

# St. Luke School Commission Meeting Minutes

**Tuesday December 6, 2016 7:00 PM**

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

*In attendance:* Andy Bauer, Beth Borland, Valerie Esposito, Dan Heslin, Katie Kumler, Sue MacGill, Kevin McCusker, Jim Naughton, Tim O'Brien, Phil Poirier, Jen Schaefer, Suzanne Sherby, Steve Weber.

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

## Principal's Report – Steve Weber

**“A” Rated:** St. Luke School was once again “A” rated by the state of Indiana. Despite my concerns of last year’s ISTEP results our overall growth exceeded expectations. We are not allowed to formally notify or use in marketing until the state finishes reviews of schools that asked for one.

**Blue Ribbon:** We also qualified to apply for Blue Ribbon status. We have qualified every year since our first recognition, but non-public schools have a limited number of schools to nominate. Schools that have been recognized in the past usually are not selected if there are other equally qualified schools that have not earned the recognition in the past. Mrs. Borland is working on the application.

**Letters of Intent:** Both school family and staff have been asked to submit a letter of intent for the 2017-18 school year to help with planning and budgeting. All are due by this Friday, December 9, as are new applications for siblings.

**Calendar Coordination:** We met with the three major Catholic high schools on the north side to coordinate major holiday dates to avoid conflict. This task was completed basically meeting the need to have fall break, Thanksgiving, Christmas and spring break on the same dates. We thank Bishop Chatard, Cathedral and Brebeuf for their cooperation.

**Tech Plan:** A second draft of an updated tech plan was sent to the tech pillar of the strategic plan. We are open to improvements and suggestions.

**SGO Request:** Last month we asked you to consider a gift to our SGO. As of this week there are just \$2 million left of the \$9.5 million of tax credits left. It looks like they will all be gone by the end of the month. You can use the paper form or contribute online at [www.i4qed.org](http://www.i4qed.org).

**Budget Notes:** There is no magic way to make a significant impact in the over subsidy deficit at this point. We’ve frozen most accounts that can be frozen and paid most of the variable bills, texts, supplies etc. We are working to improve the cafeteria performance but that has less than a \$10K impact on the issue.

Finance will meet in January to hammer out the 2017-18 expense budget and tuition recommendation. Assuming it is approved by the Chancery, we are looking at a salary increase of 3.4%-3.9%. Our early budget model assumes a 4% increase.

## Discussion:

- The faculty desire to have Christmas break begin one day or possibly two days earlier to allow them preparation and family time was brought up. Steve said that Monsignor was aware of their concerns but wants to keep the school open through the Thursday prior to Christmas.
- There will be no formal meeting for School Commission in January. However, the Finance committee will be hard at work fleshing out the details for the budgeting process.
- Beth shared that the next round of NWEA testing will be in January, which will allow us to begin measuring growth from the original numbers.

- Jen Schaefer said that we have 20 sibling applications in as of right now with many more anticipated by the deadline of Friday. There have also been many tours for children in older grades. The word seems to be out that Saint Luke School is a great option.
- Beth said that the school wish list has been published. Some needs have been met, but many remain unfulfilled. Jim suggested that classroom PCs be added to the wish list. His previous parish saw large needs met through wish lists.

## **Book and Supply fee**

The plan to increase the book and supply fee to \$300 with a discount structure of \$50 off for paying by March 1<sup>st</sup> and \$25 off for paying by May 31 was briefly discussed. Dan noted that the actual expense has increased and the \$300 figure is reflective of that. A vote was taken and the measure passed.

## **Strategic Planning Committee Reports:**

### **Academic Excellence** – Valerie Esposito

The Academic Excellence Committee (AEC) continued its work toward goals set forth in the St. Luke Strategic Plan. We also had the privilege to meet with the Academic Excellence Committee teacher liaisons. The following issues were discussed:

1. Curriculum mapping is continuing. Sue O'Brien has been engaged as an additional support in that process.
2. Differentiated learning models continue to be an area of discussion. Research into how other parish schools approach this issue will be a focus in the coming months. Teachers described challenges particular to teaching struggling students within differentiated models. Professional development targeting broadening teachers' skills in this area was suggested and opportunities for same will be investigated.
3. Space constraints continue to be an area of concern, specifically regarding differentiation, as teachers struggle to schedule and organize areas within their classrooms for differentiated learning groups. There is inadequate space available outside the classrooms as well for children who need resource help. The committee plans to connect with the group working on space planning to discuss.
4. Teachers reported continuing difficulties with technology and delays when using the Rediker program.
5. Teachers reported continued interest in use of the STL preschool for their own children, though some in attendance indicated an inability to participate in the preschool due to cost and schedule constraints.
6. Further discussion of literature and writing curricula is scheduled for our January 2017 meetings.

### Discussion:

- Andy mentioned that he has yet to hear anything good about Rediker and asked that it be put in the discussion for finances/technology next year. Dan said that it's already on the table. Valerie added that it seems to be costing the teachers a lot of time. It was noted that schools are using several different programs, none of which seem to satisfy all desires.
- Questions were raised as to whether the previously commissioned space study might be able to address any of the space issues that keep coming up. Andy said that the project was basically tabled as most options pointed to building additions which is not a current option. Although there

don't seem to be any obvious options, the subject may need further exploration as the space constraints are affecting academics, particularly in relation to Resource.

- With regard to the concerns about the cost and hours of the daycare, Monsignor communicated via email that he is very confident that the cost structure should be competitive for faculty with the discount structure. It was suggested that there may be differences if teachers are comparing the costs of our daycare to in home daycares. Beth did note that the hours are truly a problem and said that many teachers are needed at school well after 4 p.m.

**Development** – Tim asked Jen Schaefer to take charge of moving this forward as most of what she's already doing falls under this umbrella

**Facilities** – Sue MacGill

1. The playground demolition is underway. The entire project is projected to take two weeks.
2. The sidewalks are poured from the parking lot to 75th. If you get a chance to thank Joe Seifert or the Duncans, please do. The price was very favorable.
3. The lead testing in the school went well. All sources with the exception of one near the gym were within acceptable lead levels. Patrick is meeting with a plumber to explore remediation for the one fountain that was slightly above acceptable levels. The fountain was in the concession stand area and is locked to the children. It was very slightly over the limit. It is being addressed and will be re-tested.
4. The consensus on Buildings and Grounds was to begin the restroom renovation with a boys' bathroom. Monsignor wants to keep the issue of cleanliness, the restrooms specifically, on our radar. The timing depends on the approval. A second bid is expected and there is hope that the work could be done over Christmas, but no guarantee.

**Technology** – Dan Heslin

**Recent Activity**

- SC Tech Team developed version 1.1 of the School Tech Strategy plan enhancing the first draft and providing guidance on areas where the school needs to add detail (e.g., refresh schedule, how tech is used in the classroom, support model) Dan said it still needs work but is moving in the right direction.
- Met with Patrick J to better understand the network upgrade strategy; further review found some potentially unneeded items (e.g., wiring building - \$5-10k, higher end security device - \$20k) that can simplify the approach
- Met with Mr. Fleming to evaluate current network performance by walking around building and looking at speed/connectivity; found a number of areas where existing routers are crossing signals causing network confusing and leading to performance challenges
- Reached out a 2<sup>nd</sup> time on the teacher survey and now have 20 responses. Key themes from the teachers include:
  - o Teacher PCs are, in most cases, well beyond their useful life (avg. age 5+ years old). Combine this with Wi-Fi network performance issues and the result is a less than productive environment
  - o Smart/Interwrite boards are great for the learning environment.... when they work; existing boards are performing decent at best with Smart working better than Interwrite
  - o There is limited Professional Development related to effectively using technology in the classroom; current approach is learn as you go which is taxing when layered on top of all the other activities required to run a classroom
    - o Growing demand for more devices to support learning in non 1 to 1 grades; daily demand is outstripping device supply

**Next Steps**

- (Beth/Steve) – finish updating technology strategy plan document; share with Patrick as he evaluates network needs
- (Mr. Fleming) – test router changes to see if it improves network performance; if results don't improve, work with Patrick J to test/demo a few commercial grade routers and see if performance improves.

NOTE: due to the age of teacher PCs, fixing Wi-Fi performance may not be enough to improve overall user experience

- (SC Tech) – Once strategy plan is updated, kick off review of Smart/Interwrite Boards

### **Discussion:**

- Dan noted that a lot of the tech funds are committed to the one to one computing, which has left teacher PCs neglected.
- Dan stressed that our real concern should be getting the basics right and that we should avoid bells and whistles that we won't use or can't effectively handle. The biggest tech issue now is more one of deciding the best course of action than of funding.
- Preparing for the online testing is a driver of the project as it will impact performance.

## **Finance Update – Dan Heslin**

### **Recent Activity**

- Financials improved by \$40k since last month; parish forecasting has a better handle on costs and don't expect to see major improvements due to fixed expenses for remainder of year
- School running an ~\$80k deficit for 2016/2017 driven by performance in the following key areas:
  - o Tuition ahead of budget by \$20k due to increased enrollment
  - o Salary and benefit expense over budget by \$144k from additional hiring and cost of replacement teachers
  - o Cafeteria projected to lose \$9k
    - o NOTE: \$40k worth of technology was purchased using restricted funds (driving favorability) and not paid through operating expenses; this is not sustainable as the fund balance is starting to decrease

### **Next Steps**

- (Tim to deliver) SC Exec team drafted a set of expense related questions for school to provide feedback as input into the 2017/2018 budget
- (Dan/Patrick) Update 2017/2018 budget model with new expense load and prep tuition models for January meeting
- (Steve/Beth/SC Exec) Develop view of what the school is offering with recent investments to share with Monsignor as we consider tuition strategy; expect to communicate this out to parents as well and provide perspective on what they are getting for the money
  - **(SC Members)** – If you have new investment ideas not already in the 2016/2017 budget, get them to Dan Heslin ASAP as the only things baked in are raises, expected expense inflation, and technology needs (e.g., 8<sup>th</sup> grade iPads, potential teacher PC upgrades)

### **Discussion:**

- It was noted that the addition of the pre-school seems to be a stressor on the parish budget and that there are concerns about its ability to breakeven.
- The projected budget deficit for the cafeteria is down to \$9000. The Finance committee is talking with Mrs. Noble about this and looking for ways to bridge. It was suggested that we should raise the cost of school lunch to cover.
- Dan noted that at this point we would be looking at a tuition hike in the 9-10% range to balance our projected budget. This budget includes NO extras.
- Discussions of the parish subsidy are on the horizon. Dan noted that as a school we need to be better prepared to tell the story of what we do and how we plan to accomplish it.
- Katie noted that the Parish Council meeting minutes refer to a rainy day fund. She suggested it might be time to share that a monsoon is forecast for the school.
- Dan noted that the restricted technology funds have given us some breathing room but that it's important to understand that those funds will be exhausted before long and we will be left with a large and costly infrastructure to support. He pointed out that we have to plan to replace PCs,

which typically have a maximum life of 5-6 years. Many of the problems teachers are experiencing are due to the fact that we are trying to use current technology on machines that were never designed to handle to the load we are placing on them.

- Tim suggested that the 1:1 computing model should be on the table as it represents a significant cost increase each year. Steve strenuously objected saying that the fifth grade teachers have really begun doing some great stuff and have adapted their classrooms to suit. The possibility of a surcharge for tech beginning in 5<sup>th</sup> grade was floated. The models at Chatard, Cathedral and Brebeuf were noted.
- Suzanne suggested that with regard to budget needs, we should be looking at a significant increase in the funds available for Professional Development as both the Academic Excellence and the Tech committees seem to be pointing to a real need for more training. Steve noted that we have about \$5,200 of federal dollars through MSDWT for Professional development... that plus our budget is about \$10,000. We always exhaust the federal funds first, but there is a need for more.

## **Committee Reports:**

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

**Communications** – No meeting yet – will update in February

**Faith Formation** – Teresa Schutzman/Phil Poirier – no update

**Nominations** – Tim asked Jim Naughton to take on this role.

**Pastoral Council** – Tim O'Brien/Jenn Rotz – Discussion centered on how to engage parish and school families who are not attending mass or participating in the parish community.

**PTO** – Mandy Heslin – no update

**SLAC** – Valerie Esposito – meeting later in the week. Update to come in February.

**Stewardship** – Kevin McCusker – Stewardship committee heard proposals from the new Saint Luke Dad's club for fundraising. About 5 ideas were presented but the purpose for the funds was unclear. Further discussions will ensue.

Beth shared information about the Amazon smiles program which allows any who choose to participate to have half of 1% of their Amazon purchases donated to the church at no additional cost to themselves. She urged all members to use and to share the program with others.

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

Respectfully submitted by Suzanne Sherby, School Commission Secretary