

## **St. Luke School Commission Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday October 6, 2015, 7:00 PM**

The meeting was called to order with a prayer 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, Phil Poirier, Msgr. Schaedel, Teresa Schutzman, Suzanne Sherby, Rob Shumaker, Steve Weber.

The June 3, 2015 meeting minutes were approved.

The September 1, 2015 meeting minutes were approved.

### **President's Report – Rob Shumaker**

The Open Forum was moved to the beginning of the meeting so that parents can make comments or express concerns without waiting through the entire School Commission meeting. The Commission is still open to discussion as to how to best be prepared to address issues which might be raised. A method of knowing concerns ahead of time would be ideal. Rob suggested that either the President or the Secretary could greet any guests to the meetings at the door and ask if they have a specific concern they would like to address during the forum portion of the meeting. Monsignor stated that he does not believe members should feel obligated to address concerns on the spot and that it may be more prudent to consider some things as potential items to be included on a future agenda. Section VII of the Bylaws was mentioned as providing for non-members to address the commission regarding items on the current agenda. Parents also have the option of contacting an Executive Committee member and requesting that a certain concern be added to the agenda. Monsignor strongly suggested that concerns addressed to individual school board members should be addressed directly to Administration and that we should take care that matters best resolved in that way do not end up taking up the time of the School Commission meetings.

The relevant section of the Standing Rules is copied below.

#### **Article VII: Meetings**

*Section 1:* Meetings shall be held as prescribed in the Bylaws.

*Section 2:* All meetings shall be open meetings unless designated as being Executive Sessions. In order for the Commission to go into an Executive Session, a motion for Executive Session must be made by a member, seconded, and approved by the Commission.

*Section 3:* Non-members wishing to address the Commission shall be permitted to do so during the time reserved for such purpose, if any, on the agenda published for each regular Commission meeting. Non-members may also request to address the Commission if such request has been approved for the agenda in advance of the meeting. Such requests must be addressed and delivered to the President of the Commission and approved at the Executive Committee meeting prior to the Commission meeting.

Rob stated that we will be moving to a meeting format which requires members to have read and be prepared to comment on all reports submitted prior to the meeting. We will no longer read from reports but will plan to move more directly to discussion. Rob said that the Strategic Planning reports do not need to be presented as fully polished reports, but that our goal is to ensure that all members are up to speed on the work of each committee and to allow for more input from the full commission to committees.

### **Principal's Report** – Steve Weber

Steve opened with a review of the recent Principal's coffee, which was attended by about eight parents. He said the chief concern raised had to do with use of Resource Staff and concerns about communication with parents of children who utilize the Resource faculty. He said that one mother expressed that her daughter has felt extremely welcome in the Saint Luke community as a new student. Steve and Beth also submitted the following written reports:

#### **Strategic Planning Notes:**

Technology: The teacher tech team met and their notes are included as an attachment. I also met via conference call with Phil and Dan to share that info and discuss the steps forward. Notes from that meeting are also attached.

Academic Excellence: Beth and I met with Suzanne, Valerie and Teresa to plot the way forward. Beth shared examples for the curriculum mapping progress to date. Questions to add to the discussion include: 1) how to communicate resource or enrichment support to parents? 2) how to ensure academically talented students are properly challenged? 3) Would it better to pull back and focus totally on primary K-3 grades? 4) The members recommend a consultant to work with Beth on the process 5) The members also are recommending that we consider a "Dean of Students" to support administration. 6) additional aides for first grade to assist with differentiation.

Beth will also submit a report on her progress with curriculum mapping

#### **Other Notes:**

- Bully policy: The Archdiocese is requiring a formal policy on bullying. I did send them a copy of our policy, which seems to be in compliance with their model. We are now required to send a report to OCE on any bully allegations and response twice a year. A copy of Saint Luke's Bully Policy is included at the end of these meeting minutes for reference.
- SGO Fund: Now is the time to reflect and consider a gift to our Scholarship Granting Organization. These funds are critical for supporting our families with financial need. They also give the donor a 50% state tax credit, which is much better than a deduction. I challenge each member to make a donation at whatever level you are able. You can donate online at [www.i4qed.org](http://www.i4qed.org) or with the attached paper form.
- Budget: Our 2016-17 budget discussions are already upon us. We are challenged to approve our 16-17 tuition/fees at our December meeting. That means we must have a

proposal in November for a vote in December... unless we want a special meeting in December! Things to think about: 1) request for Dean of Students 2) technology 3) health care costs 4) any discounts for early payment of fees etc. 5) additional aides for primary classes 6) 3% salary increase

Teresa Schutzman raised a concern with regard to the SGO with regard to the management fees charged. She recently learned that The Institute for Quality Education retains 8% of all funds donated, and that she believes this fee should be brought to the general attention of the parish. She said it is affecting the decisions her family makes as to how they choose to donate and that people might want to look at direct donations instead of using the SGO. Steve agreed that the fees sound high, but said that the arrangement was negotiated by the archdiocese. He also pointed out that direct donations only qualify the donor for a tax deduction and not for the more substantial tax credit that SGO donations provide. Monsignor mentioned that the north side parishes have discussed trying to set up an option between them with lower fees. It was agreed that there are compliance and management costs incurred. Dan Heslin offered to manage Saint Luke's SGO from his garage for the low fee of 6%.

Sue MacGill asked Steve if there were any specific items in the budget we should be thinking about. He responded that the requests for a Dean of Students position and the thought of additional aide time in first grade would be primary concerns. Suzanne Sherby mentioned that we committed last year to look at the discount structure for families with more than three students enrolled. Wendy will bring this up with the Finance committee during the tuition discussions. Rob said that we will need to know more about what other schools do in regard to this matter. Steve clarified that the November discussion is not the full budget discussion, but only the revenue/tuition side. The November meeting is discussion only, but members should be prepared to bring any concerns. Tuition vote will be in December meeting.

### **Technology Update**

The teacher notes seemed to stress the need for training in both specific technologies and integrating into effective instruction. We discussed making sure that the school needs were met in any future parish tech planning. Phil and Steve are going to follow up on the progress of the plan in place for IHM. Steve will see the principal this Thursday at an OCE meeting.

Now that the iPads are deployed for grades 5-6, we need to start the planning and training process to expand up and down in grade levels. We have noted what seems to be much slower download times in recent days. (I just ran a test and the download speed at 4:10PM was 5.8mbps while upload was 28.8mbps) Patrick J is checking with Comcast to see what the issue may be. The concern we discussed was balancing tech support with technology class and the time and skill demands on one person. The tech support time available this year has been cut in half since last year as grades 5-8 were rescheduled with instructional time. I will have Jen Eckert track her actual tech time v tech requests to see how the demand and response is or is not working. We also discussed contacting other institutions for tech support such as IVY Tech, Marian or Butler for some possible low/no cost intern or work-study options.

We would like to offer some parent training on best use of PlusPortals, and the possible addition of the app once the system is more fully implemented.

Steve mentioned that the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders have begun using google docs and are liking it. One of the children told him it was like having a flash drive that cannot be lost or run through the washing machine!

#### **Update on curriculum maps:**

- Beth meets weekly with grade level teams collecting information about what skills they are teaching their students (focused on math, LA and religion), what areas in which they are seeing this year's students are well prepared or not as prepared.
- As this information is collected Beth
  - Identifies the standard taught
  - Documents how the skill was taught (not all methods work best for all kid, but we are focusing on recording best practices)
  - Leads discussion of how teacher will address the students that have not mastered the skill while others have and are ready for enrichment.
  - Records on quarter one document
  - Looks for overlap and gaps
  - Prepares Profession Development in best practice strategies.
- As overlap is found, vertical teams are pulled together to discuss how to better teach broad skill more deeply at each grade level. (depth vs breadth). Discussion is also had about holding kids accountable for the skills we know they have learned and not spending excessive time "re-teaching".
- Some grade level teams are very consistent in what is taught to all students. In some cases this is achieved by switching teachers (i.e. 1 math teacher). In other grades it is achieved by thoughtful collaboration between the 3 teachers. Teachers use their prep periods to meet and also use electronic means of sharing documents (Dropbox, etc.). These documents are only shared amongst grade level teams. It may be worth exploring an internal document server or professional use of google docs to allow vertical sharing of documents to increase communication between grade levels.
- Beth's big picture is to have quarterly maps that will articulate what we teach our students, the best practice methods of how each skill is taught (but this would not be an exclusive list of methods. It needs to be fluid to address needs of all students over time), how the skills will be assessed and the amount of time focused on each skill. Also on the maps will be the state, archdiocesan and St. Luke standards that are taught that quarter. These maps will primarily be for internal use, but available to parents/community if desired. A more concise version will be prepared to share with parents/community/potential St. Luke families that will specify what children in each grade will learn at St. Luke Church and School.
- As this process occurs over the course of the 2015-2016 school year, Beth is looking for gaps, overlap and inconsistency. As discovered, these issues are addressed with teachers and modifications made for this year. Those modifications will be noted in the maps.

Sue asked what the teacher response has been to the mapping project. Beth responded that many seem worried that the project will involve a lot of work with no tangible benefit. She said this seems to be fading as they realize that while they have to provide information, Beth is doing the bulk of the work to pull it altogether. She mentioned that they are finding a great deal of consistency within grade levels, but that the process is helping to reveal areas where vertical alignment is off. She pointed to an example from the middle school last year when Mrs. Alexander identified some parts of speech which were not being adequately taught in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Mrs. Alexander worked with the 6<sup>th</sup> grade language arts teacher to enhance what they're doing.

She said that Mrs. Alexander has been impressed with the improvement in this area this year after the changes.

## **Business Items**

### **Strategic Planning**

**Academic Excellence Update** – Teresa Schutzman: Teresa stressed that committees efforts this year are directed at reacting to changes in recent years and are all developed with the over-arching goal of seeking and implementing excellence. The committee recognizes that there are many excellent practices already in place, but believes that the bar can be raised. With that in mind, she presented the following report regarding the Academic goals for the year:

1. Review existing St. Luke Academic Standards for each grade level.
2. Support the administration with the completion of new curriculum mapping of all subjects in grades K-4 at St. Luke Catholic School with standards that exceed both the current state and archdiocesan standards before the start of the 2016-17 academic year (not mapping of current curriculum, but instead a curriculum that exceeds current St. Luke standards). Mapping for grades 5-8 projected to be completed before the start of the 2017-18 school year.
  - Hire a curriculum/mapping consultant to work with Mrs. Borland seeking best practices while promoting academic rigor. The addition of a consultant allows for input for Mrs. Boland as well as removes the majority of the burden of mapping from faculty
  - Obtain information from top academic schools in the area and share with Mrs. Borland for potential incorporation into St. Luke standards
  - Ensure that mapping meets the fundamental goal of a math, language arts, and reading program that challenges each child at his/her own level
  - Investigate the possibility of an accelerated class for each grade level
3. Examine our enrichment and resource model
  - Interview Mrs. Borland, teachers and enrichment aides to understand current practices.
  - Investigate and potentially recommend augmenting enrichment model to increase academic rigor for those students exceeding St. Luke standards and those who need additional support
4. In light of enrollment that has increased from 300-600 students, with no increase in administrative staff, we recommend an additional full-time position in the administration (e.g. Dean of Students) whose job includes counselor, disciplinarian, and overseer of IEP implementation. This would free Beth Borland (from some of her many duties) and allow timely progress on the curriculum mapping.

Vernon Back stressed his belief that the development of clearly articulated standards must take precedence over everything else. Tim O'Brien seconded the idea that we cannot effectively build a curriculum map without clearly laying out the standards we are trying to meet. Vernon said that he feels deep concern that we are targeting skill levels that are too low. He believes the wide differential in ability levels at Saint Luke highlights the need to adapt what we have done in past years, and stated that he thinks a solid strategy to build the abilities of students at the low end of our spectrum, while ensuring that we are never dumbing down the curriculum for students at other levels is critical. Vernon passed materials from his daughter's first grade class to highlight the low level he believes we are targeting at this point. He said he believes that the

standards are too low in both math and reading, but that he worries the most about math because it is easier for children to do reading at their own level at home. Suzanne Sherby agreed that the level of challenge in the math program for the lower grades is very low, and said she is especially concerned to see that the first grade math papers are a near mirror to what her son is doing in second grade. She stated that she thinks the papers coming home highlight the low achievement level attained in the math program and fuel the concerns of parents in the lower grades who sense that something is not right. Vernon mentioned several methodologies used at Sycamore school and other places to teach to each child's ability level and suggested a ½ day working session in which the standards that we are working to can be clearly laid out for all to see.

Rob asked Teresa what the overall Commission can do to help. Teresa said that they are still trying to lay the foundation to hit the ground running. She said that there will be lots of work to do, and that she and Valerie will be asking others for help. She believes there are challenges in the lower grades and wants to pursue the idea of focusing our efforts fully on grades k-4 and making that area more solid with truly rigorous materials instead of mapping 3 subjects for all 9 grades. She also believes some of the concerns raised highlight the need for a consultant to work with Beth on the project. Monsignor shared with the group that he shared the AE committee report which highlighted the concerns of all stakeholders with Beth and Steve last year. He said he believes there is a need to clearly state our standards and is in support of Vernon's idea to do this work prior to moving further on the mapping project. He also said we should keep in mind that schools like Sycamore may not be all they're cracked up to be.

**Technology Update** – Phil shared the following 2015 Work Plan with the commission

Goal statement: During the 2015-16 school year, the Technology Committee will work to establish a structure to facilitate effective communication and clear accountability for technological needs of the School. The Committee will also facilitate both effective deployment and use of technology in the classroom, and the availability of sufficient resources to support that technology.

- A. Structural Measures - The Committee will consider internal structural options to facilitate communication and decision-making on technology matters between the School and Parish. It will work to establish (1) clear communication between the School and Parish on technology matters and (2) effective assignment of responsibility and accountability for tasks in the technology space among the various School and Parish personnel involved in implementing technology. The Committee will consider models adopted at peer schools, including the establishment of a common Technology Commission to support both the Parish and the School.
- B. Technology Resources - Working with the Principal and designated school employees, the Committee will assess the School's needs in technological hardware, IT support, technology training, and associated procurement and implementation processes. In this process, it will assess the resources devoted to technology, particularly with respect to IT support and education in the use of classroom technology. Where the Committee finds resources to be insufficient, it will develop measures to supply the needed resources. Where possible, it will facilitate coordination in appropriate areas with the new Chatard CIO. The Committee will make recommendations to the full Commission or Pastoral Council in these areas, as appropriate.

C. Peer School Comparisons - The Committee will continue the process of information gathering from peer schools and relevant high schools as to technology selection and implementation. It will periodically report on its findings to the Commission and the Principal.

The following comments were made in addition to the report submitted above:

- Phil stated that a clear understanding of who is doing what and where accountability lies is of prime importance. He said it is readily apparent to him from the meetings thus far with various people involved that there is not a uniform idea of who is responsible for what.
- Rob asked what the overall committee can do to help, and Phil said he will be asking for help as needs are identified
- Phil said that although the ideas we're discussing as a sub-committee of School commission in pursuit of fulfilling the Strategic Plan, technology needs cross all boundaries between school and parish and a common approach is needed. He suggested that there may be a need for a closer liaison
- Andy Bauer mentioned that there is a new member of the Buildings and Grounds committee with a tech background and that Patrick has suggested melding those as an on-going structure.
- Monsignor said that he wants to see the best organization possible and suggested that if there are conflicts in terms of who believes they have control of a given area, those should be brought to him for final resolution.

**Development Update** – Suzanne submitted the following report:

The Development Committee members met briefly to begin discussion of how we can best work to meet the goals and actions outlined in the Strategic Plan. It was agreed that a larger meeting to clarify the scope of this effort is needed. To that end, the committee will schedule a time to meet with the School Administration, the Pastor and possibly members of the Parish Finance committee and the Parish Communications committee.

As of now, the committee has contemplated the following:

- We'd like to see a well-constructed parent survey for the 2015/2016 school year.
- We would like to see either as a separate survey or part of the survey mentioned above, an effort to better understand why parents choose to send their children to Saint Luke Catholic School.
- Additionally, we believe an effort should be made to contact parishioners who choose other School options for their children and understand whether their choices are:
  - Financial
  - Academic
  - Other

The committee feels that all efforts in the Academic Excellence arena are likely critical to building the stature and reputation of Saint Luke in the parish community and the community at large.

The group asked for additional guidance. Monsignor offered the following points as direction:

- Start with SMRE. We need to know why so many parish families choose other options. He said he does not believe it is financial.

- The point was made that the parish data base is not 100% accurate with regard to baptismal records. Monsignor said to get SMRA records from Sister Diane.
- Talk to realtors and find out why Saint Luke isn't even listed as a school option when you search for homes on Trulia or Zillow.

**Facilities Update** – Andy Bauer submitted the following report. He also mentioned that anyone is always welcome to attend Buildings and Grounds meetings and said that they are a helpful group of people.

**2015-2016 St Luke School Commission Strategic Plan Facilities Work Group Action Plan**

The goal for this year is to continue to work towards achieving the goals set out in the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan for Facilities.

**Goal One:** To provide a safe, secure and aesthetically pleasing environment in which to work and learn.

Action: Review the parking lots and playground for safety concerns and solutions.

**2015-16 Update and Action:** New lighting will be installed this year in the parking lot. Money for a new playground was the main goal of the 2015 Parish Festival. School Commission will work with Buildings & Grounds (B&G) to continue progress towards funding a new playground, determine the best location and develop a timeline for installing a new playground.

Action: Work with the Parish manager to develop a plan to decrease the response time of the custodial staff to maintenance, repair and replacement issues.

**2015-16 Update and Action:** In line with the steps taken below, a punch list of needs was developed and work was done to address at least some of those needs. School Commission, with the Principal and Parish manager's input, will assist in reviewing and updating the list see what work remains and work with the Parish manager to eliminate delays. This may be a challenge in the short term given the recent medical misfortune suffered by both full time members of our parish custodial staff.

Action: Hire an additional custodian who would report directly to the Principal and be responsible for and responsive to the demands of the school including the daily cleaning of the restrooms and common areas of the school.

**2015-16 Update and Action:** A part time porter was hired by the Parish during 2014-2015 specifically to clean the school and school utilized areas. Noticeable improvement has been made. School Commission will work with the Principal and B&G to assess if more resources and attention to this issue are required.

Action: Allow the School Commission representative on the B&G Committee to work closely with the Parish staff on a revised, detailed list of specifications for cleanliness, repair requests and appropriate cycling of capital improvements and replacements within the School.

**2015-16 Update and Action:** A "punch list" of items to address was created in 2014-15 and progress was made but the content of the list falls short of meeting all the items listed in the Action. School Commission will work with B&G to revise/update the list for current needs, as well as work with the Principal and B&G to establish specifications for cleanliness (which may already exist) and create on paper a cycle for capital improvements.



**Goal Two:** The SLSC will work closely with the Parish staff and the B&G Committee to determine the best use of existing space within the Parish Buildings and any need for additional space.

Action: Consult with a design professional to plan for the modification of existing space and for the construction of new space if necessary to accommodate the growing needs.

**2015-16 Update and Action:** Additional office space in the Parish office area was found for Mr. Dugan. A consultant was engaged to perform a study, and initial discussions and site visits were performed in Spring 2015. The School Commission will follow up with B&G to get the assessment completed this school year and work with B&G and the Parish manager on creating a plan to move forward on any recommendations that come out of that study.

**Cubbies:** In Spring 2015, all 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classrooms as well as one upper grade classroom received new cubbies. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade classroom cubbies are still in need of replacement. School Commission will work with B&G and the Principal to identify funding for these rooms, with the minimum goal of getting at least one more grade finished this school year, once we see how the design and materials used in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade rooms perform and if there are any modifications required.

### **Committees/Liaison Reports:**

Anne Horton reported on PTO activities as follows:

- Enrichment/after school activities have been offered. These programs are not for profit, but are intended to help school families.
- The Buzz book has been submitted to the printer and will be out soon
- The membership committee is working on board members for next year.
- Trash bag sales were lower than in previous years, largely due to the graduation last year of one child who had built up a very large following of trash bag buyers. This was anticipated in the budget. About 7000 rolls were sold. This number is about 800-900 lower than last year. An attempt to sell at Fall Fest was not successful. Trash bags are still available if anyone missed the opportunities presented.
- Fab Fridays are underway. The students raised \$800 for the privilege of dunking Mrs. Hicks.
- A new spirit wear vendor is in place this year and has proved much easier to work with. Another sale will be opened prior to holiday season so that families can buy Christmas gifts.

**Pastors Comments** – Monsignor made the following comments:

Fall Fest was quite successful

Be mindful of the Eckrich family and commented that he has never seen a parish come together so effectively in support of a member in need. He commented that this was a marvelous silver lining.

We should not leap to the conclusion that the fact that we have not previously worked from a curriculum map means that we are somehow a poorly run school. To the contrary, we have some of the highest Istep scores and some of the best teachers.

The comments regarding our math are probably accurate. He mentioned that he has noted changing demographics with others in the surrounding community.

He cautioned against using an “another body is the solution” mentality. He does not want to see us fall into a knee-jerk reaction of hiring every time we identify a problem. We need to be able to find solutions within our current excellent resources.

He is in support of Vernon’s idea of locking people in a room until a direction is agreed on. He suggested we not waste time and energy on the past or the present, but focus on where we are headed.

A closing prayer was said, and the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Suzanne Sherby, School Commission Secretary

**FOR Reference:**

**Bullying or Harassment Policy:**

Students are to respect all students and staff. Harassment in any form by a St. Luke School student during school hours or at school-sponsored activities is strictly prohibited. All reports of unwelcome, offensive or inappropriate conduct will be promptly and thoroughly investigated if reported to the school administrators in a timely manner. The parents of the suspected offender and reported victim will be notified. Consequences will be determined.

Harassment by means of electronic media, including, but not limited to, Internet, “Facebook”, “Instagram” or other social media, text messaging, etc. – **even outside of school** - is subject to the same review. This includes taking pictures or videos in the classroom or depicting students or teachers, which are then shown to others or posted on the Internet. Students are NOT allowed to carry cell phones with them in class (see Electronic Devices). Such items will be confiscated and returned only to a parent.

**Definition of Harassment:**

Harassment may include but is not limited to

- 1) unsolicited, unwelcome, or demeaning comments
- 2) any foul or obscene behavior or communication including technology
- 3) inappropriate or unwelcome touching of another
- 4) the display of explicit sexual visual material
- 5) the use or threat of violence, force, coercion, intimidation, or any action that makes another person uncomfortable
- 6) inappropriate comments about race or religion
- 7) speaking ill of or telling lies about others
- 8) encouraging others to use any of the above behaviors.

**Definition of Bullying:**

Any action that is:

- Repeated (as opposed to an isolated incident)
- Intentional (directly intended to humiliate or demean)  Power over another person

**Method for Reporting an Incident of Harassment or Bullying:**

**THE ADMINISTRATION MUST KNOW ABOUT BULLYING SITUATIONS IF WE ARE TO HELP. All incidents MUST be reported as soon as possible.**

1. 1) At school: report the incident to a teacher, staff member or administrator.
2. 2) At an athletic event: report the incident to the coach or Athletic Director.
3. 3) At a youth ministry activity: report the incident to a chaperone or YM.
4. 4) Whenever possible, parents should directly contact the parents of the suspected “bully” to work out a plan.
5. 5) Report all incidents promptly. DO NOT WAIT OR IGNORE! The situation will NOT get better if the “bully” thinks he/she has gotten away with it.

A conference will be held which will include all parties involved. Consequences will be determined at that time.