

St. Luke School Commission Meeting Minutes

Tuesday November 8, 2016 7:00 PM

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

In attendance: Andy Bauer, Beth Borland, Valerie Esposito, Dan Heslin, Mandy Heslin, Katie Kumler, Kevin McCusker, Jim Naughton, Tim O'Brien, Phil Poirier, Teresa Schutzman, Steve Weber.

Jim Naughton was introduced to the Commission. He has been appointed to fill the vacant seat. The October 2016 meeting minutes were approved.

Principal's Report – Steve Weber

2017-2018 School Calendar: Please find attached the proposed school calendar for the 2017-2018 school year for your review and comment. It is both in linear text form and in iCal for your convenience. Msgr. Schaedel has reviewed the calendar and it has his approval.

2017-18 Salary Scale: While it is awaiting formal approval from Cardinal-Designate Tobin, the Office of Catholic Schools Committee has approved a 5-year phase-in for improving a more just teacher salary scale. The average increase will be 3.9% for the lower and middle levels of the salary scale. The increase for those over 20 years of experience will be 2%. Our current budget plans for 2017-2018 assumes a 4% increase. While this applies directly to contracted teachers, it will have an impact on hourly employees as well, so the 4% makes sense overall.

St. Luke Scholarship Granting Organization (SGO): Please consider making a donation to our SGO fund as soon as possible. At the rate Indiana state tax credits are being used, they will likely be gone by December. You can donate online at www.i4qed.org or use the paper donation form that is also attached.

2017-2018 Letters of Intent: This year we will ask for letters of intent to re-enroll for current K-7 students electronically.

2017-2018 Book and Supply Fee/Deposit: The book and supply fee, which serves as the deposit for the following year, will be paid through FACTS this year. Our current fee is set at \$275 per child and at this point finance does not intend to increase. However, in recent years we have offered discounts to families who commit with the deposit early in 2017. Prior years the discount has been \$50 off per child if committed and paid by early February, or \$225 per child. A discount of \$25 per child was offered if paid by May 31, or \$250 per child. The full rate of \$275 was in effect after June 1. We do need to decide if we want to maintain this discount structure or modify.

2017-2018 Enrollment Interest: Mrs. Schaefer is currently giving 2-3 tours a week to families interested in St. Luke for 2017-2018 school year. Most are new families looking at kindergarten.

Discussion:

Discussion regarding the book and supply fee involved a suggestion that the discount structure should be revised. The following discussion points regarding possible revisions to the proposed structure were offered:

- Moving the deadline for the largest discount back to at least March 1st to allow families more time to take advantage. Steve said that the expenses related to the fees are typically incurred in June.
- Allowing families to push the payment into May and June to take advantage of the months when those who pay tuition over 10 months do not have tuition payments. Steve said that the church office is prepared to maintain the offered discounts over schedules that work for families who

have multiple book and supply fees to pay provided they make arrangements prior to the deadline. The arrangements should involve paying at least one fee by the deadline.

- Raising the fee to \$300 and simplifying the discount structure was also discussed. Several members were in favor of this idea due to the budget deficits we're facing this year. Others felt that the fee should remain at the current level which is reflective
- The following structure was suggested: A \$300 book and supply fee with the offer of a \$50 discount for those who pay by March 1st and a \$25 discount for those who pay by May 31st. Kevin McCusker pointed out that the standing rules call for discussion of the proposal in executive committee before a formal vote can be taken. Therefore the item book and supply fee was tabled until a vote can be taken in December.

Beth Borland shared some thoughts on the new NWEA testing used to assess math and reading skills. As well as language usage. She said the testing was very helpful and that they expect it see more value from it as it measures growth and gives more guidance to teachers than our past testing did. In addition, the test reads the student and will adjust to correct or incorrect answers to enable The State of Indiana has recently extended funding for tests to non-public schools which has made the more costly testing possible. Teachers are already focusing on specific skills with students.

Finance Update – Dan Heslin

Recent Highlights

- Latest budget vs. forecast has increased the projected deficit from **(\$72k) to (\$121K)**. The deficit is driven by:
 - ❖ (\$156k) overage salary / benefits
 - ❖ +\$46k in additional tuition revenue
 - ❖ (\$11k) overage in operating expenses. Dan warned that this number is deceptive because we are seeing a \$40K savings from using restricted funds for technology purchases that would otherwise be an on-going expense. Once the restricted funds run out, this will represent a real problem.
- School leadership is monitoring flexible spending, but current operating commitments make closing the deficit through expense reduction highly unlikely.
- Dan stressed the need to develop a strategic path to break even for future through additional revenue and expense management. He noted that since the October meeting the financials have further deteriorated with an additional \$40K in salary expense. Dan further noted that the salary and benefits piece is a very big portion of expenses. He said that we would need a \$175/child tuition increase just to cover the salary increases. That number wouldn't even touch other needs.

NEXT STEPS:

- SC Exec team working with school to evaluate current expense structure to identify potential run rate savings
- Need to define how the 2016/2017 gap will be paid back if it can't be closed.
- Refine 2017/20018 tuition model with perspective on refined expense structure.
- Send any know strategic planning needs not currently in 2016/2017 baseline ASAP

Strategic Planning Committee Reports:

Academic Excellence Committee – Valerie Esposito

In an effort to obtain additional insight and collaboration from teachers as we pursue our goals for this year, the Academic Excellence Committee (AEC) issued a general invitation on 10/5/16 to faculty to act as teacher liaisons with the AEC. The following teachers stepped forward: Elizabeth Hicks, Dede Moore,

Amy Sweet, Brigid Alexander, Sara Clark, Jennifer Forsee, and Cassie McDowell. The AEC held its first meeting with teacher liaisons and Beth Borland on 11/3/16.

With the addition of assistance from faculty, we continue to work toward the goals set forth in the Strategic Plan. This month's achievements toward particular goals are as follows:

Goal One: St. Luke Catholic School will continue to provide a Christ-centered learning environment with strong academics and a focus on Catholic identity.

During the 11//3/16 meeting with teacher liaisons, the following issues were discussed:

1. Usefulness of current basal readers in lower grades is lower than ideal. Some liaisons indicated using the current reader as a "map" to guide lessons and selection of augmentative literature. Some difficulties with the implementation of the new primary math program in 2nd and 3rd grades were also expressed. More discussion/development is needed to understand consequences to the ongoing curriculum mapping.
2. Examples of improving the overall continuity of the SLS curriculum were also shared. For instance, liaisons indicated a need for improving student performance of writing in lower grades so that they can prepare students well for entrance into high school and honors-level English courses. Teacher suggestions of changes to improving the current writing program were discussed, including ways to improve student's independent reading/writing.
3. Library suggestion made: to organize the library with attention given to student's reading levels. Evaluation of benefit and feasibility of this organizational approach in the school library has been initiated.
4. Schedule changes related to additional math time and resource group constraints have led to reduction in scramble groups for differentiated learning in some grade levels. Teachers also reported concerns with switching classrooms to implement differentiation as it reduces teachers' ability to connect with their homeroom students. Schedule and curriculum changes that allow for differentiation in language arts will be further discussed.
5. Demands on teacher time appear to be at an all-time high. Some teachers report loss of their lunch break as a result. It was agreed that any additional changes to schedules or curriculum must be evaluated with a focus on teacher efficiency and ability to reasonably teach curriculum.

Goal Five: To attract, support and retain excellent teachers and staff who are deeply committed to living, sharing and promoting the Catholic faith and strong academic knowledge to the students at St. Luke Catholic School.

Action: Encourage and provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate and share ideas, best practices, and teaching methods found within St. Luke Catholic School and other regional and national schools.

1. Several north deanery schools have initiated differentiated learning models for math and language arts over the past two years. Some liaisons are already connected with these teachers/schools. We proposed to continue to utilize these connections to evaluate the benefit and feasibility of those other models at St. Luke.

Facilities Committee – Sue MacGill

Steve had proposed several areas of concentration for the 2016-1017 school year and the items were presented at the September Buildings and Grounds meeting.

1. Patrick will take note of the padding around the south hoop in the south gym. This was noted as a safety concern.
2. The 20 year old PA/Bell system needs replacement. This is a school expense; Patrick indicated he forwarded several options to Steve. The cost is approximately \$15,000.00. Where does this fall on our priority list?
3. The desks in grades 1-4 are beyond their useful life. This was also determined to be a school expense. Should we examine the estimates that Steve has?
4. The water in the drinking fountains will be tested for lead using a company was 120 Water Audit. The cost is \$59.00 per location (of water). This is a safety issue.
5. The walkway to school (along Illinois and Holliday Dr. E.) has had ongoing discussion. A consensus was reached in B and G to provide a gravel path.
6. The playground plan (the nicest, most comprehensive of the three presented) was APPROVED. Sorry for the all-caps, some of us thought it might never happen. Should be installed by Thanksgiving.
7. The list at the September B and G was not too long. Is this the time to jump into the restroom issue? This is a very expensive issue and will require a great deal of discussion.

Technology – Dan Heslin

Technology activity focused on three areas during October:

School Tech Strategy Plan:

- School drafted version 1.0 which was mainly a current asset inventory and in need of additional detail
- School Commission will work with Mr. Fleming (new tech teacher) to update with more strategic detail which should include
 - How we plan to use technology in the classroom
 - Define 2017/2018 technology additions such as ipads for 8th grade
 - Develop tech lifecycle management or refresh cycle

Teacher Survey:

- Sent request to all teachers asking that they spend five minutes providing feedback on technology against three questions: 1) what is working, 2) challenges, and 3)improvement opportunities
- Only 6 of 47 responded. Although small sample size, many consistent themes.

Network Upgrade Plan

- Parish Buildings and Grounds committee developed a timeline of activities to deliver the upgraded network infrastructure in 2017.

TEACHER SURVEY FEEDBACK

1.Network, computer and Rediker performance are impacting productivity

- Internet isn't consistent
- Internet speed is an issue. As the middle school becomes 1:1 **we need to rely on bandwidth on a daily basis, even during standardized testing.**
- My computer is old and slow to turn on...many time it freezes in the middle of work
- Usually from when I log-in, to actually being able to open Rediker for attendance and email, it ranges from 5-20 minutes.
- **I lose valuable time on-task with students** as lessons as we wait for software to open.
- Takes 30 seconds per student/per topic to load information into Rediker.

2. Smart/Interwrite boards are great... when they work!

- Interwrite board is constantly not working... Pen never works... Think a smartboard would be much better for second graders
- I think the Interwrite board is extremely difficult to work with. It makes lessons take longer than trouble or takes up too much time to get it working.
- Smart board doesn't always respond to my pens

What's working feedback:

- Document cameras in the rooms
- Smart/Interwrite boards when they work
- Printers in classrooms work
- Teacher i-pads

Improvement opportunities feedback: (This is a sample of responses)

- Need technology training and development. "It seems like we often have to learn on the fly and never fully understand what we are learning or how to apply it effectively"
- Set of iPads/PCs in lower grade classrooms for small group enrichment. "Even having 4-5 iPads would be extremely helpful. They would be used daily at Literacy Centers, for math fact practice, etc"
- Need to fix the basics before adding any additional technology. "Nothing more should be added until the basics can be accessed"

Discussion:

- Teresa noted that she was disappointed to hear that so few teachers responded to the informal survey. She asked that Steve send the request for information out again and he agreed to do so.
- Discussion centered on the fact that we lack a clearly articulated plan. This has led to missed opportunities and has kept us from moving forward as we should. Financial issues play a role, but the lack of progress seems more clearly attributable to the failure to lay out a coherent plan. Andy Bauer stated that his experiences in Buildings and Grounds have taught him that Patrick is very good at funding projects if they are brought to him with a demonstrable need and a well thought out plan to meet the need.
- Frustration was expressed with the fact that we are funding projects such as the bathroom remodels and new playground equipment while serious technology deficits are affecting classroom time and academics.

Committee Reports:

Buildings and Grounds – Andy Bauer/Sue MacGill – in addition to Sue's report, Andy added that sidewalks will be added from the church to 75th street. A generous parishioner who owns a concrete company has donated a very significant portion of the project. The remainder will be covered with parish funds and will not affect the school budget. All locks in the downstairs classrooms have now been changed out so that they can be locked from the inside. Andy noted that trivia night proceeds will be used to fund a trial bathroom remodel.

Faith Formation – Teresa Schutzman/Phil Poirier – no update

Pastoral Council – Tim O'Brien/Jenn Rotz – Steve presented to the Pastoral Council and they were appreciative of having a better overall picture of what's going on in the school.

PTO – Mandy Heslin

- PTO has arranged for a STEM day on November 16th to coincide with the STREAM plan for the year. Hands on activities are planned for all grades.
- Helping with orientation day. Providing fortune cookie with "Your future is looking bright at SLS" fortune library.
- Library vendor kickoff meeting
- STREAM – met with forensic program "Is Milton Missing" for k-4. Will know if we've been approved by October 14th
- Trash bag sales exceeded previous year

SLAC – Valerie Esposito – SLAC has begun to ask parents of athletes to staff tournaments rather than SLAC members. A newly formed DAD's club is having some success in quickly responding to needs. All is still run through Patrick, but the club seems to have streamlined the process of identifying and filling needs.

Stewardship – Kevin McCusker

Plans for a pictorial parish directory are under way. Family photos will be featured along with contact information. The book will be available to parishioners at no charge.

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

Respectfully submitted by Suzanne Sherby, School Commission Secretary