

St. Luke School Commission Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 3, 2015, 7:00 PM

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

In attendance: Andy Bauer, Matt Behringer, Beth Leffler, Sue MacGill, Wendy Mehringer, Phil Poirier, Msgr. Schaedel, Jen Schaefer, Suzanne Sherby, Rob Shumaker, Steve Weber;
Guests: Charlie Babcock, (middle school math teacher) Kate Bruner (6th grade math teacher) and Chris Kelly (1st grade math teacher)

The February 3, 2015 meeting minutes were approved with no dissent.

Computation/Math Goals update:

A follow up on the computation update from the December School commission meeting was initiated. Math teachers were invited to express their thoughts on how our students are progressing in general and especially with regard to computation skills. It was noted that an effort to improve computation skills has been underway this year and that it has taken the form of timed tests once or twice per week in most of the lower grades.

Mr. Babcock related that several changes to the middle school math program are in the works. The current 8th grade will be the last group of students to take the Algebra ECA (End of Course Assessment). Currently about 2/3 of the students complete Algebra I by the end of 8th grade while the remaining 1/3 take a Pre-Algebra course. Local high schools are moving toward having students take Algebra I in high school instead of placing them directly in Algebra II or Geometry if they are able to test out. Mr. Babcock said that the ECA has typically required that over a month of school time be devoted to preparing for the test and that it may be helpful to be able to devote that time to a more slowly paced curriculum. Mr. Babcock believes this change is driven by changes in curriculum at local high schools.

With regard to computation skills, Mr. Babcock noted that command of computation skills is fundamental to success in Algebra and that success cannot be achieved without. He said that the students he tutors are usually deficient in the basic operations and generally do not have command of math facts which he would point to as the cause of their struggles.

Kate Bruner said that in 6th grade as well, kids need to have quick recall of facts and proficiency in basic operations to be successful. She mentioned that this year in particular she is about one month behind in curriculum due to a need to spend time doing an extensive review of fractions.

Chris Kelly said that in first grade they ask the children to practice flash cards every night. They spend a lot of time working on tricks to help kids learn the basic facts. Their focus is on building a conceptual understanding of mathematics more than having them memorize arithmetic. She said they spend a lot of time on concepts and building understanding of place value. They focus strongly on helping kids to understand adding by learning the “doubles” facts first and then building on that knowledge. She said they use a lot of manipulatives and try to present information in many ways to help children understand the underlying concepts. She said she loves the way the concepts are presented and believes they are helping children to achieve a deeper understanding.

It was suggested that we should consider some type of program which would allow kids in grades 1 – 5 to do daily practice and review of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division to ensure mastery of these functions. One commission member expressed the belief that daily practice of math should be like sports practice, that excellence can only be achieved through repeated practice. She also said she believes our math program de-emphasizes basic arithmetic with a heavy focus on conceptual functions. She shared that one local and well respected private school has children do 20 practice problems every morning as they begin their day and that they come back from lunch to do another 20 to achieve a balance between computational proficiency and conceptual knowledge. Whatever is not finished in class would be sent home as homework, thereby ensuring all children get arithmetic practice.

Chris Kelly stated strongly that they do not have enough time to add arithmetic during the day. She said that most children in first grade are not intellectually capable of doing arithmetic which involves regrouping. She said they have only 45 minutes for math and that the time allotted is already not enough for the concepts they cover, and that she believes other areas such as time for reading stories to the children teaching cursive would suffer due to the lost time. Charlie Babcock suggested that perhaps such a program could be implemented in the morning before school as many children are there as early as 7:30. Suzanne Sherby said she thinks arithmetic should be part of the children's day to ensure competence at the basic functions and that time should be found for it.

Monsignor Schaedel expressed his support for a program which provides arithmetic practice. The commission thanked the teachers for volunteering their time to share their thoughts and experiences with the school commission.

Principal's Report – Steve Weber

Enrollment Projections: Admission letters were mailed today for current applicants who have completed the admission process. There have been several inquiries and visits but applications have not been turned in as of this writing.

K	59
1	63
2	61
3	64
4	76
5	69
6	69
7	67
8	65
T	593

ACRE: The NCEA publishes the Assessment of Catholic Religious Education (ACRE) to help assess our program. The Archdiocese changed two years ago to the ACRE from our own, self-developed, Faith

2000. Only grades 5 and 8 are assessed, as opposed to grades 3, 6, 8 in the prior test. The teachers have e-copies of the 82-page report but here is a simple summary. We use it to guide improvement in curriculum and instruction.

Grade 5 88.8% rated advanced or proficient in Faith Knowledge (pillars of catechism) 13.2% rated needing improvement 78% report regularly attending weekend liturgies

Grade 8 93.4% rated advanced or proficient in Faith Knowledge (pillars of catechism) 6.6% rated needing improvement 86% report regularly attending weekend liturgies

Monsignor commented that parish involvement is one of the best forms of evangelization available to us. He mentioned MOYC as being a particularly good place to begin involvement and to encourage active participation and build the habit of regular mass attendance for young families.

ISTEP+ Fun: As you know, I spoke at the state Board of Education last month and the results of all the efforts did reduce the time for the part 1, applied skills test, by 50% making it about the same as prior years. However, despite additional protest and communication about the length of the multiple-choice test in late April and May, no changes were made.

I am more concerned about the style of testing and the quality (or lack of it) in the question writing and some of the content. I did share this with the state board but, obviously, the test was already written (by sadists... excuse the editorial remark) so they couldn't be changed.

My attitude is that this is a fairly meaningless assessment this year. Even if it were well written and somewhat valid, it simply provides a baseline for the new standards and future assessment.

Admissions: I have decided not to hire a part-time admissions director but to utilize existing staff. Mr. Patrick Duggins, who is our Latin teacher, is interested in moving into administration at some point, will fill that role and use the empty office in the parish area. He will manage all financial aid applications, parish, SGO and Choice Scholarship. He will work some additional hours during the summer months. He will also work on some marketing tools and coordinate with the church office.

Katrina Schneider will manage the data and coordinate information flow between the church and parish. She and Patrick, depending on availability, will work with interested families and coordinate screenings and shadow days.

Assistant Principal Search: I have six applications at this time and am expecting at least two more before the March 13 due date. I will begin interviews after spring break. Then bring the top candidates for review by a team of SC members and teachers, before bringing a recommendation to Msgr. Schaedel.

Business Items

Edits to Bylaws and Standing Rules: As Tim O'Brien was not available to present the suggested edits, this item will be deferred until the April meeting.

Budget Report: Wendy Mehringer presented the proposed budget for 2015-2016, which projects total revenues of \$2.8 million, expenses of \$3.2 million and a parish subsidy of \$436,275. This represents an increase in projected expenses of just over \$100,000. More than half of this projected increase is driven by archdiocesan mandated increases in health care and retirement expenses.

The following points were noted:

- It is impossible to be completely accurate with projections of revenue until enrollment numbers are more certain. At this time, walk in applicants are still coming in and all commitments are not

firm. We should have a somewhat better grasp on these numbers for the discussion in April, but even then, the numbers are only projections and are not guaranteed

- The salary expense increases reflect the addition of the Latin program and also having the math resource person move from part time to full time.
- A full time salary ends up costing about \$40,000 with benefits and other expenses included.
- A full time aide at 28 hours costs about \$14,000.
- Monsignor noted that our teacher to aide ratio is very high as compared to other schools.
- It was noted that funds not used in the previous budget period are not lost, but are moved into a contingency status. For instance, if a text book adoption is delayed, the money is held over and termed “restricted” which is essentially ear-marked for the original specific purpose. It is not a “use it or lose it” budget scenario.
- More time will be allotted in the April meeting for discussion and questions.

Strategic Planning /Updates and committee reports

- **Technology** – Phil Poirier: Matt and Phil have scheduled a meeting to discuss goals for the committee. At a recent site visit to Saint Barnabas, we heard very positive comments about the Jupiter software system, which the Principal there says does have all the functionality we are looking for. Phil mentioned that he felt the Rediker system we have been investigating seems lacking in some areas with regard to the interface for parents. It was suggested that we investigate Jupiter further. Ultimately the decision will reflect the best balance of cost and function
- **Development** – Sue MacGill: Another meeting is scheduled with Ronnie Miller to further investigate possibilities of enhancing Saint Luke’s social media presence via venues like Facebook and Twitter.
- **Facilities** – Andy Bauer:
 - Several improvements are scheduled to be completed during spring break. The Computer Lab, Enrichment areas and the 6th grade classrooms will all be painted. New desks will be delivered to the 6th grade classrooms. The old desks are being donated. The lighting in the stairwell from the school to the gym will be replaced with LED lights which will improve the quality of the light which is very difficult to access for changes. The LED will greatly improve the longevity of the lights.
 - The site review for space planning should be complete in late March/early April. They are looking at short term options which involve simple changes within the existing footprint of the building and long term options which would add to the footprint.
 - Safety concerns in the playground and back parking lot are being discussed. Replacement of the playground is being looked at, but there is no short term plan to move forward. It was established that nothing on the equipment is broken or dangerous as it stands, though the equipment is at the end of its suggested life. No plans will move forward until we know whether Saint Luke will indeed purchase the home of the recently deceased Mrs. Davis. Such purchase might affect the placement and usage, depending on possible plans for use of the home.
 - Finally, the trial run for the cubby/closet remodel project will be implemented in Mrs. Kelly’s first grade classroom over spring break. Sue MacGill requested that the April School Commission meeting include a tour of the building and a look at the new cubbies.
- **Excellence** – Beth Leffler:

- The committee would like to formally recommend that the Assistant Principal position be posted to the State website and possibly in the Lafayette diocese as well in order to draw a richer pool of applicants.
- The recent visit to Saint Barnabas revealed that the Assistant Principal there fills the role of curriculum director which includes development and implementation of curriculum. They refer to their Assistant Principal as master teacher and she provides support and leadership to the faculty. The committee liked this arrangement and felt it was a very good model of the role we have discussed needing in our own situation.
- The committee's focus is still primarily on curriculum. Beth suggests that an effort at curriculum mapping begin in mathematics to help highlight areas of strength and weakness and possibly shed light on the questions surrounding computation skills.
- Additionally, we saw a system of academic differentiation at Saint Barnabas that the committee found impressive. It is similar to what Carmel Schools do in that grades 1-5 share common blocks for English and Math. Students are grouped by ability and move classrooms, enabling kids at every grade to work to the highest level of their ability. Children who read above the highest reading group in their own grade move up a grade for reading. The system has been very effective and the committee would like to explore the possibility of moving to a similar system at Saint Luke as it appears to be a more meaningful way to differentiate than the present scramble groups.

Committee/Liaison Reports

- **Finance** – Wendy Mehringer – All items covered in Budget discussion
- **Nominations** – Phil Poirier – Phil asked that we begin thinking of possible nominees and either contacting them, or forwarding their names and information to him. A request for nominees to serve on School Commission will be published in the bulletin.
- **Faith Formation** – Teresa Schutzman – No report/Teresa absent
- **Buildings and Grounds** – Andy Bauer – All items covered in Facilities report
- **Stewardship** – Matt Behringer –
 - A retreat was held in January which resulted in the formation of several sub-committees. There is a lot of energy for various projects and discussions. One visible result thus far is the installation of the new prayer wall in the narthex. Options for a permanent installation are being discussed. Matt mentioned that the prayer wall is neatly tied to the Catholic tradition of candle lighting and seems to have been well received.
 - A second new item is the kiosk of adult education materials available to all parishioners in the narthex.
 - There is further discussion of potential outreach ministries planned. Matt will bring Monsignor's suggestion of reaching out to MOYC to the group.
- **PTO** – Jen Schaefer
 - Fab Friday last month featured an Oscars theme. The kids made an i-movie entitled "Why Saint Luke is Great" The kids watched the movie in the afternoon. They received popcorn during the movie if they brought in a donation of crayons for Riley Children's Hospital.
 - PTO is getting great feedback from parents about the service tie-ins for Fab Fridays this year.
 - Trivia Night is scheduled for April 11th.

Pastoral Council – Eileen O’Brien Metzger – Eileen was not in attendance, but sent the following notes from the meeting:

- A group attended a meeting at Christ the King with other parishes to discuss parish concerns (mass times, sharing priests, faith formation). St Luke has a good young adult program. Other parishes would like to know how it started and try to implement some of those measures. Joe Citro is very involved
- Faith Formation Report – summary by Mary Lynn Subrin
 - 6-10 member that meet about 3x per year
 - Some activities for 2014/2015 included:
 - 4/23-25 Our Lady of Czestochwa icon at St Luke
Fr Blount healing mass and speaks to groups at SL
Catholic Faith Pure and Simple in August - simple explanation and Q&A sessions
 - iv. Eucharistic Miracles of the World display at SL June 19-22
Pilgrimage to Wisconsin and IL shrines July 14-16
 - SMRE beginning 8/17 – 114 total enrolled grades K-9
 - Marriage on Tap – 7 event dates, have been selling out
 - Bible Study – ongoing, 4 programs
 - RCIA began in Sept – 3 catechumens and 8 candidates recognized in Dec, 2 cat and 7 candidates for Rite of Election
 - Catechesis for confirmation PARENTS planned for 2015
 - Catechesis for holy communion PARENTS 11/6 and 2/12/15
 - Lighthouse Ministries spoke with parish staff in Nov – goal is evangelization and bringing Symbolon to SL for online education. Team = Kathy Hirsch, Teresa Schutzman, Donna Kruse, Dana Moore, and Lisa Gilligan.
 - Confirmation retreat at Benedict Inn for St Luke (62) and SMRE (16) was 2/28 (interjection from Eileen “Awesome! I attended as a SMRE confirmation teacher. Put on by high school team. One day, creative, fun, and spiritual. Kids responded they loved it. Plan to continue this format next year.”)
 - Soup Suppers during Lent with speakers
 - FHC retreat at St Luke on March 7
 - Catechetical volunteer staff invited to Evening of Reflection at Fatima 2/2/15
 - Awards for Faith Keepers (high school helpers) in SMRE program

Youth Ministry update –

- Patrick DugginsPatrick, the Latin teacher, has agreed to help with YM.
- In need of help, as he also has many other duties at the school (acting VP).
- YM involve middle school and high school.
- Activities approx monthly – involve mass and activity – bonfire at the rectory, pizza, another mass and dinner this Sunday evening. Work in process

Fritz asked for any nominations – PLEASE ASK SCHOOL COMM IF THEY HAVE ANYONE THEY THINK WOULD BE A GOOD FIT TO TURN IN A NOMINATION FORM.

Annual Report from Patrick Jendraszak – parish census data

- Compared data from 2011-2014
- Household types - Largest group is married (approx 1400), followed by singles, divorced, widowed, other and separated.
- Location – Indpls (approx 1450), Carmel (approx 400), and other (approx 100)
- Parishioner age – older parish
 - 60+ is largest group (approx 1100),
 - Followed by 19-29 (700ish), 40-49 and 12-18 (650ish), 50-59 (625ish).
 - Smallest group is 30-39 (450ish). Due to “nomadic” reasons – move frequently and don’t claim a parish.

- Sacramental Data -Baptisms on constant rise ii. Other data fluctuates (1st comm., confirmation, burials, marriages)
- Contributing households Approx 70% of households contribute to Sunday collections
- Annual Giving patterns
 - \$1-1,000 (825ish contributors). Highest group, has increased over time.
 - \$1,000-2,000 (300ish). Remained fairly constant over the years.
 - \$2,000-4,000 ((275ish). Fairly constant.

Other amts. Have a few that donate >\$10,000/yr (10ish). Remained constant, hope we don't lose them (age?) 18 households give approx 16% of total parish offerings.

Contributing households by city
 Indpls (1,000ish) Carmel (250ish) Other (80ish)
- **SLAC** – Andy Borland – No report/Andy absent
- **Parish Communications** – Suzanne Sherby – no report

Pastors Comments - Monsignor expressed his belief that the real reason we have the school is to evangelize. He said that a typical path is for parents to become more active in and connected to the church as their children spend more time in school. He believes all our activities are really an end to meeting this need. He said he feels the new prayer board in the Narthex is an excellent way to keep encouraging families and parents especially to become more deeply involved and to bring their children to mass. He encouraged all of us to keep this end in mind, and to continue to consider our activities in light of their potential to bring families closer to their faith.

Monsignor also said that with reference to the work Beth Leffler and the Academic Excellence committee are doing, he would like to see some type of “Saint Luke Canon of Literature”. He said that he is uncomfortable with the idea of individual teachers making literature selections without a process to ensure consistency between classrooms and grades. Essentially, he feels there should be a list of books, mostly classic, that every child who attends nine years of school at Saint Luke will have been exposed to.

Closing Prayer was said.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by Suzanne Sherby, School Commission Secretary

Important Dates:

Next Executive Committee/Finance Meeting: Thursday, March 12, 2015 at 7:30 am

Next School Commission Meeting: Tuesday April 7, 2015 at 7pm