

# St. Luke School Commission Meeting Minutes

**Tuesday, February 3, 2015, 7:00 PM**

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM.

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

The December 2, 2014 meeting minutes were approved with no dissent.

## **Principal's Report** – Steve Weber

**Admissions:** After a discussion with Patrick and Msgr. Schaedel, I will move forward with developing a job description for a part-time admissions coordinator. The plan would involve having this person also manage the paperwork and applications for Choice Scholarships and SGO grants.

**Assistant Principal:** I have posted the assistant principal position on the Archdiocese website. Resumes accepted until March 15. Interviews start April 13. I'm looking especially for a person with strong curriculum experience.

**Latin/Spanish Update:** After meeting with both Mr. Duggins (Latin) and Mrs. Jones (Spanish) we will revise our program for next year. The feedback from grades 5 and 6 having dual Latin and Spanish is both overwhelming for some and confusing to others. Mrs. Jones indicates that the two-day per week program in place for grade 5 & 6 is not effective.

As a result we will move both Latin and Spanish to a minimum of three days for grades 6, 7, and 8 next year. We will ask parents to decide for grades 6, 7, 8 between Latin and Spanish later this spring. Both Mr. Duggins and Mrs. Jones will also visit the high schools to assess the expectations to move into Latin II or Spanish II to be sure our preparation is on target for our goal. In addition, we have replaced our 1998 Spanish text with a 2016 edition.

**SGO Update:** Our SGO account had donations for 2014 of \$73,855. There were forty donors to the fund. I thank the four Commission members who were able to make a donation.

**Enrollment Update:** We have had two kindergarten screenings completed. We have a total of 58 applications as of this writing. We had 4 students leave at semester and 7 new students enter at semester. We have another student, who recently moved from NJ, who will enter this week.

**Survey Notes:** As part of the statewide Catholic school accrediting process we sent out surveys in the fall. We will send out our own survey to parents, staff, 6<sup>th</sup> grade students and 10<sup>th</sup> grade graduates for feed-back in February. This allows us to compare data year to year.

**Facility Notes:** We will continue the process of updating the facility. We will be able to replace the 20 year-old desks and chairs in 6<sup>th</sup> grade over spring break. We are hopeful the parish buildings and grounds will be able to paint the rooms like they did for 5<sup>th</sup> grade this past summer.

**Choice Scholarship Note:** The five Catholic dioceses conducted an internal audit of the Choice Scholarship program to assure that we were utilizing the program in accordance with the rules. The media reported that the about \$3.9 million was returned to the state due to errors in reporting tuition costs. St. Luke was found to have made an error in one case and will be assessed about \$8,000. There were no errors in this year's voucher applications.

**Good News:** The St. Luke Middle School Speech Team took the first place trophy in the Cathedral High School MLK Speech Contest. There were fifteen schools participating. Every St. Luke student earned a ribbon. Congratulations to coaches Mrs. Chapman and Mrs. Alexander. Thanks to all the parents who helped the students practice. Thanks to the students who spent most of a Saturday at the competition.

**Testing:** Mr Weber will be testifying before the State Board of Education on Wednesday morning February 4, 2015 about concerns with the upcoming test. The test has been revised and considerably lengthened, resulting in a substantial loss of teaching and classroom time. Additionally, the new test is computer based, and test runs indicate that problems are likely. A further concern is that the test, in addition to being arduously long, seems to have many poorly written questions. The test results will not be available until the fall, which means it will also fail to give us any actionable feedback for current teachers. Mr. Weber stated that for the first time, he feels the test is truly intrusive and will not be helpful to us in any way. He stated that it is unlikely there will be changes made for this year, as the first round of testing is already scheduled for March, but that he hopes change will result for the coming years.

## **Business Items**

**Edits to Bylaws and Standing Rules:** Many comments and suggestions were received in the day prior to this meeting, leaving inadequate time for updates to the documents. Discussion and a vote on changes will be scheduled for the March meeting. Updates will be emailed to members prior to the meeting.

**Budget Report:** Wendy Mehringer reported that revenue and expenses have remained essentially true to projections. On a budget of \$450,000, we have spent \$410,000 to date. The issues under discussion in the Finance Committee are mainly the problems created by timing issues, as large expenses tend to come in lumps and the revenue stream sometimes lags behind these necessary expenditures.

**Cubby/closet remodel Project:** Andy Bauer presented the plan to remodel the storage closets in the 1<sup>st</sup> thru 4<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms. The plan has been discussed with teachers and their input and revisions are reflected in the current design. Teachers were questioned as to the pros and cons of the project. All indications are that the remodel is sorely needed, and all teachers questioned were in favor of proceeding. Buildings and Grounds has worked with Patrick and the teachers to this point and is looking for an indication of support or dissent from the School Commission.

The total cost of the project for all 15 classrooms is projected to be between \$45,000 and \$50,000. This expense is not currently budgeted, but a plan to use discretionary school funds to remodel one closet over spring break has been suggested. Buildings and Grounds would then work with Patrick to find funding for the project to be completed next year. The slow start to the project will also offer an opportunity for usage and examination by teachers which might enable further improvements on the existing plan and allow us to learn from the first installation to ensure excellence in the remainder. Monsignor suggested that we might consider revising the plan to add some flexibility for the occasions when the number of students in a given classroom tops 24, to ensure that we would always be able accommodate all students. There is currently one third grade class with 26 students. Although this is not the norm, it is something that should be considered. Other than the first closet, the project will be funded outside of school funds.

The School Commission offered unanimous support for the project. Monsignor expressed his approval of the plan to start with a single closet and learn from it before proceeding.

## **Strategic Planning /Updates and committee reports**

- **Technology** – Phil Poirier: There are two areas in progress with regard to software.
  - There are several investigative visits planned to local peer schools in the upcoming months. The technology committee will use these opportunities to learn from the technology choices of other schools in conjunction with the academic purposes of the visits.
  - An effort to find the best possible family communication software is underway, with the intention of finding the best possible way for families and staff to have a true one stop site for all needs. The Archdiocese is recommending Jupiter software as the best option. The committee likes and is in the process of evaluating Rediker software as well, which is currently in use at Scecina and Brebeuf High Schools. The committee will be visiting both and evaluating the product's success. Teacher-ease may also be evaluated as a possibility. Although the purchasing power of the Archdiocese makes it wise to look seriously at their recommendation, the plan is to choose the most functional product and to eliminate the need for anything outside of the one system.
  - Whichever product is chosen, the goal is to find something that will bring all of the following functions under one umbrella in way that is user friendly for both teachers, administrators and parents:
    - Gradebook
    - Teacher applications
    - Text alerts
    - Café tracking and payment
    - Tuition and billing
    - Testing and assignment tracking
    - Nurse function – immunization tracking
    - Smart phone apps
  
- **Development** – Sue MacGill:
  - The success and timing of the winter open house were discussed and it is felt that the current structure may need to be re-evaluated as new families looking for a school home may find a fall open house more functional, while current families looking to get a good feel for what's going on in the classroom may be better served by a different model. Ways to improve the model are under discussion.
  - There has also been discussion regarding the look and feel of the website. The need to make sure it is always current was discussed as being paramount.
  - Sue met with Ronnie Miller to discuss possible communication issues and to form a tighter link between the parish and the school. Ronnie is willing and eager to assist in publishing school events and items and would love to be involved in any efforts to promote the school. She is not in a position to write the stories herself though, which highlights the need to form a coherent method for getting the information passed along. Discussions will continue. The possibility of increasing our presence on Twitter and Facebook was discussed, and it was agreed further work is needed to make a real difference in this area. The committee would like to act in order to capitalize on the real enthusiasm Ronnie expressed.

- An SGO fundraising party geared toward past families is being contemplated. Sue is working with Ronnie on this.
- **Facilities** – Andy Bauer:
  - There was no meeting in January, but the site review with the architect is moving forward
- **Academic Excellence** – Beth Leffler:
  - A plan for site visits to other local schools has been put together. Steve Weber and the committee developed a format for evaluating and comparing the schools which includes notes for items we will specifically plan to look at. The visits will include committee members and at least two teachers, all of whom will report back to their respective groups so that ideas and thoughts can be shared. Several local Catholic schools were chosen and the group plans to visit Lumen Christi, an independent Catholic School and The Highlands Latin School as well.
  - The curriculum mapping is still under discussion
  - Monsignor suggested that he would also like for the committee to check out what Carmel Schools and other competitors for our students such as Park Tudor and Orchard are doing as well.

## **Committee/Liaison Reports**

- **Finance** – Wendy Mehringer – We should expect to discuss and approve the budget in the April meeting
- **Nominations** – Phil Poirier – We will work to have the nominations set by the end of March which would provide adequate time to publicize the information prior to the elections. The date of the election is not yet set, but the end of April was suggested. The goal will be to have the election complete in time for the new members to be able to attend one or more meetings of the Commission in the current school year.
- **Faith Formation** – Teresa Schutzman – Teresa met with Sister Diane. High School and Youth formation was the focus. They discussed re-constituting some models that have been successful in bringing youth together in the past. Sister Diane expressed willingness to support any ideas, but cautioned that leaders will be needed in order for the efforts to have a chance. They specifically discussed a plan to have winter movie nights where kids could be dropped off to watch a movie with religious subject matter in the gym. This effort would also provide a date night scenario for parents while helping to evangelize our youth.
- **Buildings and Grounds** – Andy Bauer:
  - The plan to install collapsible bleachers has been scrapped due to structural issues which make the installation impossible. Further discussion will be needed to identify other options
  - There is no update on the gaga pit
- **Stewardship** – Matt Behringer – No report.
- **PTO** – Jen Schaefer
  - Saint Nicholas visited the children in December.
  - The teacher appreciation luncheon was a success with catering by school dad Mr. Baker. Raffle items were donated by the PTO board. Parish staff were included.
  - PTO sponsored lunch for all grades on the last day of school prior to Christmas as the cafeteria is closed. The intention was to save the room moms from having to coordinate

and collect for a meal that day. PTO gifted \$150 to kindergarten thru 6<sup>th</sup> grade for the lunch, and \$200 for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. There is discussion of doing the same thing for the last full day of school in May when the cafeteria being closed creates the same problem.

- Kids were allowed to wear Colts jerseys and jeans in January if they contributed \$1.00 to do so. \$300 was raised and donated to Anna's house.
- Last Friday was fab Friday. The kids all got super sundaes from Orange leaf and were able to add their own toppings. The teachers were given a soup lunch which was a success.
- **Pastoral Council** – Eileen O'Brien Metzger
  - Marriage on Tap has been very successful. The next session is sold out, probably because dynamic speaker Monsignor Schaedel will be the presenter.
  - The Valentine's evening for married couples is coming up. There is space still available.
  - Youth ministry discussions are still on-going. Recent events have met with success, with 20 to 30 kids attending, and sometimes as many as 40.
  - Father Peter's efforts to build a Young Adult group have been fruitful. At a recent event for the young adults of Northside parishes, it was evident that our attendance and involvement was among the best and the program seems to be thriving. Efforts to continue its growth will involve facebook and other social media.
  - Evangelization continues to be a prime topic. The focus will be within our own parish and will look to encourage faith formation within existing groups such as MOYC.
  - Mary's Way will become a spring only event and is planned for May
  - No leadership has stepped up to host a Trivia Night as of yet, so as of now there is no plan for the event.
- **SLAC** – Andy Borland – There was no meeting, but the problem of the bleachers is at the top of SLAC concerns.
- **Parish Communications** – Suzanne Sherby – no report

**Pastors Comments** - Monsignor emphasized the need to make sure that we keep all the events and items up to date on any means of communication we use, from the website down to bulletin boards within the school, if we mean to have any hope of people paying attention to them. He expressed support for Ronnie Miller's efforts and reinforced that Ronnie cannot be the writer of the stories, but that the school side of the equation should take full advantage of her willingness to help by bringing the news to her.

Monsignor also expressed support for the idea of changing the structure of our open house to better meet needs. As well, he stated that he is alarmed to hear that no one has stepped up to host a Trivia Night event and said that he hopes to see that happen as he believes it is a good event which might potentially be the funding mechanism for some of the projects under discussion.

Monsignor informed the School Commission that the owner of the home closest to the playground has passed away, and that her family has offered Saint Luke first right of refusal on a purchase of the home, which they intend to sell. Monsignor said that he does plan on purchasing that home, as it makes sense in relation to the church property, although the purpose would be

uncertain for the time being. This fact will need to be evaluated in the scheme of other financial decisions we will be making in the near future.

Finally, Monsignor offered kudos to Steve for the effort he has put forth in voicing his concerns with regard to revamped testing to the SBOE and others. He praised Steve as a good citizen in his care not only for Saint Luke children but other Indiana School children whose welfare and success is as important to the overall community as our own.

Open Forum – Several parents have expressed concerns about the 2015/2016 School calendar, which was presented to the board in December. Steve clarified that the calendar does not represent a move toward a balanced calendar, but that it is the best attempt to match our breaks to those of the area Catholic High Schools while also considering the needs of our staff.

Closing Prayer was said.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:35 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by Suzanne Sherby, School Commission Secretary

**Important Dates:**

Next Executive Committee/Finance Meeting: Thursday, February 19, 2015 at 7:30 am

Next School Commission Meeting: Tuesday March 3, 2015 at 7pm