

## St. Luke School Commission Meeting Minutes

**Tuesday February 2, 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, Phil Poirier, Msgr. Schaedel, Teresa Schutzman, Suzanne Sherby, Rob Shumaker, Steve Weber.

The December 2015 meeting minutes were approved.

Rob shared with the group that Wendy Mehringer has taken on additional professional responsibilities which will limit her time. Andy Bauer will be assisting her with Finance committee duties for the remainder of the year.

**Pre-School Report:** Former teacher Tara Land presented a plan to develop a pre-school which is currently being considered by the church. The pre-school would occupy the space in the recently purchased home adjacent to the playground. The pre-school will be considered a ministry of the church and thus requires neither Parish Council nor School Commission approval. The pre-school itself will have no affiliation with Saint Luke School and none of our faculty will be involved in its operations. The primary mission of the school is to serve the children of Saint Luke teachers. The facility will open initially as a daycare which will be exclusive to Saint Luke teachers and staff for the purposes of facilitating better recruitment and teacher retention. It will operate on a schedule aligned with the contracted work days for teachers and would not therefore be operating over school breaks, including summer vacation. The day care would open for 3 year olds in the fall of 2016 with a pre-school option on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. There is a plan to hire a director and 2 lead teachers. Twelve to Fourteen children could be accommodated with a teacher/student ratio of 7:1. The following year, the pre-school portion would expand to include a pre-K option for the now older graduated of the 3 year old pre-school. The established 3 year old pre-school program would continue. A Mother's Day out option for future is also under discussion. The group has researched licensing requirements and has also consulted with other local school including St. Joan of Arc and Bishop Chatard. Both operate similar ministries which have been successful. The intention is to operate as a church ministry rather than as a licensed daycare as there is more flexibility. That option is also less expensive. Steve noted that in his time here, we have never really lost teachers to higher salaries at public schools, but that instead we lose them due to babies as the high cost of childcare makes working. Monsignor stated that BCHS President, Bill Sahn, told him that the Trojan Tot ministry is one of the best things that Chatard has done in recent years. He said that he had not previously considered this a possibility for Saint Luke due to the simple fact that there was no space for such a ministry. The purchase of the house and the consultations with other preschool ministries have convinced him that it is both feasible and valuable. Msgr further mentioned that although there's no number for tuition yet, Patrick has gone over the numbers and feels the project is affordable. The structure would be a short term loan from the church. The goal is to make childcare convenient and affordable to teachers and also ensure that the preschool is a break-even operation for the parish and that no money is lost on the venture.

A number of current and past teachers attended the meeting and expressed strong support for the plan. The Director of the Trojan Tots program also attended and attested to its success and said she feels the program would be a valuable addition for Saint Luke. Rob shared that Parish Council had adopted a statement of support for the project and suggested that School Commission should do the same. All expressed approval of the project and of making a formal statement on support. The proposed statement is included below and will be formalized at the March meeting:

*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

Saint Luke placed second in the spelling bee.

**Indiana DOE School Rating:** St. Luke Catholic School was again rated an “A” school by the Indiana Department of Education based on our performance on the 2014-15 ISTEP. Given the mess the state and CTB McGraw Hill made of both the standards change and the assessment change, I’m pleased that we maintained our rating. More than half of the Archdiocese schools dropped, some from an A to a D school. Note that our A rating came before the politicians tried to clean up their mess by requiring that no rating would drop. A more complete data report is included on a separate report. We just got the complete report to help direct areas for improvement. Individual results were sent to parents this week.

**Donations:** Thanks to the six members who were able to make donations to our SGO fund and to those who contributed to our school “wish list”. A total of 35 donors made contributions of **\$78,446.79** to our SGO fund for 2015. There is still about \$500,000 of tax credits left for the state’s fiscal year or for donations of about \$1 million. Donations can still be made until June 30 but the tax credit will be for 2016. We are sending “thank you” notes to our donors in addition to the response from the SGO.

Andy Bauer asked if it might not be time to do a thorough review of our award amounts in light of changes to SGO rules. Steve agreed that that would be a good idea and noted that it is important to note that we have the highest award amounts in the diocese. Most schools go with the minimum allowable amount of \$500 for new students. This allows students to qualify for vouchers later, but does not address the true needs of the family. Saint Luke has chosen to keep its fund at a level where we could step in if the State were to do something to pull the rug out from under our families who depend on them.

Tim O’Brien asked if we feel that SGO donations are in any way compromising Sunday contributions. Monsignor noted that we are 62,000 ahead of our expected contributions, so he does not believe that SGO donations are affecting tithing.

**Open House:** We will hold our Open House on **Sunday, January 31**. St. Luke students will lector, usher and provide the choir for the 9:30 Mass. The Student Council will provide tours for new families interested in St. Luke School. The Open House is for current families, parishioners and interested new families and will run from 10:30-12:00. We’ve asked the PTO to sponsor coffee and donuts during this time. You are invited to participate as well.

**Open Visitation:** We will host an open visitation for parents on **Monday, 2/1/16** to observe instruction from 9-11AM and 12:30-2:30. Please feel free to participate if you wish.

**New Parent Information:** We will have a second new parent information session on **Monday, 2/1/16 at 7PM**. You are welcome to attend.

**Application Status:** As of January 20, we had 50 completed applications for kindergarten, 2 for first grade and one for fourth grade. There are several applications in process for kindergarten and third and fourth grade.

**Cathedral HS MLK Speech Contest:** The St. Luke Middle School Speech team earned the first place trophy out of 19 schools at the Martin Luther King Middle School Speech Contest sponsored by Cathedral HS. Congratulations to the students, Mrs. Chapman, Mrs. Alexander, Mrs. Forsee and the parents who helped the students practice.

**Marketing Notes:** We had St. Luke eighth grade students present the 1-minute ministry remarks on the weekend of January 23-24. They each wrote their own talk about St. Luke School and presented it at each of the Masses. The students were Eric Klem, Katherine Melbert, Sumner Wolff and Mary Horlander.

**Geography Bee:** We held our first National Geography Bee this week. Students from grades 4-8 participated. The school winner, Christian Barda participates in the state geography bee. Nate Wendowski was the runner up. Thanks to Mrs. O'Neill for organizing the event.

**Endowment Status:** St. Luke Catholic School has three Endowments in the Catholic Community Foundation. The values from the prior fiscal year were as follows:

The St. Luke Catholic School Endowment Fund: value \$219,637 distribution \$11,145

The St. Luke School Max Boncosky Fund: value \$77,522 distribution \$4,035

The Hackl Family Fund for St. Luke School: value \$1,555,833 distribution \$79,532

The Boncosky fund is donor advised and used for financial aid

The Hackl fund supports technology and TCE grants for teachers

The School Endowment supports general school operations

(Note, of course, the market recent fall may impact the overall value at this time.) Steve noted that the Hackl family Fund is the largest single endowment in the Diocese and that we are very lucky to have it. Phil asked for clarification on how the Hackl distributions are spent. Steve shared that the endowment is tied to technology and continuing education grants for teachers. About \$40,000 goes to tech needs and about \$20,000 for education grants. He clarified that the distribution can be no more than 5% of the total current value of the fund due to IRS rules.

**Staffing Notes:** Here are the staffing changes for 2016-17 that I know at this time.

**Mrs. Debby Miller**, a veteran third grade teacher is retiring.

**Mrs. Kathy Chapman**, a veteran middle school LA teacher is retiring.

**Mr. Chris Moran**, our general music and band teacher is declining a contract to work in private business.

**Mr. Charles Babcock**, our middle school math teacher is declining a contract to work full-time for the IRS.

The open positions are posted both on the DOE website and the OCS website.

At this time, I have two math teacher applications, a music teacher application and several third grade teacher applications. Interview will begin after Catholic Schools Week.

Budgeting implications are generally positive. Mrs. Miller was at the top of the scale and Mrs. Chapman's part-time salary was not in the budget and will not be replaced.

**Parish Pre-School and Day Care:** The Parish Council approved a proposal to develop a parish based day-care and pre-school in the house the parish purchased. Initially, it would mainly benefit the young children of teachers and parish staff members. It is considered a parish ministry and does not fall under the School Commission. We've invited a representative of the planning group to provide some information on the proposal.

**DC Trip** – The graduating class of 2017 has been offered the opportunity to attend the presidential inauguration during their class trip to Washington DC. Steve asked for feedback from the families and received a very positive response. This will add a 4<sup>th</sup> day to the trip and should be a great experience for all involved.

## **Strategic Planning Committee Reports:**

### **Academic Excellence Committee Report:**

**The following report was submitted via email – discussion is detailed after report:** Our committee would like to thank Steve Weber and Beth Borland for working so well with the committee and allowing us to work with them!!!

The recommended standard of preparing our students to be one grade level up from the State Standards by the completion of grade 3 will be offered for discussion and approval at the February 2016 School Commission meeting. This standard will be supported with implementation of goals listed below for student success.

A new (Non-Common Core) math program will replace the present math in grades 1-3. Textbook purchases will be necessary, and funds will need to be allotted accordingly. At the present time Singapore Math is under consideration.

The committee has recommended the Memoria Press literature program for implementation in grades 1-3. Steve Weber and Beth Borland will determine if that will be done in 2016 or 2017. The committee would like to see implementation in the fall of 2016.

Steve Weber and Beth Borland (with the support of the school commission) will implement differentiation for mathematics and reading in grades 1-3 beginning in the fall of 2016. The committee has been extremely impressed with the success of the program the second grade teachers, along with administration, designed and implemented in November. Beth shared with the committee that children are re-evaluated at the beginning of each topic, thus giving the groups a great deal of fluidity. The committee is pleased that the differentiation model will be used in kindergarten and first grades next year, and believes that if at all possible, the model that second grade is using should be preferred to one in which children remain in their homerooms for grouping. The committee recognizes that there are challenges involved in having young children switch classrooms for academics, but hopes that creative planning can overcome them. Additional discussion and research is required to determine what form reading differentiation would take.

An independent professional has been retained to assess the current schedule and use of time by faculty, resource personnel, and instructional aides. This evaluation is intended to maximize efficiency and help us to better utilize the instructional assistants within the classroom to optimize student academic progress and to support the differentiation efforts.

The committee continues to feel that a third administrator should be considered. The school has doubled in size and this will be the first time St. Luke will have a school curricula map that will require full time oversight, accountability, and support for faculty and staff.

The committee will be visiting top local pre-schools and kindergarten's to explore their curricula as our full day kindergarten program is evaluated. This information will be provided to Beth Borland.

**Discussion:** Teresa noted that the committee has heard that there may be rumors surrounding the work on the mapping project and the push for differentiation and standards definition. She asked that anyone with questions or concerns please ask them directly so that everyone can be as accurate and honest as possible when parents or teachers ask questions of any commission members. Teresa shared that the main focus of the AE committee has been to allow for learning differentiation to adequately meet the needs of all students and a plan to formalize as the Saint Luke standard the goal of having all students performing one grade level ahead of the State standards by the end of third grade. She stressed that the focus of the differentiation discussion has very much been ensuring that the groups are never fixed, but that student placement in math and reading is constantly re-evaluated and completely fluid.

Beth further clarified that the discussion has never been about grouping kids in classrooms by ability for the entire day. She said the school firmly believes that kids learn at different rates and that our job is not to pigeonhole them, but to get all of our kids to where they need to be. She stated firmly that she would not want to be a part of a school that worked that way, but that there is room for differentiated learning given the fact that kids are at different places in their journey. She said that we are prepared to formalize the idea that we challenge the kids as they are ready, with the understanding that we are not planning to leave anyone behind. She said that in many cases we are already teaching at higher levels and trying to maintain those already high standards. Steve seconded the idea that we are always trying to meet and exceed the standards, stressing that if you're in third grade reading at a fourth grade level, we'd better be providing material at your level anyway. Steve said he sees the statement of teaching a grade level ahead as a goal.

Vernon Back stated that the conversation by stating the fact that St. Luke does not have a stated academic excellence goal and curriculum map. This led to research into what our peer schools are doing and the realization that many of them have a stated goal of having their students prepared at one grade level ahead of their actual grade. He said that the move to common core aligned reading and math texts targeted at grade level in the lower grades in recent years has shaken parental confidence that we are truly exceeding state standards. He said he sees the move as setting a goal to aspire to and that the curriculum mapping project would not be possible without having concrete targets. He reminded the group that many preschools are teaching a kindergarten or even more advanced curriculums which means that many of our incoming students are stagnating for a year or more under our traditional kindergarten curriculum. He said that he does not believe the curriculum has been updated since before the time when it moved from a half to full day program, and that State standards are low. He stated firmly that the standards statement is intended to allow kids to excel.

Teresa said that there is misinformation out in the school community and reiterated that the intent is to form a firm basis for the curriculum mapping project. She stressed that there is no intention of pushing kids who aren't ready, and that much of the committee's concern has been to make sure that all kids have the needed support to get to the desired goal, which is that every child will reach his or her maximum potential. She agreed that the State standards are low. Suzanne shared that the genesis of the standards discussion was to build a foundation for the curriculum mapping project and that one issue is that the State standards are in many ways very vague, which led to the intent to say exactly what we're trying to accomplish at Saint Luke more clearly. She said that in the 12 years that she's had children enrolled, the school has always claimed that we teach above the level of the public schools. In many ways, the suggestion that we formalize the statement that we are attempting to prepare children to be one year ahead of grade level by the end of third grade is simply an attempt to codify that statement.

Monsignor asked what the Archdiocesan standards are and Teresa clarified that outside of the religion portion, they follow the State public school standards exactly. She reiterated that this is a low bar and that we can and should do better. Steve suggested that we need to work on the language of a specific statement and state more clearly that no student will be left behind in any way or pushed ahead too quickly. Teachers from the primary, intermediate and upper grades will be appointed to participate in crafting the statement. Teresa stated firmly that teachers input would be much welcomed and that their participation at meetings would help to make communication much smoother.

**Development Committee Report – submitted via email**

We have received and included input on the Development survey from multiple people. The final version is attached here. The timeframe originally discussed was to send the survey by the end of January with the expectation of having results tabulated by the end of February. There is an issue with procuring the data regarding families who have pulled a child out of Saint Luke School in the past five years. Beth Borland is working to resolve this. We should know by the end of the week if it will be possible to gather this information electronically or if it will have gathered by hand. If the latter is true, we will go ahead and send the survey to the SMRE families and try to reach the others separately. We hope to still have results tabulated by the end of February. The committee would like to work on a comprehensive survey of current school parents as well to be sent in the March/April timeframe.

**Technology Committee Report:**

Recent Activity	
<p><b>January, 2016 Activities</b></p>	<p>The technology committee met with Steve Weber, Jen Eckert, and Rick Davis (facilities) to discuss a set of key questions related to current and future technology needs. The following are key points from the meeting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) School’s most immediate concern is bandwidth; recent network performance analysis shows school maxing out capacity for long periods during the school day               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ ~500 devices hitting school Wi-Fi network during day; expect ~700 in next 2 years</li> <li>○ Rediker software a potential high bandwidth challenge</li> </ul> </li> <li>2) Expectation is for the current 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade iPad program to move upstream over the next 2 years starting with the current 6<sup>th</sup> grade class taking them to 7<sup>th</sup> grade               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Plan that 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> will have opportunity to take home</li> <li>○ Need to evaluate funding strategy for adding new devices and insurance for breakage; quotes ~20% breakage for take home devices at other schools</li> </ul> </li> <li>3) Must plan for increased use of technology in the classroom over next 2-3 years; will depend on teacher interest and value add for teaching subject</li> <li>4) Electronic textbooks are becoming more mainstream across schools; current school plan is to use physical books in the classroom and have the option to use electronic copy at home where available</li> <li>5) Jen’s teaching load has increased to 75-80% focus (good thing) from near 50/50 teaching to tech support; want to increase teaching even further, but increases tech support gap               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Note – tech support needs evolving beyond “level 1” type challenges and require more advanced knowledgebase (e.g., Wi-Fi network design, bandwidth analysis)</li> </ul> </li> <li>6) Rediker software remains an area of opportunity. We are not using all functionality and can improve across the board understanding of tool</li> </ol>

a. Held training meeting with parents (~50 attended)

### Action Items

- Identify cost of additional bandwidth (*Steve and Patrick*)
- Connect with Rediker support to remedy software performance challenges (*Steve and Patrick*)
- Follow up with CIO of North Deanery to understand opportunities for shared services; immediate focus on getting an outside evaluation of our network (*Steve and Patrick*)
- Draft technology strategy plan for the school based on work to date (*Technology Committee*)
- Advance discussions on potential tech support models for school (*Technology Committee*)
- Proposed: Build, or communicate if it exists, St. Luke 'How to Guide/Top 10 Functions' for parents to best use Rediker (*TBD*)

The committee members stressed that determining the actual bandwidth needed is critical before any decisions can be made. The infrastructure upgrades done recently give us just the infrastructure to add more bandwidth, not the actual bandwidth. Steve noted that we are near maxing out from the moment the teachers arrive in the morning until the end of the school day.

### Facilities Committee Report

1. Purchase orders for LED lighting installation in church parking lot have been issued, installation will likely not take place for a couple months due to ordering of materials and weather but the decision has been made and progress is now in the hands of the contractors.
2. With the changeover in city council representative for St Luke's district B&G is reaching 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 75<sup>th</sup> 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. IT needs were discussed at the most recent meeting and Rick Davis offered his assessment the situation, which was we need a tech road map of where we want to be before we can figure out

how we want to meet those needs. Rick has offered his expertise to work with Dan & Phil from School Commission and Steve and Patrick to help with the road map.

### **2015-2016 Facilities Work Group Action Plan “To Do” List:**

1. Playground

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

Patrick is forming a committee representing the various constituencies impacted by the playground (MOYC, School, AYS, PTO, B&G, SLAC, etc.). This group would study the issues involved including location, type of equipment, etc. with a desire to have a final decision in place by the end of the school year so construction could occur over the summer. It is believed funds from the Fall Festival should cover the costs of the equipment and installation, but further funds may be needed if moving the playground is the recommended solution. Sue is looking for parents who are particularly passionate about the playground to suggest to Patrick for serving on the committee.

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

Andy met with Patrick and Beth Borland to discuss creating a new list of maintenance, repair and replacement items. At February's faculty meeting Beth will inform the teachers of a renewed push to create a list of items to fix or enhance their rooms and how to enter those requests into the computerized tracking system St. Luke already has in place. From those entries Patrick can create a list to take to Mr. Weber and Buildings & Grounds to prioritize and identify best approaches.

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

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

Kickoff of this project is ongoing. Buildings & Grounds has determined the ventilation in some of the school bathrooms is not sufficient and is looking at improvements which should help with the odor.

4. 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

Until very recently it appeared the space assessment started in Spring 2015 had withered on the vine and died. Buildings & Grounds discussed this at a recent meeting and came to the conclusion the pro bono nature of the assessment was hurting its progress and recommended a hired consultant would be appropriate. Patrick began investigating potential consultants but had a chance meeting with a principal at the company doing the pro bono assessment and discovered a breakdown in communication was the cause for the delay. The project has been started back up and we should have an update on progress by our next meeting.

5. Cubbies



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

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

The meeting was closed for discussion at Monsignor's request to all but voting members.

Respectfully submitted by Suzanne Sherby, School Commission Secretary