

St. Luke School Commission Meeting Minutes

Tuesday December 1, 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, Wendy Mehringer, Phil Poirier, Jenn Rotz, Msgr. Schaedel, Teresa Schutzman, Suzanne Sherby, Rob Shumaker, Steve Weber.

The November 3, 2015 meeting minutes were approved.

Principal's Report – Steve Weber

Letters of Intent: Staff and family letters of intent are due by December 11. I did submit my intent to return to Msgr. Schaedel. Two senior staff members have already informed Steve that they will be retiring at the end of this school year. Steve noted that the differential in their salaries versus what we will need to pay a new hire adds about \$30,000 in the budget.

Admissions: Applications for 2016-17 are starting to come in but it is too soon to count. Mr. Duggins typically has at least one tour a day the past few weeks. We do have students shadowing in upper grades for possible mid-year transfer.

2016-2017 Calendar: The fourth version of the 2016-2017 school calendar is attached. I would like to send out to parents as we are already getting requests.

SGO donation: I hope that each member of the Commission will consider making a donation to our SGO.

Wish List: We published a “Wish List” of items requested by teachers to help with their students. Please consider any of these items that “tickle your fancy.” Beth noted that as of this afternoon, four requests have already been fulfilled by parents. Those include the drying rack for Kindergarten, the ELA review materials for 3rd grade, the Children’s Bibles for 4th grade and the 7th grade novel set. Members asked if the list could be posted to the parish in general as parishioners without school children might be interested and able to fulfill the additional requests.

Pay Roll: Just FYI. The Archdiocese is changing payroll systems for the second time in less than three years. They are also shifting pay from two times per month (15th and 30th) to every two weeks. This is effective January 1.

Book and Supply Question: There was a question about expenses associated with the book and supply fee that is also used as the deposit. Here are the major items that the fee covers.

All text materials	\$60,595
Programs (music, art, science, PE, etc)	\$ 4,565
Instructional Supplies	\$13,900
Testing Materials (AIMS, ACRE, etc)	\$ 4,800
Copier/Paper	\$29,300
Grade Book Software	<u>\$16,000</u>
Subtotal	\$129,160

Total Collected \$129,154

Technology (currently funded through endowment) \$40,000

Andy Bauer asked whether the orchestra/band commitment included in the letter of intent to return due from families was binding. Steve noted that it is primarily for planning purposes with regard to

scheduling, but said that like the book and supply fee, it follows a June 1 deadline, after which it is binding.

Update on Curriculum:

- 2nd grade is differentiating their math based on level. They are very excited to see how well it is working and have had conversations with the 1st grade teachers about implementing this in 1st grade as well.
- We have finished our 3-8 vertical alignment of grammar and will start looking at literature.
- Needs for classroom instructional materials have been put together on a Wish List and the list has been distributed to families for consideration of underwriting.
- St. Luke School's current curriculum is being mapped. This is allowing for conversation about what is being taught and what holes and overlap exist. These maps will be used to adjust curriculum to what new standard the school commission and Monsignor Schaedel set for St. Luke School.
- School administration and teachers are examining math textbooks and supplemental resources for enrichment and remediation to determine if there are materials that better addresses our school needs, especially in 1-3.
- School administration is working to adjust Instructional Aids job description and with teachers to best use our Aids with students.
- School administration is looking at our schedule to maximize academic time and best use the staff resources we have while continuing to provide St. Luke Students with a progressively traditional education.

Business Items:

Rob began the tuition discussion by reminding all that the tuition rate for the 2016/2017 school year is our sole purpose in this meeting. We are not discerning how funds will be spent, just what the number will be. He further noted that though the actual rate of increase in the parish subsidy has not been calculated for this discussion, the percentage increase in the subsidy has been roughly equivalent to the percentage increase in tuition over time. Rob shared that Sue MacGill could not be at the meeting tonight. She shared her thoughts regarding tuition via email and asked that Rob cast her vote accordingly if it is needed to break a tie. She said that she does not wish to see parents unduly burdened by a tuition increase, but also does not want to see the school underfunded. She shared that she does not see increased enrollment as the answer to our financial issues. Conversely, she said she takes no pride in having the lowest tuition in the deanery and is concerned about the impact to the school. She said she finds the idea of having low tuition but adding multiple fees to cover actual expenses disingenuous.

Tuition Discussion:

The preliminary discussion of tuition at the previous meeting led to the development of two models, both of which consider a percentage increase of \$150 to base tuition, or approximately 3.7%. Model A provides for a \$150 increase to the base tuition rate with the per child increase amount reduced with each additional child alongside the per child discount. Model B contemplates a \$150 increase per child with the additional charged without regard for the multi child discount. The tuition increase history is as follows:

14/15 to 15/16 \$80 or 2%

13/14 to 14/15 \$60 or 1.5%

12/13 to 13/14 \$75 or 2%

All previous years have included the multi child discount in the increase.

Monsignor stated that he strongly favors increased enrollment as the best way to combat increased costs. He circulated a handout which illustrated that the difference in tuition revenue between model A and Model B is \$8600. Both models are prepared using our current enrollment number of 582, and that enrolling two additional students would cover the difference. Monsignor strongly urged that we do that instead of passing additional costs onto families. He noted that we have the earliest tuition fix in the diocese and that we have plenty of time to pursue higher enrollment.

Vernon Back noted that he objects to the fact that both models show the increase in non-parishioner tuition as a dollar amount equal to that of the parishioner rate, which when expressed as a percentage increase, greatly favors non-parishioners. In the model contemplated, parishioners would see a 3.73% increase while non-parishioners would see an increase of only 2.44% . He noted that this differential might seem relatively insignificant for the current year, but that over time the potential lost revenue becomes significant. Steve shared that we have 60 students from non-parish families and that about 20 of them are Choice Scholarship kids. He said that he prefers to communicate the tuition increase each year as a dollar amount instead of a percentage because it is easier for parents to understand. This has led to the same dollar increase for both parish and non-parish families.

Andy Bauer shared that he is against model B which allocates the per child increase without discount. Vernon agreed that he favors Model A, but wants to see the percentage increase equally applied to non-parishioners. It was noted that the need for an increase of this size is driven largely by increased costs in salary and benefits, and that model A just barely covers those costs. A member asked what percent of the wish list presented last month is covered by these models. Steve stated that this tuition model really can't cover any of the wish list items, but that the 2 retirements noted earlier will help to give us some flexibility.

Teresa Schutzman brought up several concerns. She shared that the Academic Excellence committee believes we need to be very serious about replacing our math and reading text books and that we really need to know exactly what is being budgeted for in order to understand whether these expenses have been adequately planned for. She noted that the committee has come to believe that both parents and teachers have noted a decline in the quality of our texts due to the changes in standards driven by the State of Indiana and the actions of the Archdiocese in supporting the State changes. She stressed that there is a strong need for a return to basics. She shared that she had contacted the middle school math teacher to ask his opinion of our materials and also to understand what he believes is driving the success of our middle school math. He told her that he believes in “basics, basics, basics.” He said he always teaches the simplest method and does not believe in teaching multiple methods. The committee is looking to return the school to a more traditional model which builds a firm foundation in the basics.

Steve stated that there is \$60,000 built into the budget for texts. Additionally, there is a reserve fund for texts carried over from previous years. He was not sure of the exact amount, but guessed it at about \$30,000. Teresa reiterated that we must take steps to ensure these necessary expenses are covered. Several members noted that the entire increase is tied up in known and unavoidable items such as salary and benefits, and that no provision seems to have been made for any of the wish list items, including aides, Dean of Students or technology needs. Teresa shared that she is firmly of the opinion that we may not need to hire any additional aides. She feels that a shifting of resources will likely be possible to meet the needs the AE committee is identifying. She suggested that in light of the importance of Academics, the commission strongly consider putting other projects on hold to ensure we are adequately funding this area of extreme import. She noted that we have invested quite a bit of funding in building improvements in recent years and that it is time to focus on making the materials we use to teach our students truly excellent. She mentioned the desire of many parents to move away from the Common Core aligned materials that have been in place for some time. She also noted a desire to see only literature which has a clear moral lesson and/or a contrast between good and evil.

Several members expressed frustration with the sequence of determining tuition revenue needed prior to laying out the details of the budget for the year. Vernon noted that this is essentially backwards from how a typical business would approach the revenue vs. expense equation. Dan Heslin added that under this model, we have people expecting low tuition increases based on history and only an assumption that the parish can sustain it. Steve said that until four years ago we did work out a budget prior to determining the minimum revenue needed from tuition, but that the timing on that pushed the tuition decision out as far as May. He says we lost families who needed certainty on the tuition number. Teresa asked why other parishes are able to fix tuition rates later in the year, while we are not. Steve stated again that our new families are looking for certainty on the costs and said that the high schools have already set their tuition rates for next year.

Most members expressed that they would like to see a more straight forward approach to budget and tuition. Monsignor again stressed that he believes the best approach to these budget concerns is to drive enrollment. He said that if we had ten more seats filled, we would be having a completely different discussion. He noted as well that although we have the lowest tuition in the North Deanery, we have the lowest parish subsidy as well.

Andy Bauer pointed out that there are many un-defined potential expenses. He noted that the tech plan in particular has no actual costs affixed. He said that he thinks the idea of a Dean of Students should be on hold until we can determine if reallocation of resources is a better option, especially given the fact that by the next budget cycle we should be able to fully evaluate how much difference having a vice principal on board might have made to staffing proposals.

Dan noted that as it stands, it appears there will be no money allotted for any of the proposed changes and needs. Teresa expressed that she is thankful to have Beth involved in, with Steve's support, looking to really dig into and identify our strengths and weaknesses. She stressed again the need to ensure we are able to meet the needs being identified in the academic arena. She said that the committee work all points to our text books being inferior, which is something that parents are concerned about, and which may be at the root of why our school isn't full. She expressed pleasure in seeing and hearing how excited the teachers are about the ability grouping in second grade and wants to ensure that we can spread these good changes throughout our structure. She stressed that we must build our academics with a solid math program and great reading materials, and expressed a strong desire to see those needs funded.

Rob reminded everyone that despite our frustrations with the many unknowns and the backwards nature of the process, our obligation is to set tuition this evening, not to allocate funds. He assured everyone that there will be an opportunity to dig into those details in an upcoming meeting. One member pointed out that some of the wish list items should surely be covered by the \$60,000 already set aside for text book purchases, the reserve fund from previous years and the extra income potentially generated by moving to the percentage increase as opposed to the across the board dollar amount increase for non-parishioners. Steve said that he feels like we can make a lot of the items on the wish list happen under either Model A or Model B work. He noted that including all of the options on the wish list would have required a tuition hike of over \$600/student. He said that the \$55,000 full time IT person isn't likely to happen, but that if we choose wisely, we can realize a lot of the rest.

With regard to the wish list and other needs, Teresa said that she wanted to outline that we are looking to re-vamp academic materials in K-3 this year, that grades 4,5 and 6 will be next. She noted that it seems we will not need any changes to middle school math due to the success of our current program, but that we would expect to see some potential changes needed there as well in the literature program. She feels that we should consider a plea to the PTO to help with funding some of these initiatives as they are so important. Dan suggested that maybe a plea to the parish in general might be in order at some point as some families whose children have grown or who don't have children in the school might feel called to help. As the PTO rep was not able to attend this meeting, Jenn Rotz offered to pass this potential need on for us, and also noted that she believes the fact that \$3500 worth of wish list items for the school was fulfilled within less than 24 hours of a request being made is an indication that parents are willing to support the school. Steve noted that the PTO reserve fund has been diminishing as they have funded an increasing number of projects recently. Teresa asserted that if parents are made aware of the meaningful changes and improvements we are making, support will come and our enrollment will grow along with it. Phil Poirier noted that there may have been a breakdown in the planning between committees and noted that technology will begin to work more closely with the academic committee as the needs there should drive the whole process.

Rob moved the discussion toward a decision. Monsignor noted that historically we have been in the 2% range and are now considering an increase of 3.7%. It was noted again that the required 3% increase in salary and benefits has pushed us to that level and that beyond that, there's not really much extra money. Wendy Mehringer said that it seems our financial planning has all happened one year at a time and that it would be wise to think more long term so that we're not constantly coming to parents and parishioners with extra fees or needs that aren't considered in the base tuition. The proposed tuition was calculated using the current year enrollment of 582. Monsignor said he'd really like to see us planning from an enrollment of 590, as 10-12 extra seats really changes things. Steve confirmed that an enrollment in the 590-600 range is comfortable both in terms of budget and managing the day to day of the school. Vernon recalled that we briefly discussed adding a surcharge in 1st grade to cover the cost of having full time aides in each classroom and suggested there might be a need to consider that in our proposed tuition models. The surcharge model has been used in the kindergarten tuition calculation for several years now. Monsignor said that he is opposed to doing that as it leads to the idea that we just keep adding fees to cover necessities. He said that model is too likely to lead to questions like whether parents should pay for access to the resource personnel, which he believes should just be part of what we do to meet the needs of our students.

Rob asked that we prepare for a vote and outlined again Models A and B. In light of the discussion, Rob added a model "C" in which the \$150 increase would remain as stated for parishioners, but would be carried over to the non-parishioner rate as a percentage rather than a number, which would make the first child increase for non-parishioners be approximately \$228 (3.7%). Monsignor said again that he would like to see us recalculate the increase needed based on an enrollment of 590 and use the lower number which would result. He challenged the group to drive enrollment to meet that goal, saying he thinks it is a fair challenge.

Rob polled for members in favor of models A and B and found none. He then polled all voting members as to support for Model C. There was unanimous support for Model C. Rob cast Sue MacGill's vote in favor of Model C as well, as it best aligned with the thoughts she expressed to him.

**Note – the tuition increase must be ratified by Monsignor before it is final.

Strategic Planning Committee Reports:

Academic Excellence: From Teresa Schutzman

Curriculum Standard Requested for Adoption

St. Luke School's Academic Standards will be one grade level above state standards by the end of third grade".

Present Working List FOR GRADES K-3:

COMMITTEE WORK IN ACTION:

1. Re-define the duties of the instructional assistants to be more hands on and interactive with the students (under the guidance of the teachers) in both math and reading. These changes would be in grades k-3.
2. Evaluate Resource personnel duties focusing on support for differentiation in core courses in grade K-3.
3. The committee hopes that this will be helpful in expanding current efforts at differentiation to include K-3 in both math and reading.
4. Science, social studies and religion will be taught 3 times a week. (Some grades presently do this with specific times set aside for switches for these subjects while others incorporate it into their homeroom time).

5. The Saxon Math (non-common core) curriculum and the Singapore Math (non-common core) curriculum are being evaluated by the administration and faculty in grades K-3 for implementation by the fall, 1016. (Manipulative's are an important and required component of instruction in grades K-3.)
6. The current readers for K-3 are being evaluated. Readers and literature at peer schools are also being looked at for comparison. The committee is evaluating all materials with the baseline that there is an interesting, engaging story and a moral lesson included. The committee plans to work on a pathway to move us toward a best practice model in the near term.
7. Differentiation (grouping) will be defined based on concrete evaluation along with teacher recommendation, mobility criteria, and parent communication prior to full implementation in K-3
8. Lunch times and specials will be evaluated once the Math, LA, and Science times are determined for maximum and appropriate use.

This committee requests that the Commission consider allocating ALL EXTRA MONEY, ALONG WITH FINANCIAL HELP FROM THE PTO, for new Math and Literature/Reading materials for grades K-3 FOR IMPLEMENTATION BY AUGUST, 2016.

Teresa noted that the committee is confident that with proper support, all of our students can be working at the 4th grade level as laid out by the State of Indiana at the end of their 3rd grade year. Rob said we will take action on this proposal at the next meeting. Teresa expressed that Beth and Steve seem comfortable setting the bar at this level.

Development: From Suzanne Sherby

The development committee just sent a draft of a potential survey to Steve and Beth for review. The intended targets of the survey are:

- SMRE families
- Families who have remained local, but pulled a child out of Saint Luke in the past 5 years.

We intend that the survey will go out in early January with results tabulated and communicated by early February.

In the new year, the committee plans to begin work on a well-constructed parent survey for school families for the 2015/2016 school year and a survey of parents of 3 year old children that may be considering Saint Luke School in the future.

Facilities: From Andy Bauer

We presented the action plan to Buildings and Grounds at their last meeting. It was well received and they were glad to see School Commission so invested. The next step is to meet with Patrick to divvy up the action items and begin work. The site assessment has stalled, in part due to its pro bono nature. Patrick is going to see if he can get it moving again, but Buildings and Grounds suggested spending some money to get this done if we can't get the pro bono study moving along.

Technology: From Dan Heslin

The Technology Committee members interviewed Prescott Sanders, the President of the Technology Commission at IHM, about IHM's experience in technology support. IHM had an employee IT support specialist that left, and they attempted to backfill the IT support services via a contractor that proved unsatisfactory, with teachers and volunteers filling in support gaps. IHM then advertised to fill an IT support position, but were unable to attract a sufficiently skilled person at the salary offered (\$35-40,000). IHM interviewed a number of contractors and eventually settled on K&J, who were willing to work with the school and parish to craft a contract that met the needs of both. Under that contract, a technician is onsite for 30 hours/week, 11 months per year, and is available for either school or parish needs. The technician also has a support team available for issues that are outside of his immediate competence. Currently the school takes much more of the technician's time, but that is expected to even out over time.

We discussed the possibility of joining in with IHM, possibly taking the technician's other 10 hours per week to see if this is a model that could work for us.

We also interviewed Mrs. Eckert. She manages most of the day-to-day IT support and ordering, along with training the teachers on how to integrate technology into their classrooms. The only areas she appears not to have responsibility for are Rediker, which is managed by Katrina, and the library computer systems. She continues to be the front-line IT support person, but this year her teaching load has almost doubled and she accordingly has less time available for support issues. She enjoys the teacher training much more than the IT support. She is reasonably confident about her ability to solve many issues, but admits that she gets out of her depth rapidly when network or email issues crop up. She thought that having a service available on call to deal with such issues would be very helpful.

The committee members are meeting tomorrow with Patrick Jendraszak and Rick Davis (from Buildings & Grounds) to discuss IT needs and responsibilities. We also plan to meet separately with others who manage aspects of technology, such as Katrina, to get their input. Dan said that the group will work on a 3-5 year roadmap which he believes should be created and outlined before we start allocating or spending any dollars, and that it will be good to take a step back and make sure we're on the right path. He said he believes there are likely a number of very tech savvy parishioners who would be happy to step up. He also noted that they plan to stay connected to the Buildings and Grounds people and that at least one of them falls into the very tech savvy category.

Committee Reports

Pastoral: Rob Shumaker and Jenn Rotz – Rob noted that the Pastoral council would like input into the survey the Development Committee is putting together. Jenn added that the primary focus of Pastoral Council is growing the participation and membership of the young adult population. She said there is also a strong need for more lectors and Eucharistic ministers. She clarified that high school youth can be lectors, but that you must be 18 to be an EM.

Faith Formation: Teresa Schutzman – Faith Formation met and is talking about finding a sponsor to help with a movie night. Her vision is that they will show Jesus of Nazareth in the gym for students, SMRE children and their parents. Sister Diane liked the idea. Parents would be required to attend with their kids. The thought was that people could bring lawn chairs for seating. Jenn mentioned that PTO had looked into showing a movie for fall fest and had met with some issues regarding rights for showing a movie to a group that large. Steve mentioned that as there is no January School Commission meeting, this may have to be worked on outside of meetings rather than as an agenda item due to timing.

Buildings and Grounds: Andy Bauer – Movement on replacing the playground equipment is coming soon now that the fall fest numbers are finalized and the committee knows how much money it has to work with. He said they will likely set up a sub-committee to make sure that the needs of all interested parties are represented in the selection of new playground equipment. When asked if the current playground equipment can be donated, Andy said it's been considered, but is unlikely due to potential liability issues driven by the fact that the equipment is at the end of its useful life and may be unsafe soon.

1. Carpet in the school office is to be replaced at Christmas break.
2. New volleyball posts in south gym will have the metal lip fixed (tripping hazard)
3. Kindergarten mulch was refreshed.
4. Play Area status: Waiting for the dollar amount from the Fall Festival to determine how extensive this project can be. Much discussion about moving the play area to somewhere near the football field to alleviate the danger of kids crossing the parking lot to access the area. Patrick suggested a focus group comprised of parents, teachers, coaches, B & G people to get this project off to a well-researched start.

5. Rick (?) wants the Strategic Plan Technology Pillar and corresponding to do list. Andy will get that from Dan and get it sent to him.
 6. Patrick applied for a grant for a Network Technology Assessment
 7. Young Mr. Williams asked for \$500 to refresh/refurbish the Rosary Garden as part of his Eagle Scout project.
 8. LED lights for the parking lot.....the saga continues. A test light is to be installed on the lower pole near the circle drive and we'll go from there.
- Andy also shared that Saint Luke graduate Andrew Williams has approached the Buildings and Grounds committee with a proposal to refurbish the Rosary Garden for his Eagle Scout project. He will involve the current eighth grade class in some portion of the project.

Stewardship: no report.

PTO: no report

SLAC: no report

Communications: Met with Ronnie Miller to discuss ways school commission and the parish can increase partnership. Key areas of need identified focused on broader interest from Parishioners, without school age children, regarding what is happening at the School. Opportunities discussed were a) a monthly overview of happenings by grade in the bulletin and b) using 3-4 inserts per year to highlight big school activities (e.g., open houses, Catholic schools week). I connected with Steve/Beth and we are working to get time together to plan next steps. Additionally, started attending monthly St. Luke Communication Committee, led by Laura Deer, which is a group tasked with building a more robust communication roadmap. Initial focus is improving our overall (i.e., parish and school) web presence. Dan also noted that Ronnie would be happy to give us access to the insert in the bulletin if we have a need to communicate anything, including the changes we are making or requests for funding.

Next Steps

- Connect with Steve and Beth on communicating more frequent school information in bulletin
- Attend next Communication Committee meeting

Pastors Comments – Monsignor mentioned that Trivia Night has been set for February 5th. The proceeds will help to fund the musical Wizard of Oz.

He said that this has been an emotional meeting for him, as he's been waiting during the entirety of his 4 and ½ years at Saint Luke to hear that we are looking at new math materials. Finally, Monsignor recommended that all read the book *The Lost Classroom*, which is about the negative consequences suffered by dioceses in which they closed parish schools.

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

Respectfully submitted by Suzanne Sherby, School Commission Secretary