal federal deduction applies to federal income tax. This amount will vary by tax bracket. Depending on tax bracket, the \$1000 donation could have an actual cost to donor as little as \$250.

If possible, I'd like to challenge each Commission member to consider making a gift to our fund each in accordance to ability. It really does make a difference. The majority of the families receiving our SGO grants are parish families. A copy of the donation form is a separate attachment. You can also check the website i4qed.org for more examples or details.

Social Media, Kids and Parents: We had an incident last month when I received a message from the IHM principal, that an instagram.com website had been set up by an IHM kid that also had SLS kids involved. While nothing immediately bad was on the site, it requested pictures and other drama to be posted anonymously. It involved both sixth and seventh grade students at both schools. I did alert parents in both grades to check the powerful tools they give their kids for proper use. I also spoke directly to the 7th grade, listing the names of the SLS seventh graders who had signed onto the site. The sites were taken down with parental intervention.

Facilities Plan: A report prepared gratis by a local architect was delivered this week. It contains ideas and possibilities for future space planning in the building and will be reviewed in the coming weeks.

Assistant Principal Job Description: Updates to add minimum of five years classroom teaching experience and a special interest in curriculum or special education. Additional comments can be emailed to Steve.

Business Items

Edits to Bylaws and Standing Rules: Still under review per Tim O'Brien.

Ratification of Strategic Plan: Sue MacGill presented two options for the statement of purpose for the foreign language piece of the Academic Excellence Pillar. Comments were requested via email, and the final version will be presented for inclusion in the final ratification of the Plan at the December meeting. Ratification is delayed due to Monsignor's travel schedule.

2015/16 Book and Supply Fee: Wendy Mehringer presented the \$275.00 fee proposed for the 2015/2016 school year book and supply fee. The fee is offered in a tiered structure that allows the following discounts:

\$225 if paid by January 30

\$250 if paid by May 30

\$275 is paid by June 30

Although the amount of \$275 represents an increase, the tiered approach is intended to allow people to take advantage of discounts to maintain the lower fee structure if they desire and are willing to pay on time. The fee covers text books, workbooks, paper, and supplies for classes.

There was discussion about the timing of the fee and whether it is possible to spread it out over time. The revenue from the funds is used as a deposit or commitment to hold placement in the school and is needed in bulk to allow for large one time purchases such as textbooks which are required prior to the start of school. Spreading the fee out by embedding it in tuition payments has been discussed in the past, but no way to do it has been found due to the needs the fee covers, and the fact that the deposit/hold function of the fee is lost under that scenario. Also, firm commitments are needed both for planning and financial purposes. A payment function for the fee will be available on the school website as soon as it is approved. It is possible for families to begin payments through the church office by check immediately in order to stretch out in smaller amounts, or to pay a single fee of \$225 at any time now through January 30 if families desire to stretch the payments out. It was also noted that any family who struggles with the timing of the fee can contact the church business office and that in the past they have been very willing to maintain the discount structure past deadlines for families who make good faith payment arrangements.

The fee was approved with a positive vote by nine members. One member abstained.

2015/2016 Tuition: Wendy Mehringer presented three potential tuition scenarios which show tuition increasing by amounts of 1.65%, 2% and 2.4%. The increase at 1.65% amounts to a \$65 increase in the base amount for the first child, at 2% to an \$80 increase to the base amount, and at 2.4% to an increase of \$95 to the base tuition amount.

The assumptions contained within the model for budgeting include the standard archdiocesan increase for teacher salaries of 2%. Our model also includes an additional 1% allowance to enable flexibility in offering additional merit raises based on performance and review. At this time, no increase in healthcare costs are assumed or budgeted. Current budget allows for \$9100/year per insured employee.

The goal in building the tuition model has been to cover costs and to maintain a steady and predictable trajectory for increases over time. Saint Luke has tried to maintain low tuition increases

throughout past years, and it was noted that our tuition remains the lowest among north side Catholic Schools. The increase for the 2014/2015 school year was 1.95%.

Concerns were raised about the fees for parishioners with four and five children in school. It was suggested that any conversations about the tuition structure should include the possibility of further reducing or eliminating fees for the few families making payments for four and five of students in an effort to ensure that the fee structure is reflective of the value we as Catholics place on openness to life. There are currently seven families with a total of four students and one family with five students.

Strategic Planning – Sue MacGill

Sue shared that the work on the Strategic Plan going forward will be completed in a more dispersed, committee like structure. Based on stated interests and talents, the following committee assignments have been made.

- Technology – **Phil Poirier**, Matt Behringer
- Facilities – **Andy Bauer**, Tim O'Brien
- Development – **Sue MacGill**, Wendy Mehringer, Andy Borland
- Academic Excellence – **Beth Leffler**, Suzanne Sherby, Tim O'Brien, Phil Poirier, Teresa Schutzman

The first member listed will serve essentially as the facilitator for each committee's efforts, and will be responsible for setting goals and timeframes and keeping the process on track and moving forward. That person will also offer progress reports as to the progress and findings of the committee at each commission meeting. Both Sue and Beth stressed that committee assignments are meant to be fluid, and that no members should feel excluded from involvement in any of the committees. Assignments were made based on the preferences expressed. Any concerns should be emailed to Sue or Beth as quickly as possible.

Rob noted that Sue and Beth have provided excellent leadership on the process of building the Strategic Plan, and on providing a path for ensuring that implementation goals are realistic and likely to be accomplished. All members agreed. Well done!

- Committee/Liaison Reports
- Nominations – Phil Poirier– No report
- Faith Formation – Teresa Schutzman– no report
- Buildings and Grounds – Andy Bauer:
 - The closet/cubby design for the 1st thru 4th grade classrooms was presented to the teachers. Modifications suggested by the teachers were incorporated and the design approved and sent to carpenters for bids. A spring break installation is being contemplated, and the funding source still under discussion.
 - The replacement of the south gym floor was put on hold in favor of completing the rebuild of the columns at the front entrance of the church. It was felt that the need for the columns was more visible and urgent need. Additionally, the cost of replacing the front columns was significantly less than the \$65,000 - \$70,000 expense of the gym floor, which will remain a project under evaluation and consideration for future.
 - Buildings and grounds asks that parishioners who see or notice maintenance problems should please take photos and email to Sandy Miller.
 - All new desks in the school are in place.

- Adding electrical controls to the HVAC system for both economy and surge protection is being considered
- A plan to computerize the emergency plans is also being considered. In the current plan, teachers and staff would be required to grab a binder containing plans. The computerization would allow the plan to be on a hand-held device more easily accessible in an emergency. The cost is relatively low.
- The playground is nearing the end of its useful life and will need to be replaced soon. There is talk of making it a funding goal for next year's Fall Festival.
- Stewardship – Matt Behringer
 - The Stewardship committee met and worked to identify the many needs/events not related to specific ministries. They are planning a retreat to work toward further identifying all such needs and finding opportunities across the many groups and ministries to coordinate.
 - The idea of SLAC being able to sell advertising in the gyms in order to assist with funding was briefly considered. More specific ideas will be forthcoming, but it was agreed that such plans should be dialed back.
- PTO – Jen Schaefer
 - The October Fab Friday event was combined with the final trash bag celebration. A school wide pizza party with an estimation game for each classroom was held.
 - The painting in the back lot was completed. 2 Hopscotch grids and 3 sets of Four Squares were installed successfully and look great.
 - PTO has a bid out to have a map of the United States and an Indiana state map painted onto the back lot. The maps would show capitals and waterways.
 - Plans for November Fab Friday are underway and include a pasta or canned food drive, depending on the needs of the local food pantries.
 - PTO is attempting to schedule a police officer to come in again to discuss internet safety again with both students and parents.
 - Requests have been made to implement a bullying program and are being considered.
- Pastoral Council – Eileen O'Brien Metzger/Rob Shumaker
 - Focus is on all the ministries associated with the Mass and the fact that the vast majority of the needs are fulfilled by retirees. There will be an emphasis on drawing in and involving people from younger groups going forward.
 - The Christmas mass schedule is likely to change. Monsignor would like to see the gym Mass eliminated.
- SLAC – Andy Borland
 - The over-whelming discussion at SLAC meetings is how to meet the voracious financial needs of the athletic program.
 - 140 new boys basketball uniforms are needed at a cost of \$11,000
 - The possibility of sponsorships is under discussion, and SLAC is very inclined to take that path, but there is a lot of work left to do to gain approval for that. Feedback from School Commission was that sponsorships which would place ads in our facilities should take pains to consider the needs of all ministries and groups who use the gym prior to moving forward at all. But overall, the need for more funding is recognized.
 - Questions were asked as to why the fees for programs are so high. All money charged is only to cover actual costs, which are just very high.
 - Raffle ticket sales are still open – only about 95 tickets sold. SLAC would like to have sales pushed through the school in any way possible.

- Additionally, SLAC will host a spaghetti dinner soon. Attendance is encouraged.
- Parish Communications – Suzanne Sherby – no report

Closing Prayer was said.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:25 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by Suzanne Sherby, School Commission Secretary

Important Dates:

Next Executive Committee/Finance Meeting: Thursday, November 20, 2014 at 7:30 am

Next School Commission Meeting: Tuesday December 2, 2014 at 7pm