

St. Luke School Commission Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 5, 2015, 7:00 PM

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

In attendance: Andy Bauer, Matt Behringer, Beth Leffler, Sue MacGill, Tim O'Brien, Phil Poirier, Msgr. Schaedel, Jen Schaefer, Teresa Schutzman, Suzanne Sherby, Rob Shumaker, Steve Weber;

Also in attendance: Newly elected members Vernon Back and Valerie Esposito

The April 7, 2015 meeting minutes were offered and approved.

Newly members Vernon Back and Valerie Esposito were welcomed to the Commission. Andy Bauer was also congratulated on winning a second term on the commission.

Principal's Report – Steve Weber

Enrollment Update: as of 5.5.15

K	60
1	62
2	60
3	63
4	75
5	65
6	74
7	63
8	64 T = 587

16 applications and 11 are scheduled to shadow

Tech Update: Jen Eckert and I met with Phil and a rep from IHM on their parish tech committee model. I also met with Bill Sahm and Patrick Jendraszak regarding the Bishop Chatard shared services proposal. We have not received the proposal but it will be considered as a support option. We were most interested in the professional development for tech support and instructional usage.

Our infrastructure upgrades this summer proved effective in eliminating or minimizing trouble with online ISTEP testing, once the state and test provider solved their technical glitches. A lot of time was eaten up by problems with the State for the test. Significant time from Jen Eckert was required to make the test happen. Several questions were asked as to whether the computer teacher is the best person to fulfil all the IT needs of the school. Many feel that teaching and handling all the IT needs is too much for one person. It was suggested that we look at using an outside company or hiring a young tech person to work on all IT similar to what IHM plans. Steve said he thought such a person would be hard to find given the salary we can pay.

Our roll out of iPads for grades 5-6 was delayed by technical problems in setting up a new domain name for student email address to give full function of the tablets. This is almost done. The units are in the classrooms and are being used at a basic level at this time. The delay was due to problems establishing a domain name for emailing and with downloading apps. A

question was raised as to why the 5th and 6th grades were chosen rather than the middle school children, as it seems they might be more mature and ready. Steve said that the 5th and 6th grades were chosen because those teachers are the most tech savvy and excited about having the resource. It's thought that other teachers will hopefully get excited about what they're able to do when it's all functional and carry through to other grades. We've done some research as to what other schools are doing, and plan to follow a model most like Chatard's, where the school maintains all control and children are very limited as to what they can do on the device. It has taken a great deal of time to get the iPads ready, but Steve feels like it will be less time intensive once it is running.

We still have not decided on admin and grade book software for next year. I am currently working on bringing down the pricing on Rediker, which, at this time, is our preferred package. It is significantly more expensive than any of the other systems we have reviewed. Teachers will go to review, again, the Jupiter software the Archdiocese is supporting at STA next week to see if the improvements needed for us to adopt have been made. While not ideal, we could maintain another year on MSP if we cannot settle on a price for the package. Our current expenditure on software is about \$6000-7000/year. The Rediker is nearly double this, but Steve feels they will negotiate.

Assistant Principal: Following the recommendations of the academic excellence committee the focus for the assistant principal position will be curriculum coordination and staff development. Interviews are being scheduled for later this week and next. Steve said that he received 21 applications of which 8 were viable. One of the 8 is a parishioner. Interviews will be conducted over the next week and the field narrowed to 3 candidates. Steve requested that a few members from the School Commission participate in an advisory capacity once the field is narrowed. Jen Schaffer was chosen as the parent representative. Beth Leffler and Suzanne Sherby will participate on behalf of the School Commission. Strength in curriculum planning will be a primary focus in looking for the right person to fill the position.

Enrichment Cycle: This year's Culture Fair, which concluded April 27 was a huge success. While it was a lot of work, it brought lots of exhausted smiles at the end of the day! That is the best time. We decided that it is wise to bring back a cycle of enrichment activities that we had used in the recent past. Here is the recommended cycle that we will be following.

- Culture Fair
 - Study of Countries
- Celebration of Arts
 - Art and Literary Journal, Musical
- Academic Area: STEM, Pioneer Day, Science Fair, Invention Convention, Robotics, Catholic Pilgrimage
- Young Author's
 - Student created books, poems

SGO/Choice Scholarship Notes: As of 2:30 today we have completed 70 school choice scholarships (vouchers) for the 2015-16 school year. This does represent an increase already over last year. Several are SGO shifts to Choice Scholarships. The passage of the state budget did

remove the \$4800 cap for K-8 schools so this could help our non-Catholic families and require fewer SGO grants to fill in the gaps. The new information has not been entered into the system because DOE has to calculate what each public school district will receive on a per student basis. It should increase the value of full grant between \$1,000-\$2,000 per student. Questions were raised about our level of dependency on the vouchers. A school in Ohio recently had to close its doors when the State cancelled the program. Steve said that we are currently at 15% of our students utilizing vouchers in some way and that we have purposefully maintained the SGO account at a level which would enable us to withstand a sudden loss of voucher income. Our approach has been to maintain a responsibly conservative position allowing us to benefit from the State funds without becoming dependent. SGO applications are being received but have not yet been processed. As voucher and SGO grants are determined the FACTS amounts will be adjusted and parents notified.

SGO Request: The Archdiocese is starting its push to rebuild our SGO funds. A luncheon was held on Monday. The state did increase the amount of tax credits available. Please consider a gift to our SGO fund at the Institute for Quality Education. A copy of the donation form is attached. The same request is being made to all parents in the next few Quick Notes. This year we were able to grant \$57,250.

Business Items

Bylaws and Standing Rules: The final version was emailed to members this afternoon. It was felt that all changes since the previous more involved discussion were simply for clarity and consistency, not for meaning or content. A brief discussion arose around the admissions policy, particularly with regard to class size. Monsignor has stated his position that we will continue to make exceptions to serve parish children. Members stated that they are in agreement with Monsignor that all parish children should be served to the greatest extent. It was pointed out that historically, class size has always been a contentious issue. Several members felt that the growing diversity in the needs of children who are coming to us highlights the need for greater academic differentiation, and that class size being larger in particular makes the need to move to more ability grouping more urgent. Several felt that aide time available should be looked at and clarified, and that children's needs in light of the resource help we have available must be evaluated as part of the admissions process. Finally, several members felt that while it is sometimes appropriate to make exceptions in class size to serve the needs of parish children, we should be more stringent about following the rules outlined for notification and consideration in the guidelines. It was felt that there is a need for further evaluation of the written admissions policy, but that the current iteration does not in any way prevent ratification of the edits as presented.

Tim O'Brien offered the Bylaws for ratification. Sue MacGill seconded the motion. All approved: The Bylaws are ratified.

Tim O'Brien offered the Standing Rules for ratification. Andy Bauer seconded the motion. One member abstained due to not having had time to read the new edits. All others approved and the Standing Rules were ratified.

Time O'Brien offered the Policy Manual for ratification. Rob Shumaker seconded the motion. All approved and the motion was ratified.

The newly ratified documents will be posted on the website along with the minutes from this meeting.

Strategic Planning /Updates and committee reports

- **Technology** – Phil Poirier: The meeting with IHM provided lots of interesting ideas. They are at least a year ahead of us with regard to implementation of technology and have had a strong partnership on the issue with their parish council. They are setting up a technology commission and looking to hire a young techy person from outside to really take them to the next level. Steve mentioned that though they are ahead of us in some ways, our infrastructure planning and the improvements we've made, which was evidenced by the recent IStep testing in which our systems held and all the problems existed on the State side. IHM has chosen Chrome books rather than I-pads for use in the classroom. It was agreed that we have to continue to step up our own planning efforts to stay current and relevant with regard to technology and use in the classroom.
- **Development** – Sue MacGill: Communication does seem to be enhanced. Cultural Fair pictures are already up on the board in the Narthex. It was suggested that perhaps a teacher or PTO representative could serve as a photographer at such events to help keep the flow of information to Ronnie Miller strong.
- **Facilities** – Andy Bauer: Andy could not attend the recent meeting, but had the following updates from the meeting:
 - Funding for five more classrooms to receive updated cubbies has been approved. First and second grades will be completed this summer. Minor concerns regarding the fit and finish of the cubbies were addressed and resolved quickly, meaning the installations this summer should be smooth.
 - It is confirmed that the south gym floor will be replaced this summer. The storage doors near the stage will also be replaced as they have become unsafe and very old. The volleyball posts will also be replaced.
 - Mr. Fink, our longtime HVAC person is retiring this summer
 - The cost of the cubbies is about \$4000. After the project this summer, all the 3rd and 4th grade classrooms and three rooms in the lower level will still be in need of this improvement.
- **Excellence** – Beth Leffler: The school visits are nearly complete and we are in the process of meeting with as many teachers as possible for feedback with regard to best practices and challenges they face. Parent meetings have also been conducted. We are working to compile all the information and are seeing some common threads emerge. We are still trying to build an understanding of enrichment activities. The committee plans to produce a report of findings for the last Commission meeting of the year with suggestions and ideas for improvements and an overview of the plans for continuing work on Excellence. Overall, the importance of filling the Assistant Principal slot with someone who can provide real curriculum support is paramount.

Committee/Liaison Reports

- **Finance** – Wendy Mehringer – No further report
- **Nominations** – Phil Poirier – The election is complete and went well, culminating in the re-election of Andy Bauer and the election of Vernon and Valerie. A lot was learned and a memo will be put together to make the next election as smooth as possible, with no one having to learn the ropes on the fly. Sue MacGill will be staying on as the At Large candidate.
- **Faith Formation** – Teresa Schutzman – No report – the meeting was simultaneous to ours, so report will come next time.

- **Buildings and Grounds** – Andy Bauer – All items covered in strategic planning update. Issues with 2 of the school bathrooms were brought up. Andy noted and will take forward.
- **Stewardship** – Matt Behringer – A permanent prayer wall will be installed between the doors of the Father Courtney Room. It will be quite large and nicely done in wood and cork.
- **PTO** – Jen Schaefer –
 - PTO provided support for the Cultural Fair in the form of Silly Safari for the Australia exhibit and a Mariachi band for overall.
 - It's teacher appreciation week, multiple activities are planned including a nacho lunch and a secret pal luncheon. PTO has made an effort to include all parish staff in these activities as well.
 - PTO is looking for mentor families and will probably take the approach of a personal ask instead of putting out memos or notes. There are 71 new families in need of mentors. Steve will add a note about this need to the upcoming quicknote.
 - We have chosen Distinct Images as our new spirit wear vendor, thus making all previous spirit wear officially "vintage."
- **Pastoral Council** – Rob Shumaker – Rob presented a report on the School Commissions activities and work to Pastoral Council, assisted by Steve. The report was well received. wants a copy of the Strategic Plan. It was noted the plan is posted on the website, but we will get it to them.
- **SLAC** – Andy Borland – No report/Andy absent – Andy Bauer brought up a need for the athletic department to be more aware of academic activity in the school with regard to scheduling. Many activities were planned right in the middle of the Istep. These concerns will be raised Andy Borland via email and he will pass along to SLAC and the AD.
- **Parish Communications** – Suzanne Sherby – A new committee has been formed. First meeting next week with logo for uniforms as agenda item. Several members expressed that keeping the cost of uniform shirts low should be priority.

General:

- The schedule for the final meeting was changed due to conflicts. Previous date was May 28th. That meeting has been cancelled and rescheduled for June 3rd. The agenda items will be: Approval of May meeting minutes, officer elections, Academic Excellence committee report and Principal's review. The review portion of the meeting will be closed. The Exec meeting was cancelled as well as the agenda for the meeting is already set.
- Tim O'Brien questioned the status of the potential parish purchase of the home near the playground. Monsignor said that they refused our initial offer and seem to feel that they can quickly sell for more. It was generally felt that the number the family has in mind is unlikely and that another chance to purchase the home will arise due to poor condition and the record of other sales on the street. This purchase would require that the property be re-zoned for church use and would be conditional on this occurrence.

Pastors Comments - Monsignor had three comments:

- Monsignor thanked Steve for rising to the challenge of working without an Assistant Principal this year. He said he knows Steve has been stretched and thinks he's held things together well.
- First Communion went very well and Monsignor thinks we are well served by the religion program in this parish.

- Monsignor said he is continuously impressed by the way our kids are able to get up and express themselves well at events like the Culture Fair and Biz Town and that he believes these are valuable skills.
- With regard to CYO concerns: CYO has always been a parish function, but about 99% of the kids participating are school children. He believes the only people who can anything about it are the parents of the athletes.

Closing Prayer was said.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by Suzanne Sherby, School Commission Secretary

Important Dates:

Next Executive Committee/Finance Meeting: Cancelled.

Next School Commission Meeting: Changed to Wednesday June 3, 2015 at 7pm