

# **St. Robert Home & School Association**

## **Minutes for February 24, 2010**

**Present:** Lauren Beckmann, Sara Coffou, Amy Hietpas, Susan Joy, Lisa Lesjak, Yvonne Luzney, Dennis Reilly, Wendy Scherwenka, Wendy Wallace, Kathy Wyatt, Sally Zale, Pam Mattox

**Excused:** Karen Hunt, Joan Schramka

**Guests:** Jeanette Corbett, Dan Davis

### **I. Reflection**

### **II. President's Report – Sally Zale**

- **Annual Operating Guidelines Approval:** Sally briefly reviewed the annual operating guidelines and asked the board to review and get back to her with any comments. Sally asked Yvonne Luzney to look into the cost of the service anniversary plaques and other service gifts so she can add the cost in the guidelines. The guidelines will be reviewed/revise at the March meeting.

### **III. Principal's Report – Lauren Beckmann**

The middle school service projects are underway and there is an improved quality in the program. Now that there are several groups going to different places at different times of the day there is a new challenge in coordination. During the last project there was a lot of confusion with the teachers about when the students would be leaving, coming back and whether or not they would be back for lunch. There seems to be a gap with coordination and communication between the groups. Sally had assumed that the faculty volunteer would be the one to communicate this information but somehow the expectations were not communicated. Sally said the next step in the improvement of the program is to create a resource binder (started by Barb Lucius), to develop a curriculum with the faculty and to create a coordinator to deal with logistics.

### **IV. Other Reports**

- **Marketing & Development – Lisa Lesjak:**

The Annual Fund is now at \$122,865. If everyone that gave last year gave the same amount at this time the fund would come up short \$18K.

Lisa mentioned her report on the attendance at the Open House in Family Matters. This year they had more families go through the Open House. The Open House had great energy due to all the activities that were going on that day. There were many kids in uniform in the halls and plenty of volunteers. Thanks go out to everyone that was involved with Open House.

Lisa is going to be more aggressive than ever this month by calling current families to ask what their status is for re-enrollment. Currently there are 262 probables and with verbal commitments that number goes to 307. So far for the K4 class for next year there are 25 enrolling and about 23 students for K5. This is up from 19 in the current K4 class. Lisa has a few K5 tours scheduled in the next 2 weeks, so there is hope that there will be 2 classes for K5 next year.

The school is in need of more scholarship money. They are currently using the dividends from their funds which are not yielding as much as they did in previous years in the current market. We need to do more soliciting for money for scholarships. These scholarships are only for the use of parishioners at this time, however, there isn't even enough to cover those parishioners that would like to send their child to St. Robert but don't have the means.

Lisa discussed the outcome of the parent survey briefly and just wanted to make the board aware of one narrative comment that she thinks was worth reading to us. The comment mentioned that they thought the parent leadership associations/committees are exclusive and not welcoming to anyone other than their friends. The board agreed that these comments might reflect other people's perceptions and we need to be aware of these perceptions and make sure that all parents know that they are welcome to participate in any of the leadership volunteer opportunities. As the H&S Association we need to make sure we are welcoming and inclusive. Sally will write something up in Family Matters in the next few weeks to reflect these thoughts.

▪ **Parish Council – Kathy Wyatt:**

- Francine Micklus gave a summary of the music ministry, including the addition of the junior choir this year (formerly called the children's choir). There is a teen Mass two times a month at 5:30pm on Sundays. They have chosen the 11am Mass on Sundays to have the Children's Liturgy of the Word for K4 through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. They will also be starting the Good Shepard Program for 3-4 year olds this fall. She is currently working on the music for each Mass.
- Deb Scheid is looking for a parishioner that would help organize the time & talent volunteers for the parish. Susan Joy said she could help them with this task.
- Scrip: Kathy was able to get Alterra Coffee on the Scrip program for a 10% give back. She was also able to get Oakcrest Tavern for 8%.

▪ **School Advisory Board – Dan Davis for Karen Hunt:**

○ **Education & Enrichment:**

**Lunch Program:**

- Silverware was introduced in place of the plastic utensils.
- A new cook recently began work and early reports are positive.
- Child height refrigerated food bar which is self serve has been introduced.
- An upright freezer will be ordered this summer.
- Increasing the amount of natural, unprocessed foods and have tried to serve at least one meal a week cooked from scratch.

**Art Program:**

- Feedback on increasing minutes to Archdiocese mandates: Mrs. Bailey sees more advantage in adding time to the middle school art than to grades 1-5, which already incorporate a lot of art integration. No one wants to consider the reality of having to cut back on any other programs to accommodate this mandate.
- Committee: Visual and musical arts are tools for creating meaning that are as basic as language arts. As we expect SRS students to gain facility and compose their thoughts with all three of these tools, we would like to see movement, incremental if necessary, of the instructional minute's allocations toward the Archdiocese mandates. The committee supports the faculty Arts Integration Team in steering the visual and musical arts curricula toward goals similar to those of the language arts curriculum.

- **Development:** Need based scholarship funds are most urgently needed. Four years ago, \$32K was available for these; currently on \$24K; may have enrollment repercussions.
  - **Technology:** Computer replacement is becoming critical. The committee visited Lumen Christi to gather information about its technology program and support system, which includes student help. A cost benefit analysis on a PC lab vs. Mac lab will be completed in March and a detailed proposal is expected for presentation to Home & School sometime in April. Problems with managing the Help Desk requests were recently discovered. Bill Brousseau and the Committee are working to iron this out.
  - **Budget & Finance:** A 5% tuition increase is proposed, based on an anticipated 330 enrollment. With the anticipated increase in enrollment, additional staff will need to be hired. Some of the key factors influencing this decision are the rising cost of benefits and the level of Parish support. Even with the increase in tuition there is still a \$30-40K deficit in the new budget that will need to be reconciled. Lauren has put together an Ad Hoc Committee to create guidelines for teacher compensation. Because there is such a wide gap between the teachers that have been at the school a shorter time the committee is looking at ways of possibly providing catch up pay for those teachers at the lower end of the pay scale. In addition the committee will be investigating incentive based bonuses. They are still trying to close the gap with the 80% parity in compensation with the public schools, but this will be a challenge with the current financial situation. The budget does not include any monies for IT purchases or support.
  - **Parent Survey Highlights:** Lowest numeric scores were after-school enrichment, hot lunch, and faculty: consistent enforcement of student conduct, and the Olweus program. Opinions were split on the importance of improving arts instruction, with parents rating it higher than the faculty.
  - **Environment Committee:** The committee has finalized its Long-Range Facility Plan. It includes both 5-year and long-range time horizons. The 13 items currently in the 5-year plan are prioritized below. The Facility Plan can be viewed in detail on the School website.
    1. Accessibility & Media Center Project – COMPLETED AS PART OF FAITH IN OUR FUTURE 2009
    2. Entrance Signage - COMPLETED IN 2008
    3. Gym/Locker Room Modifications – IN DESIGN FOR SUMMER 2010 IMPLEMENTATION
    4. Security – IN PLANNING
    5. Aesthetic/Image Improvements - IN PLANNING
    6. Window and Door Replacement - IN PLANNING
    7. Lighting- IN PLANNING
    8. Acoustics - IN PLANNING
    9. Exterior - IN PLANNING
    10. Handrails in Stairs - IN PLANNING
- **Treasurer – Dennis Reilly:**  
Dennis passed out the balance sheet for February. Not much activity to report this month. The main activity was with the Staff Appreciation Lunch and the 2010 8<sup>th</sup> grade funds raised of approx. \$6,447 so far. Dennis asked about the activity on the 8<sup>th</sup> grade funds for 2009. Lauren will check into this and get back to Dennis. There was more activity on the income statement. Dennis still hasn't received the revenue for the

Father/Daughter dance and the Mother/Son Bowling events. Wendy S. will contact the chairs to remind them to turn the funds in to Dennis. The revenue has come in for the Pancake breakfast and they have done better than the budget this year with a net income of \$1,118 vs. \$500 budgeted. We are not going to hit the targets put forth in the budget for investment income given the current low interest rates. The discretionary funds were reviewed and the Peace Learning Center project is paid and closed. This should be added to the budget for next year. The Spanish textbooks have been received, Lauren will check into why this still shows up as an open project.

▪ **Volunteers – Susan Joy:**

Currently there is \$1,500 outstanding from those that had signed up for the volunteer buyout or have not participated in the volunteer obligations. This charge just recently went out with the lunch statements and report cards will be held if payment is not received.

There were 4 no shows for the Rice Bowl event for various reasons. Susan wanted suggestions on where anyone could use volunteers. Sara Coffou suggested offering them some work for the Emerald Auction. Sara will send Susan the list of jobs for the Emerald Auction so she can contact the volunteers to offer an alternative obligation. The other option is for them to pay the buyout fee.

## V. Wrap –Up Events

- **Pancake Breakfast – Amy:** A report from the chairs said they sold 100 more plates than last year and the marketing was great by making it coincide with the Pack the Mass. They were short of volunteers this year so the number needs to be increased for next year.
- **Book Fair – Pam (Jeanette Corbett) –**The book fair was very successful with net income approx. \$1,070 in a one day event which was a little better than was raised last year in a 2/3 day event. The chairs this year did a wonderful job! General thoughts from Vicki Bennett on Usborne books was the selection was limited, there was not enough fiction, a limited number of books for older children. The selection seemed to be directed more toward the younger children. She would not recommend using Usborne next year as a vendor. The chairs thought the company was primarily set up to do home sales and were not very organized for a big event such as ours. The chairs kept asking for more inventory and the Usborne representatives never seemed to take them very seriously and were also surprised at the amount of books they sold. The Usborne representatives also discussed a pledge program called “Reach for the Stars” however the H&S association isn’t interested in a program for pledges when there are so many other fund raisers at the moment. Jeanette said that she and Mary Becker would do the book fair again next year and will explore some other vendors and come back with some recommendations before going back to Scholastic.
- **Catholic Schools Week – Wendy W.:** Everything went smoothly, and the students seemed to enjoy all the activities. Pick & Save decorated one of the cakes without a request, so the manager gave all the cakes to the school for free.

- **Teacher Appreciation Luncheon – Amy:** This event went well with a fun Mexican Fiesta theme. The Mexican buffet was catered by COA and everyone seemed to enjoy it. The chairs would like to change the day of the week next year and not have it on a Wednesday. The early dismissal did not allow enough time for cleanup and they felt very rushed. Lauren agreed to have the event on a Friday and have a ½ day of school so the teachers could really enjoy the event as a group. Volunteers however need to be informed in the description for this volunteer assignment that their children will not be in school so they will need to make accommodations or not sign up for this event.
- **Talent Show – Wendy W.:** The talent show was a great success. Laurin Dodge and Joe O'Neill did a wonderful job selecting the acts and coordinating the event. Laurin would still like to coordinate the event next year but does not want to be involved with choosing the acts. The board had a vote on making this an every other year event but the majority voted against and it was decided to have the event next year with the key change above. The reason to keep the event annually is that it is a very good experience and opportunity for many students to showcase their talent and it is enjoyed by the other students and parents for the entertainment. Another suggestion for next year would be to possibly call it a “variety” show and bring in some impartial people from outside the school, maybe from Holy Family, to do the selecting and judging.
- **Prospective Families Coffee Reception– Amy/Yvonne:** Only 3 prospective families showed up for this event. Some suggested reasons for the low turnout was the fact that the Mass is at a time when most children are going to preschool and this particular Mass this year was right before Valentines Day and preschools usually have parties where parents need to help. Lisa thought it was still a worthwhile event since it gives her the opportunity to make contact with interested families again by personally inviting them to Mass. It is also a chance to showcase the student Mass. Sally said next year she will schedule the coffee reception for late February.
- **Father/Daughter Dance – Wendy S.:** Over 200 people were at the event this year. Everyone seemed to like Reilly Hall as the venue because it was smaller and more intimate. The decorations were also fantastic. The chairs said they would consider chairing this event again in 2012. Some recommendations for improvement include adding a registration table or doing some type of ticketing to account for the people that signed up. Dennis Reilly gave an example of a popular pop song that was played by the DJ at the party that he thought was very inappropriate for the venue. He read out loud the suggestive and inappropriate lyrics all present. Everyone agreed that the DJ needs to be held accountable by providing appropriate music for girls ages 4 through 14. In the future the DJ should submit the play list before the event for review and approval by the chairs. Sally will talk to Holly about the situation to find out what was done.
- **Rice Bowl – Wendy W.:** The chairs said they would chair this event again. They didn't realize however, that they needed to have more volunteers to help with supervision during recess because the children were not able to go outside due to the noon Ash Wednesday Mass. It was decided that the room parents could help out with this duty and it should be added to the events for the room parent description for next year.

## VI. Ongoing Events

- **Emerald Auction-Pam:** The chairs are very busy at the moment putting the finishing touches on the Auction book before it goes to the printers. Everything is moving along very well. A very generous underwriter came forward for the IML units, which will pay for most of the rental cost of the units of approx. \$9,000. Right now they are concentrating on the table sales and raffle ticket sales and hoping to get increased participation over last year.

## **VII. Upcoming Events**

- **Grandparents Reception (March 25<sup>th</sup>) – Wendy S.:** Invites will go out in the first week in March. It was mentioned that last year after Mass the reception became a free for all as the children rushed ahead of the grandparents for the food. Lauren will discuss this with the teachers and make sure they give the students the message that the grandparents get served first and then the students.
- **Green Week (April 19<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup>) – Wendy W.** No report this month.
- **Middle School Showcase– Wendy W. :** Directors fees were increased as a result of the vote by H&S to approve additional funding for the Middle School Showcase. The total increase in directors' fees is \$700 over last year. Wendy proposed to reflect this increase in the budget for this year. Sara Coffou initiated a motion to increase the budget by \$700 this year for the Middle School Showcase to increase the directors' fees and the board approved.

**Next H&S Meeting – Wednesday, March 17<sup>th</sup> 6:30-9:00 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Yvonne Luzney  
Secretary