

St. Luke School Commission Meeting Minutes

Tuesday March 1, 2016 7:00 PM

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

In attendance: Andy Bauer, Vernon Back, Beth Borland, Valerie Esposito, Dan Heslin, Anne Horton, Sue MacGill, Wendy Mehringer, Tim O'Brien, Jenn Rotz, Teresa Schutzman, Suzanne Sherby, Rob Shumaker, Steve Weber.

The meeting was opened with a prayer.

The February 2016 meeting minutes were approved, along with the proposed resolution of support for the Parish Pre-school. The statement as adopted is below:

The Saint Luke School Commission unanimously endorses the concept of a day care and preschool ministry for the parish. As research into implementation proceeds, the School Commission remains supportive and prepared to assist as needed.

Principal's Report – Steve Weber

Academic Excellence Goal Statement: The academic excellence committee met and revised the academic excellence goal, and recommends its approval.

“The St. Luke School Academic Excellence Goal is to maximize each student's academic and intellectual advancement based on their ability with a target of at least one grade level above state standards by the end of the third grade.”

Financial Aid Update: We will require all seeking financial aid, parish, Choice Scholarship and SGO to file through the FACTS system. This keeps all data in an easily accessible form and provides a common way to review special needs. This will be announced in a separate Quick Note this week. The deadline for current families to apply will be April 1, 2016. This should assure that parents would know their aid amounts well before the end of the year.

The SC finance committee recommended and approved an increase in SGO grants to keep the aide proportional to the increases in tuition. The amounts for families meeting the family size and income requirements would be as follows.

100% of FR = \$2,500, 150% of FR = \$2000, 200% of FR = \$1,500

This increase would still leave about two-thirds of the funds available for an emergency, such as a drop in or of state Choice Scholarship funds. It also leaves room for unexpected increases in qualified families. This increase should also be able to hold for two to three years.

Budget Notes: When reviewing the draft of the 2016-17 budget for St. Luke School please note the following:

- 1) While the budget is predicated on a 585 enrollment which is accurate at this time. The mix of 1, 2, 3, etc child families and non-parish families results in slightly less income than projected.
- 2) It takes into account savings from retirements and staffing, as it is known at this time.
- 3) It does not add two aides in grade 1.
- 4) It exceeds the historic subsidy amounts.
- 5) It does account for a K-5 math materials adoption.
- 6) It does take into account the unexpected but likely change in the pay scale for teachers. This change will amount to an average 5% increase for 1-20 year teachers and a 2% increase for all others. The goal is

to bring starting and mid-range salaries closer to public school salaries. Our tuition has already been set so the additional amount has a strong impact on our budget discussion.

Steve noted that since he originally wrote his report, 4 new applications have been received and several families who left Saint Luke in the past have indicated a desire to return. Both things will have a positive impact on the budget numbers. He also noted that the archdiocese is in control of the salary and benefit numbers, not the parish. When asked, he shared that the salary range stretches from \$29,900 for a starting teacher to about \$52/53,000 for a veteran as opposed to the average starting salary in a public school of \$35,000 to \$41,000.

Curriculum Notes: Beth Curriculum mapping is continuing with the priority on grades k – 3. The current curriculum is being mapped, and then will be examined to see what needs to be altered to meet the new goal of St. Luke School. A curriculum maps for grades k-3 being mapped to the new goal will be in place for the start of school in August 2016. She will address any gaps which emerge through the process and noted that it is going well. Teresa noted that the map will not be final as they will not be looking at literature until next year. Beth said that the skills targets will be the same and that resources are always up for review. Her intent is to choose novels to support the concepts on the map.

Beth and kindergarten teachers are visiting the three preschools that send us the most students. We hope to gain a better understanding of the methods used as well as the content taught. The preschools are Saint Luke United Methodist, Second Presbyterian's Children's Circle and Beth el Zedek.

Beth and teachers from primary grades are visiting Park Tudor to see the Singapore Math program they are using and talk with their staff about their experiences. Park Tudor used a Singapore based program called Math in Focus.

Literature teachers are working to develop a set of criteria for novels read in St. Luke School. Beth was asked, and agreed to share her rough draft of these criteria with the commission. Valerie asked if there will be guidelines included for tougher issues such as sexuality. Steve shared that there are already morality guidelines in place which are supposed to be used to evaluate all literature selections and said that he will email them to the commission.

Other Notes:

- The production of *The Wizard of Oz* has involved over 100 students and is scheduled to be presented March 4 and 5. Both shows are essentially sold out, though some seats are being added to meet demand.
- A group of middle school girls has started the "Shimmers" (Students Honoring Immaculate Mother Mary's Eternal Rosary) and meet in the chapel each Friday after school to pray the rosary.
- The class of 2017, next year's eighth grade, will take their Washington, DC trip the week of the inauguration of our next president in January of 2017.
- ISTEP part 1, applied skills begins on February 29. So far the practice materials and format seems better and more streamlined than last year. This is done on paper. ISTEP part 2, objective/multiple choice test taken in late April, looks like it will be on computer. The "stress test" using the computers worked without much drama. When asked how much time is spent preparing for the test, Beth noted that the state requirement is one hour, and that the real focus is on instructions and layout of the test more than actual practice material. Steve stated that overall the testing is going much better than last year.

Business Items: Budget – Wendy Mehringer

Rob noted that there is to be no vote tonight, only discussion of budget issues.

Wendy opened by noting the following items:

- The large increase in salary and benefits expense: the number went from \$1,947,343 for the current year to a projection of \$2,037,320 for the 15/16 school year. Steve noted again that this number is controlled by the Archdiocese and that they are attempting to help address the gap in salary between Catholic and public school teachers. He said the number is not final, but that it will be presented to the Priests this week. He said we should plan for this number as it represents the worst case scenario financially.
- At last look, the parish subsidy for the current year was projected to be about 30K over budget. It is now expected to be nearly 11K under budget. Wendy congratulated the school staff for the successful effort at controlling expenses.
- The parish subsidy requested is \$495,000. Wendy said that at this point Patrick Jendrasik and the Finance Council have clearly stated that the number is too high to be acceptable. They want to see it closer to \$450,000, maybe \$455,000.
- There are no new positions included in the budget. This means the requested first grade aides are not funded.
- The tuition numbers are still moving – tuition is likely overstated by about \$27,000 due to the actual mix of students per family, meaning the total number paying full tuition due to sibling discounts is less than projected. (the budget contemplates 152 first child tuition payments, but the actual number right now is 141)

The following discussion points were raised:

- Did the study of aide/staff usage by the consultant, Max Oldham had turned up any possible changes which might allow for the requested aides in first grade? Steve said that the only potential change is that one of the religious sisters might be able to move to another grade as the grades with the largest number of students age up and potentially need less extra attention. He said that the consultant helped to give them some guidance on the number of instructional versus clerical hours worked by aides. Those changes have already been communicated. He said that the study showed that our resource personnel are already serving so many kids that we may need more, so no possibility of shifting any of their time.
- Vernon requested that Steve share the consultant's report with the Commission. Steve will email.
- Vernon noted a cut to technology funds and asked if the restrictions on the Hackl endowment are being followed. Steve said that there is \$40,000 allocated to capital equipment and \$10,000 to professional development. He clarified that the Hackl family did not put the restrictions in place, but that the school placed the restrictions for planning purposes.
- It was noted several times with concern that the cafeteria is operating at a deficit of \$18,000 as of the February projections. Mrs. Noble noted that the lunch count has dropped to about 200 since the new meal requirements have gone into place. She is working to find healthy menu items that kids will eat.
- Andy asked if the additional applications and movements in enrollment are likely to make up any of the funds that would be required to get the requested first grade aides. Steve said he thinks it is likely that we'll be able to fund one aide, but not two.
- Jenn Rotz asked about the history of increases in the parish subsidy. At this point, the school is essentially asking for a \$500,000 subsidy in a 3 million dollar budget. It was noted that although the Parish Preschool is not to have any effect on the school, the fact that the parish is providing funding in the short term does restrict the school's ability to ask for a larger subsidy. Jenn said

she believes a case could and should be made to Parish Council that the improvements being recommended in the Academic Excellence efforts will allow us to offer a demonstrably better product which should in turn pay off in increased enrollment. She noted that it is a classic pay now or pay later scenario. She offered to share this message with the Council.

- Teresa said she sees Jenn's statements as very valid and pointed out that the school is the single largest ministry of the parish. She feels strongly that once the mapping is complete, and we are able to publicize to the community that we have a really strong, values based reading program, people will come and we will see increased enrollment. She said she believes the move to new math in k-3 is a selling point, and that we'll be able to make the point even more strongly when we are able to say that we have a proven, moral and sound reading program as well. Both items will be very marketable, supporting the idea that they are worth investment from the parish.

The following points were made with regard to the budget and tuition setting model at Saint Luke:

- Enrollment being fluid at this point makes pinning real numbers down difficult. Steve said that in the lower grades, kindergarten especially, commitments don't come in until later in the year, sometimes even as late as early summer.
- Vernon stated his firm belief that the entire process is backward and that we should not be setting a tuition number without a better understanding of budgeting needs. He stressed that we cannot continue to rob Peter to pay Paul and at some point will have to address the fact that tuition does not begin to cover the true needs of the school.
- Suzanne recalled the frustration expressed by many when the Commission was asked to set tuition in December without budget information and suggested that we need to make a formal motion to flip the process around so that the discussion occurs in the proper order. She noted that at the time we set tuition there did not seem to be a really good reason for the timing of the discussion other than that the school wishes to send a tuition amount with our acceptance letters to new families in March. It was suggested that since other local schools do not set their tuition until later and Saint Luke has historically been the lowest tuition school in the north deanery, we could send acceptance letters with an overview of the current year tuition and a historical view of the typical % increase without jeopardizing acceptance.
- Dan suggested that a rebate model on tuition would be preferable to the current model in which the school's needs are not truly addressed. He also noted that there are several very large classes in the upper grades which will be rolling off at some point, potentially leaving us with an even smaller pool of students to meet needs.
- Wendy said that moving the timeframe of the discussion would seem to be a good choice as we've seen a failure to fund any of the wish list. She said that it's clear that a discussion of funding 2 aide positions just should not be so provocative. She further noted that there should be a broader discussion of timing and of the size of the subsidy as well as discussion of whether it really makes sense for us to offer the lowest tuition in the deanery and have the lowest parish subsidy as well. She suggested there should be discussion of moving closer to the middle of the pack on those items.
- Rob noted that in addition to the unexpectedly high salary and benefits number from the Archdiocese, the tuition increase unanimously recommended by the School Commission was rejected, which reduced the available revenue for this budget by \$17,500. Several members stated their belief that Monsignor may have to find a balance of the school's need and the Finance council's maximum number for the parish subsidy.
- Tim noted that the Archdiocese provides needed information too late in the cycle every year and that there are almost always last minute surprises to the budget. When asked why this number has to come from the top, Steve recalled that about 10 years ago the Archdiocese took over all salary

and benefit decisions due to a concern that schools in wealthier parishes would be able to stack the deck and attract all the best teachers.

- Dan reiterated that we should go with worst case scenarios on tuition and budget items. Moving the timing of the revenue versus expense discussion was again suggested as one thing that would improve our ability to make good decisions. Andy suggested that it would also be beneficial to change the school commission calendar so that we are working on these issues instead of tabling everything from December 1st to February 1st.
- Teresa mentioned that we should consider saying “no” to this budget if we truly think the school’s real needs are not served under it.
- Vernon stressed again that the cafeteria deficit must be addressed.

Wendy drew the group’s attention to some changes in the SGO plan.

- The award amounts have been increased by \$500 at each of the Free and Reduced levels.
- The changes are due to the fact that the fund has grown and we are trying to be true to the intent of providing meaningful help to families and honoring the intentions of donors.
- Andy pointed out that the SGO donation is one of the most meaningful you can make. A typical tax affected donation of \$1000 costs the donor \$750. An SGO donation of \$1000 costs the donor \$240, making it 3 times as effective as other donations. These numbers include the management fee paid on the fund.

Strategic Planning Committee Reports:

Academic Excellence Committee Report – Teresa Schutzman, submitted via email

The Academic Excellence Committee met with Steve Weber and Beth Borland to review the Academic Excellence Goal and the Academic Excellence Committee recommendations related to curriculum mapping, differentiated learning, schedule updates and adoption of new math materials. As a result of these meetings, we have gained consensus on the Academic Excellence Goal.

The Academic Excellence Committee requests that the School Commission adopt the following Academic Excellence Goal for St. Luke School:

St. Luke School Academic Excellence Goal

The St. Luke School Academic Excellence Goal is to maximize each student's academic and intellectual advancement, based on their ability, with a target of at least one grade level above state standards by the end of the third grade.

In addition the St. Luke School administration, with the support of the Academic Excellence, Committee, has the goal of accomplishing the following:

1. K-3 Curriculum Mapping - K-3 curriculum mapping to the Academic Excellence Goal be completed prior to the start of the 2016-17 year and implemented for the 2016-17 school year (including a Kindergarten curriculum that is updated to a full day schedule and reflective of the abilities of the students entering Kindergarten).
2. K-3 Differentiated Learning - Adopt K-3 differentiated instruction in math and reading. (*The Academic Excellence Committee recommends grouping in math and reading for the entire school year with math being differentiated across the 3 classrooms to maximize each student’s academic and intellectual advancement based on their ability.*)
3. Revised k-3 Schedules - Revised K-3 schedules that provide consistent day-to-day time blocks for math, reading, and language arts and 100 minutes of religion instruction per week. (Archdiocesan standards)
4. K-3 Math Resources - Adoption new K-3 math resources for the 2016-17 school year.

The administration, contrary to the committee's recommendation, has chosen to delay implementation of new value-based readers until the 2017-18 school year for grades K-3. The committee is hopeful this decision will be reconsidered before that time.

Teresa motioned that the new Saint Luke Academic Standards be offered for formal approval from the Commission given Beth and Steve's support of the new language. Approval was unanimous.

Development Committee Report – Suzanne Sherby, submitted via email

The Development Survey has been sent. The final timeframe for responses is the end of this week. As of this time, there have been 18 respondents. Beth will forward results to the Development Committee. The committee plans to work on a survey of current parents to be completed this spring as well. The final results of both will be considered in light of the goals outlined under the Development pillar of the Strategic Plan.

Facilities Committee Report – Andy Bauer, submitted via email

1. Church parking lot lighting should be installed before our next meeting; I'll get an update at Buildings & Grounds next week.
2. B&G continues to reach out to the new council rep and DPW to check on the status of the grant request for the sidewalks to connect the parking lot with 75th St. Once a definitive yes or no is received B&G can proceed with the most cost effective option (yes could mean concrete sidewalks on right of way, no could mean a path on church property).
3. The internet bandwidth available to the school (currently 30 MB) was discussed at great length, and it was noted the school routinely will hit that limit during peak usage hours. Given the plan to add more wireless devices to the school infrastructure and the current peak usage at our next meeting Rick Davis is going to recommend we up the bandwidth to 100 MB. I'll let you know the outcome.

2015-2016 Facilities Work Group Action Plan "To Do" List:

1. Playground

- a. **Determine remaining funding need**
- b. **Establish timeline**

The formation of the playground committee is progressing, with Suzanne Mencias, Nicole Duncan and Sue MacGill on board. Additional constituent groups (including a school staff member, SLAC, MOYC, Buildings and Grounds and ECLC) are discussing their representative with Patrick. He hopes to convene the committee in early March. Enough progress has been made on the ECLC site plan to allow for a discussion of the playground to begin.

2. Response to Maintenance, Replacement and Repair Issues

- a. **Locate previous punch list if possible**
- b. **Update list, with assistance from Principal and Parish Manager**

At the last faculty meeting Beth asked the teachers to submit their needs for maintenance, repair and replacement items, ideally by March 1st. As of last week we had received a handful of items and additional requests are being made. Patrick is going to send out a list to Buildings and Grounds ahead of our meeting next week, and B&G will go from there to work with Mr. Weber to fulfill those requests.

3. Create Detailed List of Cleanliness Specifications and Capital Improvement/Replacement Cycling

- c. **Assess current state of cleanliness specifications and work with Principal and Parish Manager to update as necessary**
- d. **Create capital improvement and replacement cycle documentation with assistance of Principal and Parish Manager**

We've enlisted the help of parishioner Renae Breitbach who has experience in commercial property management. She shared the existing specifications and cleaning schedule for property she manages and has offered to meet with Patrick and our Facilities group to discuss potential improvements at St Luke. Her main focus is making sure we are happy with the service for the price we pay. She has also offered her assistance in forming a capital replacement/maintenance plan.

- 3. **Consult a Design Professional for Space Utilization Assessment and Potential Modification to Existing Space/New Space**
 - a. **Finish space assessment started Spring 2015 during current school year**
 - b. **Create plan forward to address recommendations/needs**

From Patrick:

We have two items moving forward.

The first is the site plan for the St. Luke Early Childhood Learning Center (ECLC). When we started the school facilities plan, that was an unknown and as soon as the final site plan is completed, it will be merged into the overall Master Plan.

The second is the Space Utilization Assessment. We have a revision in hand that both Steve and I agreed to, but now there is an additional issue. The thought with Buildings and Grounds and the architect is that we should be developing an overall Master Plan for the entire facility. In addition to addressing the issues previously surfaced as part of the school space utilization study, it may include such issues as:

- Potential expansion of current sanctuary space;
- Potential expansion or development of new areas designated for the parish choirs;
- Possible changes to the entry on the west side of church, whether that take the form of:
 - landscaping the entry way circle or
 - providing a canopy or a true drive through porte cohere
- Addition of new meeting spaces

Once we get the architectural issues resolved for the St Luke ECLC, I anticipate us moving forward in a more inclusive way on the Space Utilization, transforming it into more of a Master Plan process.

- 4. **Cubbies**
 - a. **Assess experience of 1st and 2nd grade teachers for improvements, if any**
 - b. **Work with Buildings & Grounds, the Principal and Manager to fund one more grade level of cubbies**

Sue is working with Patrick to get the teacher comments to him. Sue may have any update at our meeting.

Past progress was: Sue met with the 1st and 2nd grade teachers to get their input on how the cubbies have functioned and how they could be modified for installations in 3rd and 4th grade.

The teachers were all excited to chat about the cubbies and had several observations on how the designs could be enhanced, which will be shared with Buildings & Grounds. All the teachers noted they would like one locking cubby for their personal things. Andy spoke with Mrs. Price at the school open house and she noted a specific need for storage for her science equipment which may require specialized cubbies or a separate storage structure elsewhere in the room.

Teresa strongly suggested that we place all academic needs above buildings and grounds projects for the school. She said we should not be putting off hiring aides if they are needed while completing remodeling wish lists, as desirable as they might be. Suzanne seconded Teresa's statement that academics must come first.

Technology Committee Report – Dan Heslin via email

The Technology Committee connected with Tom Groot, North Deanery Chief Information Office, to identify best approach for building a school strategy plan and gather input on how other schools are handling technical support.

Tom would like to go through a process with each school and build a robust technology plan using a consistent approach. We are now on the schedule and Tom is engaged with Mr. Weber to pull together a mix of teachers and staff that will work through the initial information gathering process.

As for tech support in schools, Tom let us know the "typical" setup in the Deanery is for the technology teacher to support level 1 type issues and have a vendor either onsite a few days each week or on retainer to support more challenging issues. This will need to be addressed as part of the technology strategy work, since we don't have a formal process for beyond level 1 issues.

Additionally, a St. Luke parishioner works for a networking technology firm has offered to get all North Deanery schools into a network hardware demonstration program. The program allows our schools to upgrade from home-use network technology (i.e., Apple routers) to commercial grade hardware. The equipment is provided free to the school for 1 year and available to purchase at a steep discount or return with no obligation to buy. The Technology Committee connected Tom with our contact and they are working on details. It is a very exciting opportunity.

- Engage with vendor on network technology demo program; Tom Groot is connected, but need St. Luke to provide details on needs (*Patrick*)
- Support strategy evaluation as needed (*Technology Committee*)
- Attend kickoff of North Deanery Technology Advisory Board (*Dan Heslin*)

Committee Reports

Nominations: Dan will work with Phil to move this process forward.

Faith Formation: Teresa was unable to devote time to the idea of a movie night this year, but plans to work toward it for next year.

B&G: Discussion mostly about cubbies and whether there is funding.

Stewardship: no report

PTO: no report

Pastoral: early childhood Center has been under a lot of discussion. The parish census report is also being looked at to try and determine what the trends are and what they mean.

SLAC: Reverse raffle sold 473 tickets and generated \$5255 in revenue for the reserve account. We will have the opportunity to host several volleyball tournaments in April. Field maintenance will begin in April/Mary

Communications: no meeting

Pastor's Comments – Monsignor Schaedel, submitted via email

Please excuse me from our meeting this month. I'm on Maui doing missionary work. But I have been unable so far to find any lepers! But seriously, today we are going to the island of Molokai where Father Damien and Sister Marianna Cope ministered to lepers isolated there. I've always wanted to see this place since I was a kid. Both of these people are now canonized saints.

Like most of you I'm excited about our school musical, The Wizard of Oz, this weekend. This presentation and others that may follow will strengthen our fine arts curriculum.

Lent and school activities surrounding it are going well.

I'm impressed by work of all our commission committees, especially Academic Excellence. My caution is that we not try to do too much at once. A couple years ago, when Father Peter Stravinskas spoke to us about classical education, his caution was that moving too quickly in curriculum reform is a recipe for disaster. Let's remember the official school motto at our deanery high school, Bishop Chatard. It is "Festina lente." Latin for "Make haste slowly."

In discussing ways to improve we have often referred to families who left our school. I too think retention is as important as recruiting. I want you to know that in the last month I've heard from three families who withdrew their children from Saint Luke. One was three years ago, one a year ago, and one family just this year. All three have expressed a desire to return next year. The grass is not always greener! No school including Saint Luke is 100% perfect. But I remain convinced that Saint Luke is about the best school around. They must think so too.

Thanks for all you do for Saint Luke. I'll see you this weekend.

Aloha!

Msgr Schaedel

The meeting was closed at 8:40 with a prayer.

Respectfully submitted by Suzanne Sherby, School Commission Secretary