

St. Luke School Commission Meeting Minutes

Tuesday April 18, 2017 7:00 PM

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

In attendance: Andy Bauer, Valerie Esposito, Dan Heslin, Mandy Heslin, Katie Kumler, Sue MacGill, Kevin McCusker, Jim Naughton, Tim O'Brien, Phil Poirier, Teresa Schutzman, Suzanne Sherby, Steve Weber.

The meeting was opened with a prayer. The March meeting minutes were approved.

President's Report – Tim O'Brien

There was a brief discussion of the transition process for the new Principal. There was agreement that the entire process should be well communicated to the entire Saint Luke community including on the website. Steve shared that Mrs Kissel will be meeting with faculty in small groups in mid to late May and will also attend PTO hot dog night. The following suggestions were made as well

- A welcome reception for parents to have an opportunity to meet Mrs. Kissel.
- That Mrs. Kissel should be introduced at weekend masses.
- That students be given an opportunity to meet her, possibly at the May Monday gathering planned for the 22nd.

Steve suggested that written reports should be provided from committees to avoid overwhelming Mrs. Kissel. All agreed that strong efforts will be made to make her feel welcome and embraced by the community. Mandy and Tim will work together on the idea of PTO hosting the welcome reception.

Principal's Report – Steve Weber

Transition: Mrs. Borland and I have met with Mrs. Elizabeth Kissel and are working on a schedule of meetings with stakeholders to insure a smooth transition. She indicated that the contract has not been signed, as of our meeting, so these will not be communicated until that is done; and her appointment has been shared with the rest of the school and parish community. I have shared with her our complete academic calendar and both staff and parent handbooks. I will also share the strategic plan and school improvement plan with her.

Teacher Changes: Beth and I have concluded interviews for the science and special Ed openings. I have a signed contract for the middle school science position. Mrs. Cayley Coss, who has been teaching middle-school science at St. Joan of Arc for eight years, will be our new grade seven teacher. We have identified our candidate for the special education opening, but have not yet signed the contract. While nothing is confirmed, there may be other changes, as it is not unusual to have more than "normal" changes when there is a leadership change. I have worked with Patrick Jendraszak and hope to have contracts ready and signed by late April or early May.

Assessment Notes: We start ISTEP part 2 this week and testing runs until May 5. These are computerized tests that require significant scheduling to assure that all are done in a safe, sane and timely matter. Sadly, according to the state schedule, we will not get ISTEP results until August. This does not allow much time for effective planning and responses. In addition, we will complete the spring assessments on NWEA. The teachers agree that the information, growth measurements and academic support tools make this much more valuable to guide instruction adjustments than ISTEP. Thus, even though there will be the ISTEP testing, it is worth the time to get accurate and timely information.

We are in negotiations with the MA Rooney Foundation to use their newly developed tool to compile data in a meaningful manner for teachers, administrators and board leaders. We hope to have the various reports run for this year and a more complete report starting next fall. Steve noted that this foundation provides an incredibly powerful synthesis of all the available data which should be very helpful. The foundation provides these services at no charge. Steve and Beth will be meeting with them on May 3rd. They evaluate both I step and NWEA results and provide detailed reporting of the information. Steve further noted that our new principal has special strengths and experience in these areas as well.

ACRE: The Assessment of Catholic Religious Education (ACRE) is given each year to grades 5, 8 and 10. It is developed by the NCEA for use in Catholic parishes and schools. It assesses student knowledge and attitudes in areas of: Faith Knowledge, Liturgical Life, Moral Formation, Communal Life, Missionary Spirit. The data compares local group results to national norms for both school and parish religious education programs. Results are listed as Advanced, Proficient and Needs Improvement. Scores are also ranked by: All Students, Catholic Students and Returning Students. Note that there is some concern that the ACRE does not match up directly to the Archdiocese standards, and that some of the questions are more reading comprehension questions than fair assessment of knowledge. Nonetheless, our students generally perform well on the assessment.

Communication: Steve noted that they are looking into developing social media accounts such as Facebook and Instagram for communicating news and information to parents.

Below is the Faith Knowledge report for All Students.

Grade 5	Advanced %	Proficient %	Needs Improve %	Total % Adv./Proficient
SLS Faith Knowledge	41.6	46.8	11.7	88.4
National School	13.0	53.7	33.3	66.7
Rel. Vocation?	42%			
School Helps Grow Faith	94%			
Grade 8				
SLS Faith Knowledge	57.1	36.5	6.3	93.6
National School	23.9	51.8	24.3	75.7
Rel. Vocation?	28%			
School Helps Grow Faith	97%			

Katie suggested comparing the scores the current 8th grade earned when they were tested in 5th grade as a way to best understand how we're doing. Steve noted that we could do that for the current 8th graders, but noted that the test was different prior to their 5th grade year.

Beth wrote an early reader grant and we were approved. We will be receiving about \$4000 to put toward helping our struggling readers. Steve further noted that the meetings for assessing vertical alignment of our curriculum are in progress.

Business Items

Final Approval of Budget:

2016/2017 (current year) – Dan Heslin noted the following:

- Current year loss decreased to (\$36k) driven by significant improvement in cafeteria collections
- Expect current year loss in the range (\$37k) to (\$47k) once all financials are settled

2017/2018 (next year budget)

- School Commission Exec did another deep dive on select areas of budget to confirm alignment; minor updates made
- Parish Finance worked with Cafeteria to develop a break-even budget for 2017/2018; expected (\$10k) loss was not going to be accepted
- 2017/2018 budget has some additional favorability through improved cafeteria position and lower hiring costs; favorability has been left in budget and placed in contingency funds to deal with any fluctuation in number of students or family mix
- At this point, budget reviewed in March is locked and prepared for approval vote in April meeting and includes a nearly \$30,000 in contingency funding.
- A new product for educational use i-pads will also improve our budget outlook significantly.

A motion to approve the budget was made and seconded. The budget was unanimously approved. The group offered a hearty thanks to Dan Heslin and Steve Weber for all their hard and effective work.

Nominations

Seven people have expressed interest and four turned in bios prior to the deadline. No candidates for the at large position have come forward. The bios will be forwarded to Monsignor for approval.

Facilities Issues Review:

Andy Bauer conducted a very thorough review of all facility issues. He met with faculty at all levels and offered the following report in summary of three general themes that arose from his research:

Cleanliness

The downstairs classrooms feel less clean than the upstairs rooms. Several reasons are likely for this: carpet hides dirt and stains better than white hard floors, downstairs is partially underground, bigger kids make bigger messes (science, etc.). This was reflected in the comments from the teachers. Upstairs teachers' comments tended towards things like HVAC control, bookcases, desks. While downstairs teachers first comments were floors, cleanliness of HVAC, etc.

Especially downstairs the teachers didn't feel the cleaning standard was high enough, or the common sense was enough. An example was a stain on the floor that was waxed over, locking it in the floor indefinitely. HVAC units throughout the building but downstairs in particular have readily visible dirt on them. What does it take to get those visibly less dirty?

Window washing seems to be something that isn't done regularly enough.

The gym is a mess, and the north gym specifically. I spend a good deal of time in the gym for Knights, plays, athletics, etc. but it was eye opening to go in there with an eye for cleanliness and to talk to the people who are in there every day. We need to really think about how we can fix this issue. Whether it is through a thoughtful selection of floor and wall coverings, additional cleanings, especially on Sunday nights, or other ideas to help keep the gym clean. It is often the first and only impression we make to visitors for all the events that take place in it. But especially in the north gym we are not being good stewards in my opinion. There are some things in the works (flooring in the locker rooms) to help with this, but we need to do more.

Tech

Computers are slow. A near universal complaint. Thankfully steps are being taken to alleviate this issue. One item that did come up with respect to computers was a request for laptops to be able to take computers home and be able to do things like enter grades from home. That type of flexibility is increasingly expected in modern business technology, need to investigate its potential for us, both pros and cons.

The interwrite boards are universally hated. The smartboards are almost universally loved, and envied by those with the interwrite boards. We should either replace the interwrite boards with smartboards or spend the money on better document cameras.

There was concern if Jen Eckert's job as "tech support to the teachers" goes away they will be facing more tech related issues and productivity declines.

Especially in the lower grades there was a desire for another computer cart as well as some dedicated in classroom desktops that could be used in a station type format.

Facility

Space. Almost everyone said they don't have enough space. Resource and the languages are in a critical need of space. While it is not a facility issue one of the comments that came up from both of the resource teachers I spoke with was with the recent increase in enrollment of kids with additional resource needs the investment in resource teaching and space has not kept up, and we are therefore letting those students down or otherwise not getting them the proper help they need. The Spanish program which has been added in recent years needs a dedicated home sized appropriately. It currently is not in a large enough space. One of the third grade rooms is not critically small but it is not an ideal situation for the number of kids in it, with well below desirable room for the normal "stuff", books, bags, coats, desk for an aide, etc. that other rooms have.

In terms of teachers and space there was consensus among the teachers about a need for a teachers lounge, that we've had in the past but has gone away as other needs became more pressing. In addition to a lounge we need to look at the teacher bathroom situation as well, both from a cleanliness side and from do we have enough of them?

I'll be blunt on the space issue. We need to build more rooms if we are going to maintain this size student body with the offerings we provide. The school is looking at a significant adjustment of the rooms assignments this summer to try to alleviate some of these issues, but it won't be able to solve all the issues in that manner. Much like how we took a serious look this year at the costs associated with having the school we want, we need to take a serious look at the type of building we need to have the school we want. We'll need to be highly engaged in the pending parish site planning process and we need to do our homework and present our case, which I believe is strong. Nobody likes to hear things like "capital campaign" or "building drive" but unless we want to drop programs like language and tech we are going to have to add rooms to provide the programs and resource services the right way. It's as simple as that. HVAC complaints were mainly two things: the blower is noisy, and it is either too hot or too cold. Not sure how you fix those things, but perhaps as we do replacement putting in limited manual controls in the rooms could be possible. Understandably there are pros and cons to that approach.

Desks and chairs need to be reviewed by grade level to see if they are meeting teacher needs and then as we go through our replacement cycle we should purchase appropriately.

We would likely benefit from a more proactive rather than reactive approach to some of the issues we currently have, like moisture wicking on the lower levels and ants in the kindergarten and 5th grade rooms. Fixing the moisture issues might not be cheap but there are things we could do, and perhaps proactively spraying for bugs outside in the spring and fall are measures we should look at.

The next step is to take this list and determine what can and cannot be done, and then determine the best approach to get the improvements made. It was noted that many of these concerns align with concerns the faculty has raised in Academic meetings as well.

May Meeting Schedule

Meeting schedule: will include review of current/ending strategic planning goals. And alignment to archdiocesan accreditation. May and June meetings combined to be May 23rd. Officer elections will be held on May 23rd.

Strategic Planning Committee Reports:

Academic Excellence – Valerie Esposito

The committee met with Beth Borland to discuss and plan for current and future initiatives. Several initiatives are underway, including the following:

- **Writing curriculum:** In our most recent meeting with faculty, staff indicated a desire to strengthen students' writing skills. The current program, titled "6+1" currently is used inconsistently among the faculty. Additional training was requested and investigated. Because of the popularity of the training, full staff training will not be available until 2018. Beth will be working with the new principal to ensure the optimal professional development plan is in place to improve teachers' ability to successfully implement 6+1 in their classrooms.
- **Library/reading program:** In an effort to increase students' personal reading, the concepts of organizing leveled books, initiating a school-wide reading program and participating in the shared system with the Indianapolis Public Library have been discussed. Additional discussions with library staff from St. Luke and Indianapolis are underway and results will be communicated.
- **We continue to hear feedback from teachers regarding the challenges of the differentiated learning models in place.** Teaching challenges exist at both ends of the learning spectrum and we continue to recommend additional teacher training be provided to assist with providing additional resources and strategies in teaching high- and low-ability students. Additionally, we recommend, where financially feasible, increasing aide support in the primary grades to assist teachers in the implementation of differentiated learning.
- **Summertime learning:** We are in the process of investigating the possibility of increasing summertime learning opportunities, possibly via online learning methods.

Facilities – Sue MacGill

Bathrooms will be complete this summer. North gym floors and locker room and bathroom floors will be enhanced with an epoxy coating.

Technology – Dan Heslin

- E-Rate proposal for increased bandwidth is submitted and awaiting confirmation of discount. As soon as confirmed, we will begin scheduling move to increased bandwidth.
- E-Rate proposal for network upgrades is submitted and awaiting confirmation of discount. As soon as confirmed, Parish technology staff will schedule upgrade activities and get started with needed cabling efforts
- Apple just released a more cost effective iPad model starting at \$299 for Education purchases; a minimum 20% discount over previous models
- Phil working with other schools to take advantage of good ideas

Committee Reports:

Buildings and Grounds – Andy Bauer/Sue MacGill – see above

Communications – Kevin McCusker – meeting April 19th to discuss parish phone app.

Faith Formation – Teresa Schutzman/Phil Poirier – May 12 will be movie night showing Our Lady of Fatima in the gym. Everyone brings their own chairs and snacks. Children under junior high age must be accompanied.

Nominations- Jim Naughton – see above

Pastoral Council – Tim O'Brien/Jenn Rotz – Last meeting focused again on how to truly engage parishioners in the parish, and how to reach those who are disengaged and bring them into the fold.

PTO – Mandy Heslin –

- Teacher development – PTO discussing opening up grant funds for continuing education at teacher's request
- Planning end of year fun day for May 17th with bounce houses, tatoos and other fun
- Accepting nominations for eleven open slots.
- Planning hot dog night
- Working on funding 3 i-pads per classroom. Also working to upgrade teacher PC's which haven't been accounted for in school master plan.

SLAC – Valerie Esposito – Working on building a war room to show kids video and help children learn from in game experience. We have a new baseball team and our wrestling team won the city championship. A dinner is being held May 5th to recognize coaches and student athletes. SLAC was pleased with parent participation in recent tournaments.

Stewardship – Katie Kumler – no meeting

May 3rd will be the annual staff appreciation breakfast. Valerie will organize via sign up genius.

The meeting was closed with a prayer at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Suzanne Sherby, School Commission Secretary