

St. Luke School Commission Meeting Minutes

Tuesday March 7, 201 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, Sue MacGill, Kevin McCusker, Jim Naughton, Tim O'Brien, Phil Poirier, Monsignor Schaedel, Teresa Schutzman, Suzanne Sherby, Steve Weber.

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

President's Report – Tim O'Brien

The Principal search is progressing as expected. The deadline for submitting resumes was March 6. We do have a pool of more than ten candidates who have already been vetted by the Archdiocese. Interviews will be conducted over the next two weeks. Tim stressed that we hope to meet the schedule but the overriding goal is to find the right person. If that person is not found they would consider an interim option, but hope this won't be necessary. The results of the survey are in and have been taken into consideration. The search committee did see common threads which they are taking into consideration.

Principal's Report – Steve Weber

Applications: Admission letters were sent out late last week for Kindergarten and upper level transfers.

Kindergarten 49

Gr. 1-8 8

In Process: 3 K and 4 gr. 1-8

There continue to be almost daily calls for admissions, so expect it to be an ongoing process. We will schedule a screening day for K once we get a few more applications.

Application Observation: It is interesting to note that our "traditional" admission activities, while helpful, do not seem to draw as many folks as in the past. We have the same number of applications at this time as in prior years but it seems most folks want individual tours etc. It will be something for the new administration to consider when planning for next year. Steve also asked for feedback regarding the possibility of going to an entirely electronic model and eliminating the monthly packet. Mandy noted that PTO has moved to an email model and that it has been a seamless transition which has been well received.

ISTEP Pt.1 & NWEA: The scheduled applied skills portion of ISTEP is finished today. We will have to do some make-up tests for kids who were sick before Friday. The applied skills are the written essays, word math problems, as well as science (4 & 6) and social studies (5 & 7).

Upon review of the **ISTEP Pt. 2** computer multiple choice tests for April 17- May 5, the amount of instructional time lost is not pretty. Mrs. Borland and I are going to, once again, protest to the state DOE about this concern. With this issue and the length of time that grades 4-7 have for the extra tests, I am concerned about having to follow up right away with **NWEA**. How we can schedule the three weeks available for testing will have an impact on having even more time spent on assessments. Just wanted to let you know our concerns. Beth clarified that the tests are taking between 5- 7 hours of classroom time depending on grade level.

Staff Notes: As of this writing 2 veteran teachers will not be returning due to retirement or a desire for more flexible work situations. **Mrs. Renner**, middle school science, and **Mrs. Hirschauer**, intermediate (gr. 3-5) special ed/resource will not be returning. This information is reflected in the salary projections. In additions, to of our veteran instructional assistants, **Ann Mason** and **JoEllen Dascoli**, are retiring at the end of this year. There may be one or two other changes for various reasons; and this is expected with a

change in administration. We are beginning to interview for the open teaching positions as we have several applicants for each position.

Tuition Recommendation

A copy of the proposed fee structure was circulated Dan noted that Monsignor did approve the commission's recommendation with the addition of a sliding scale which makes the increase slightly lower for larger families. The tuition increase now ranges from 4.3% for a family with one child to 3.7% for a family with 6 children at Saint Luke. The technology fee of \$100 per child in grades 5-8 is included in the proposal. A motion to approve was made and passed unanimously.

Budget Discussion – Dan Heslin

Dan submitted the following notes via email to aid in the budget discussion:

- 2016/2017 financial gap decreased from \$70k to \$50k in the most recent reporting period. There are limited remaining improvements for the year
- 2016/2017 Cafeteria collections are running behind and corrective action is being taken to true up what parents owe to get performance back in line
- 2017/2018 Tuition model reviewed with Monsignor and proposal will be discussed at 3/7 School Commission meeting
- 2017/2018 Budget developed and will be discussed at 3/7 School Commission meeting

Dan added these comments regarding the budget:

- This budget does fully fund the school
- The budget is built on a model of having only one tech teacher rather than two. This created some needed flexibility in the budget.
- There is some wiggle room built into the budget with the idea that the new administration may have ideas or needs that are unknown right now and that it would be best to allow for some flexibility. The wiggle room also allows a buffer against unexpected changes in enrollment.
- Cafeteria collections are a significant problem in the current budget deficit. It was noted that the notification system may be at least partially at fault.
- The Archdiocesan mandated increase in salaries and benefits ended up being higher than projected, which hurt the budgeting effort. It was expected to be about 3.5% and ended up at 3.9%
- The training budget for professional development has been increased to \$10,000 plus matching funds from the State and other grants. This represents a serious commitment to professional development and training.
- A line item was added for Development and marketing in hopes that we can make a more serious effort in this area next year.
- Consumable and Durable goods were broken out into two separate line items for better tracking.
- The Parish subsidy was increased by 2.2%
- Monsignor noted that his conversations with other Priests revealed as expected that our subsidy is one of the lower ones in the North Deanery. Several members pointed out that this can be misleading as the parish is so generous in its commitment to making capital improvements in the school such as the cubbies and bathrooms that are not considered in the budget.

The following comments were made:

- Dan said that his experience on the Finance and Technology committees has left him convinced that any possible funds should be spent on things that improve quality of life for the teachers. He noted that although there is little flexibility with regard to salary, we should take seriously the need to refresh PC's and other such things that could make teaching at our school a pleasant experience.

- Beth noted that she would like to have more flexible funding to provide stipends for teachers who take on extra responsibilities such as robotics or a school newspaper.
- Tim requested that any feedback be sent to him. A note on the budget discussed tonight is scheduled for the April meeting
- Monsignor noted that this is the most thorough and well presented budget he has seen to date. All thanked Dan for his excellent work.

Nominations

Jim will contact Ronnie Miller to have need for nominees advertised. It has already been mentioned in the quicknotes. If an election is required, it will be first weekend in May. All nominees must be vetted by Monsignor prior to running.

Strategic Planning Committee Reports:

Academic Excellence – Valerie Esposito

The Academic Excellence Committee met as a committee and also with faculty representatives.

- Discussions for preparation for the upcoming diocesan accreditation were initiated. Progress on the goals of the 2014-2017 St. Luke Strategic Plan, including differentiated learning, changes in the primary math curriculum and St. Luke curriculum mapping were noted as progress toward these goals. Further actions to enhance the progress of these goals include the provision of faculty professional development for differentiated learning. Special emphasis on low-level differentiated teaching methods will be investigated, following teacher comments requesting same. Additionally, a literature and basal reader curriculum comparison with area schools is under consideration. Barriers to progress on goals continue to be technological issues, space constraints, and limits on instructional and faculty planning time.
- Meeting with St. Luke Faculty on 2/9/2017 centered on strengthening the St. Luke writing and language arts curriculum. Staff indicated a desire to strengthen students' reading, writing and grammar skills at the primary and pre-middle school levels. A program developed by Nancie Atwell, the Winner of the 2015 Global Teacher Prize was discussed at length. The benefits and drawbacks of this reading and writing program, designed around student choice, were discussed. Elements of this program and potential for implementation will continue to be evaluated.

Facilities – Sue MacGill

- The Building and Grounds committee met and reviewed the budget that Patrick prepared along with prioritization of projects.
- The consensus was to finish the restroom renovation in the school to the extent financially possible. The work is funded in part from the Trivia night proceeds, and will commence after school dismisses for the summer. Hughey construction was optimistic that the remaining work could be done for \$50,000.00. The primary level boys'/girls' restrooms were renovated for a cost of \$28,000.00. The rooms were never properly ventilated, and that is being remedied with new exhaust. The work cannot be completed over spring break due to time constraints.
- The cubbies that were installed last year in the cloak closets have proven popular with the teachers. Some discussion as to whether this is a good idea for the downstairs classrooms with traditional closets.
- Patrick is going to get a bid for replacing the carpet in the library.
- There was a request for new furniture in the AYS/Youth Ministry room. Julie McGinnis is the designer on B & G who will research this.

- The plan to reduce moisture in the below-grade 7th and 8th grade classrooms (caused by books absorbing moisture from the concrete blocks behind the low bookcases) is to empty the bookcases. The addition of cubbies to store books would eliminate this problem. **ADD**
- Lockers: Do we need to replace or refurbish the lockers in the 7th and 8th grade hallway?
- The floors in the restroom in the North Gym need repair.
- Deckra roofing will replace the roof over the chapel (leaking issues) with metal shingles at no cost to St. Luke.

Technology – Dan Heslin

- Parish was able to re-negotiate bandwidth cost as contract agreement was set to expire. Starting in June, we will move from 100MB to 200MB for ~\$2,400 less per year as we are no longer paying for the upfront installation costs to run bandwidth from outside directly into the building
- Parish is getting quotes to complete wireless infrastructure upgrades in preparation for filing government eRate discount program; eRate reimburses us ~40% of our spend. Process is cumbersome in terms of filings and meeting dates. Erate is showing benefits in terms of better service for less cost.
- Kevin McCusker is working with Mr. Fleming to evaluate changes within current wifi infrastructure that could improve results using existing equipment; in process of evaluating recent changes to see if performance has improved. Per Kevin, they have had some success in improving speed. Kevin noted that they are still unsure of the breakdown of where the issues are in terms of routers, wifi, pcs of rediker. If current tweaks aren't good enough we'll have to go to new routers. Patrick bidding that out while Kevin and Fleming work on settings. Per Beth, teachers have been kept in the loop as to the efforts being made.

Committee Reports:

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

Communications – Kevin McCusker – meeting last month cancelled.

Faith Formation – Teresa Schutzman/Phil Poirier – Sponsoring movie night on May 12, the day before the 100th anniversary of Fatima. The movie depicting the events at Fatima will be shown in the gym. Attendees are to bring their own chairs and snacks for ease of set up and clean up. Event will be sponsored by School Commission.

Nominations- Jim Naughton - no report

Pastoral Council – Tim O'Brien/Jenn Rotz – Discussion of capital campaign. Talked about priorities with consensus on the idea of a truly long term future planning. Patrick reviewed census and demographics for parish. Council is looking for nominees for next year. Tim will be presenting a school update next month.

PTO – Mandy Heslin –

- 2/24 – Olympic power walker presented inspirational message to students. The event was engaging and successful
- Sponsoring all school science and technology day this coming Friday March 10th. STEM connection is helping with the events
- March 13th, PTO will host a pep rally where students will compete with NCAA brackets.
- 10 PTO board positions will be open for next year. Commitment is 3 years
- After school offerings opening up next week. More robotics offerings will be coming
- Teacher grants from PTO for classroom supplies will be broadened to include teacher training and other items.
- Looking into helping bring some technology into 3rd grade classrooms

SLAC – Valerie Esposito – no meeting last month. Meeting upcoming for March.

Stewardship – Katie Kumler –

- The majority of the meeting focused on the review of the Solicitation Calendar. The Solicitation Calendar is the way the Steward Commission gets line of sight to all of the Parish Ministries plans for solicitation events (goods and money) for the upcoming year. This puts the Commission in the unique position to evaluate the timing and the intent for the requested solicitation event. With all of the new and planned solicitation events the question the Commission pondered was about the saturation point of solicitation. Are we there? Ministries (e.g., PTO, Dad's Club, school) add solicitation events which may negatively impact solicitation events of other Ministries. The Commission will follow up with some groups with their recommendations.
- Plans are in the works to replace the hymnals. A survey will be conducted around the end of April. There will be opportunities to make donations to include a dedication or a memorial page. New hymnals should arrive in time for Advent2017.
- St Luke is investigating the development and use of an APP to assist in communication with the Parish. The Parish websites seems to be more popular for potential members. The APP would be a better way to push information to existing members. The APP functionality looks interesting enough to pursue the investigation.
- Children's Offertory envelopes have not been very popular. The return rate is very low and may not outweigh the cost. May replace with the use of a Stewardship checklist type of sheet that children can place in the offertory basket. The checklist includes items that they can 'do' to demonstrate participation in the theme of that particular Stewardship. The example showed was "Stewardship of the Earth" and examples included 'turn off lights in rooms not using, take shorter showers, recycle, or dispose of trash properly'. The header was 'This is what I will do to care for God's creation this year.'
- Pictorial Directory is underway. Communication began in the bulletin and will be continuing. Sign up will be online and in the Narthex after masses.
- P3 – Pizza, Pasta, and Parishioners Dinner is scheduled for **14Oct2017** and is a 'no strings attached' event to thank volunteers and the Parish for all they do. Mark your calendars.
- No Stewardship meeting in April.

Pastor's Comments:

Monsignor had the following comments:

- He would like to continue the summer movies on the lawn.
- He has asked Ronnie to cull items from Steve's notes which recognize student achievements and to publish them in the bulletin.
- He mentioned that there is new trend of having high school kids coach sports teams. He has mixed feelings as he believes the kids involved have done a good job, but feels strongly that they should never be in charge of a team without adult supervision. He doesn't believe there's always an adult present and dislikes the thought of leaving a high school kid holding the bag if something were to go wrong.
- He believes the results of the Principal search will be – Provident.
- He referenced the need for long term planning before making big dollar commitments regarding space in the school. There is a real need for a master plan. We should not make large scale investments that might have to be changed later.

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

Respectfully submitted by Suzanne Sherby, School Commission Secretary