

St. Robert Home & School Association

Minutes for March 17, 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, Karen Hunt, Joan Schramka

Guests: Tom Zale

I. Reflection

II. President's Report – Sally Zale

- **Annual Operating Guidelines Approval:** Sally passed around the updates to the annual operating guidelines and asked that everyone look it over and offer any suggestions or approval. Sally took out the acknowledgement for departing Home & School Association officers, as this was discussed last year as something they wanted to eliminate. She also increased the dollar amounts for staff recognition.

- **Event Planning for '10-'11**

Sally started looking at planning the calendar for next year and talking to all the VP's about their specific events. Sally created a tentative calendar of events which is just a start and passed it out to all present. It was pointed out that the date needed to be updated and Sally will update the date. Everyone was instructed to look it over and e-mail Sally with additions and updates. High Interest Day needs to be added per Wendy Wallace's request. There was also some discussion on changing the type of event for the fathers and sons in place of the Father/Son Packer Chili. The group brainstormed other possible events including a suggestion from Karen Hunt for laser tag. Karen will research the details on the Lasertag Adventure in Waukesha and what the cost, ages, number of people and logistics would be as a possible replacement for the Father/Son Packer Chili event. Karen said the kids love it and the fathers have fun too. Sara Coffou will call other schools and find out what they do for their father/son events.

III. Principal's Report – Lauren Beckmann

- Lauren passed out the new St. Robert School Mission and Vision that was adopted this January. Even though it has been approved it is still open to revision. This revised vision and mission has been several months in the making and started in September when the board was challenged to refine the schools mission and vision come up with a broad statement for the mission and core values and vision to support the mission. The process consisted of pulling out values that shape the vision. They selected 6 values which they had pulled out of previous mission and vision statements. They plan to look at each of the values one at a time and challenge students and teachers to find out how they can apply those values within the school. Lauren plans on selecting one particular value a month and discussing how they can apply each value as a faculty. Lauren said she is interested in the Home & School Associations perceptions of the new mission and vision and would like our feedback and suggestions. Pam mentioned the word "virtue" and Lauren liked the idea of using that word. She will take it back to the committee and see if they can work it into the values.

- The Archdiocese always presets the holidays and events for every school year. In 2011 Easter is very late in April. As a result of being so late in the year next year, the Archdiocese has allowed every school to pick their own week for spring break. Lauren will be putting together an Ad Hoc committee that will be looking at that week and coming up with other possible weeks for spring break in 2011. Surveying the families was suggested and Lauren will possibly create a survey on line with different choices of weeks (up to 3 choices) and see what comes back.

IV. Other Reports

- **Marketing & Development – Lisa Lesjak:** Lisa passed out the registration update. Verbals are just that, no paperwork has been turned in yet. She continues to get registrations for new students and is still getting requests for tours every week. Lisa can't give an update on the Annual Fund as she was having computer network issues. It was definitely incredible to see that \$20K was raised in 20 minutes for the scholarship fund at the Emerald Auction and she remains optimistic about the Annual Fund as well. If everyone that gave last year gave the same amount this time the fund would come up short \$18K. Now that the Emerald Auction is over, Lisa can start emphasizing the Annual Fund again. School family participation is currently at about 46% which is lower than where they were by the end of June last year.
- **Parish Council – Kathy Wyatt:** Not much to report for the Parish Council. Scrip is now part of the budget so they are expecting revenue. So far it is just a draft budget but approx. \$7500 has been allocated for revenue. It was initially about \$15K but it was later cut in half. Kathy said that it has been very convenient this year to have some cards on hand when trying to sell scrip. However, the Archdiocese said they will not allow holding inventory. After April, Catherine Mercuri will be able set up a system to order through the website by automatic withdrawal or check. Another idea for painless fundraising, are Pick n' Save and Office Depot store rebates. Someone mentioned that it would be beneficial to have a way to automatically register families when the registration packets are distributed. It would be nice to provide all the necessary fundraising forms for parents to fill out and return with registration.
- **School Advisory Board –Karen Hunt** has nothing to report because no meeting has been held yet this month. Tom Zale, Chair of the Budget & Finance Committee for the School Advisory Board passed around the proposed budget for 2010-2011. He mentioned that during this year's budgeting process he was able to meet with his counterpart from St. Monica to compare student costs. He passed out a summary of the revenue and expense comparisons between St. Monica and St. Robert. In summary it shows that average class size is smaller at St. Robert (18.6 compared to 23.9 at St. Monika) but average tuition is a bit higher. St. Monica has a fixed parish subsidy that is 29% higher than St. Robert but the revenues from the Annual Fund and H&S Association are higher and close that gap. This year's projected enrollment will increase to 330 with 5% increase in tuition. The budget committee did a survey with other Catholic Schools in the area and our tuition is in line with the rest of the market. St. Robert's tuition is at the upper end for that market however, it is considered a good value with a lower than average class size as well as other programs/activities offered that are not offered elsewhere.

Total revenues of \$1.475 M is projected for next fiscal year. They are projecting the Annual Fund at \$200K again. For expenses there is a salary increase for a sub set of teachers and for adding 1.5 teachers to the staff. The salary scale is targeted at 80% parity to that of the Shorewood public school teachers. The current scale is ridged and is based on years of service and education. Many of the current teachers are not close to the 80% parity. One of the strategies with increases this year is to try to get teachers that are below the 80% parity closer to the 80%. Other major expense line items in the budget include a benefits increase of 14% due to increasing health care expenses. The other line items don't add much more to the bottom line expenses and the bulk of the expenses are salary and benefits. All other expenses remain essentially flat. The difference between the revenue and expenses in approx. \$206,967. The parish will only be able to contribute \$164K at this moment so there will still be a deficit around \$43K for the school year. Some uncertainties remain in the contributions to the Annual Fund and the final enrollment for 2010-2011. However they are pretty confident they can make the enrollment numbers.

The focus going forward for the school will be on growing enrollment for long term viability. The school doesn't have any control over the parish subsidy. The budget committee's recommendation is to start the school year with a negative budget and dip into the endowment if needed to cover the expenses up to \$43K. Dennis Reilly asked if there is anything that we can do in terms of shared services with our sister parish Holy Family. Tom said that is something they need to look into and would like to get counter parts from Holy Family and St. Monica together to investigate the possibilities. As far as the enrollment emphasis, the school does have some head wind in the early years since most of the lower grades have larger class sizes. If we want to keep up with the success of recent enrollments we do not want to cut curriculum and programs that might have drawn families to the school in the first place.

Dennis Reilly mentioned that H&S can possibly contribute an amount of money to temporarily bridge that gap since there are several restrictions to taping the Endowment Fund. The question was asked if there any rules in the financial bylaws that exist in terms how much the H&S Association can tap into their reserves. Dennis doesn't have the bylaws with him to look at but will follow up and look at them so he is aware of the restrictions. Tom thought that in some respects it might be easier to tap into the Endowment and then run a campaign to increase the Endowment which might have a wider appeal than to try to raise more money from Home & School. Both ideas are worth looking into for the future.

- **Treasurer – Dennis Reilly:** Dennis passed around the balance sheet for March. He noted that there is 1 more payment to be made of \$34,250 for the Annual School Budget Contribution and for the Annual Scholarship Fund Contribution of \$2,990. Dennis wanted to know the timing of these payments. Lauren said that these payments could be made at any time. Dennis will write a check to the school as soon as possible. Dennis also mentioned he has just received \$362 in Rice Bowl contributions for Uganda. Other activity worth mentioning is the 2010 eighth grade funds is over \$6,000. For the Emerald Auction, they were over budget on dinner which was expected. The Emerald Chance will be changed to the Purse Chance. There was a snafu with the IML units because they wouldn't allow you to buy more than 1 spot for the sign up parties. Dennis thinks they will send corrected invoices. Not all the cards for the IML units were turned in yet from the Auction and they are working on getting the word out that they need these back. As far as a result of the total income from the Auction they are just getting started on getting the numbers together and will have a clearer picture in the next 2 to 3 weeks. The Emerald Auction committee will give a report out in April with all of the

details. Dennis will mention that there needs to be some other system of entering the credit card charges and processing the cards. It will take Dennis close to 6+ hours to process all the cards. They will need to find some other way to improve the processing of the cards for next year that is more efficient. The Father-Daughter dance and Mother- Son bowling all came in with lower expenses. The Magazine Drive is still under budget by almost \$5K. Net income from the Raffle will be closer to \$6K after the expenses are paid.

The Home & School dues of \$5 per student out of the registration fee are due as a payment and Dennis should receive a check from Elizabeth Cleveland in the near future. On the Discretionary Funds summary, the Art Supplies project remains open and according to Lauren that should be closed next month. The Library Book Additions should remain open because of \$558.29 still not spent.

- **Volunteers – Susan Joy:** Checked a few more people off the list for paying the opt out fee. So far the outstanding opt out payments are down to \$1,500 that still needs to be collected. Susan was able to schedule some people to volunteer for the rice bowl and pancake breakfast that have missed their previous volunteer obligations. She was also able to cover the Auction with more volunteers as well and is interested in getting an update from Sara. Sally said we are still having the variety (talent) show next year and will need 5 volunteers.

- **Fundraising Pam:**
 - Pam passed out an informational flier on The Lunch Lady Fundraising program that is used at St. Jude the Apostle and St. Luke's. It is a turnkey system with a process described below:
 - All lunches are pre-ordered one month in advance, which means no waste.
 - Volunteers prepare and serve (2-3 people per day)
 - They do not cook. Only heat/reheat.
 - Many foods are purchased at good prices from local vendors such as pizza, Cousins Subs, McDonalds, Gold Rush Chicken, Broadway Bakery.
 - Sysco Food Service-can order almost anything.
 - Their students pay only \$10 per year for milk-TOTAL. We should look into this.

The Lunch Lady Program is not a contract program. This would be run by the school and volunteers. They have a plan and it is very organized. The initial investment is only \$200. Profit is very high at St. Luke's; they have an enrollment of just over 400 students and net \$25,000-\$30,000. Pam thinks this is worth looking at due to the potential profit. Lauren said she has already signed a contract for next year with Taher and they are on the federal lunch program which has some financial benefits. This is something to look into for the next school year in 2011-2012.

- Pizzeria Piccola in Wauwatosa have a program called "Society Sundays". On at least 2 Sundays a month, they open their doors to community organizations which need to raise money through fundraisers. The kids and families from our school could work there and they get paid with the tips. St. Robert School would do all of the marketing and provide student labor and parental supervision. Families can dine in or take out. We can pre-order frozen pizza's or soup in conjunction with this, but we will have to work out the timing and delivery of the frozen goods. Pre-orders are needed one week in advance. SRS would get 15% of all sales of \$2,999 or less, and 20% if sales exceed \$3,000. Forty percent of groups hit the higher percentage, which requires a minimum of 300 orders at \$10 average each.

- The eighth grade fundraisers need to have a plan. Guidelines need to be put in place because this year this year the amount of time committed to fundraising is so extreme. The question came up on how do we change it for next year? Some suggestions were to create a binder with guidelines as well as creating a common goal. Sally will talk to Lynn Frieseke to find out what events are planned for the remaining year and ask them to clear the events with Home & School first so there aren't too many conflicts for other planned events. The thought was that all the 8th grade fundraising going forward should bring their fundraisers (fundraising plans) to the Home and School for approval.
 On a larger scale regarding all fundraisers, Sara and Pam will be looking at a model to compare fundraisers that will calculate a cost per dollar raised. This will enable us to get a handle on what fundraisers should be emphasized and which fundraisers should possibly be discontinued for maximum profit. One idea we should consider is having a quiet time before the Emerald Auction to focus on that fundraiser. The consensus seems to be in favor of writing guidelines on fundraisers. Lauren is in favor of guidelines and suggested putting together an Ad Hoc group to put an initial draft together. We don't want to make them too ridged so that there isn't room for new ideas, but guidelines are needed so as not to saturate the school community with fundraising. Lisa, Amy, Sally, Pam, Sara and Karen have agreed to be on the ad hoc committee to draw up the guidelines.
- The Band is taking a trip in May. Lindsay Richter is asking questions about fundraisers for this event. They are planning on going to the symphony in Chicago and it will cost approx \$65 per child. About 25 kids are going. Ms. Richter thinks this might be a burden for parents so that is why she is considering the fundraiser. She is thinking about doing a dining fundraiser possibly with Baskin Robbins. A car wash in the parking lot put on by the Band should be considered in the summer as a fundraiser for next year's trip.

V. Wrap –Up Events

- **Emerald Auction – Pam:** The Chairs will be presenting at the April H&S Meeting.

VI. Ongoing Events

- **Battle of the Books – Wendy W.** One more battle left and everything is going fine. This event wraps up at the end of this month.

VII. Upcoming Events

- **Grandparents Reception (March 25th) – Wendy S.:** Everything is up and running for this event. So far it has encouraged people to come from out of town. Hopefully the elevators will be a draw as well. Lauren already talked to the teachers about manners around the event and the teachers are going to discuss this with the students. The Science and Art fair are happening at the same time as well and everyone is excited by all the events that will make it more interesting for the grandparents.

- **Green Week (April 19th-23rd) – Wendy W.:** Planning for this event has already started and they have a variety of ideas. For one idea they have located an artist which will coordinate a tile mural art piece. It is a one week artist in residency at a cost of \$2,000 plus travel expenses. The artist usually stays with families in the area so the lodging expenses are not needed. It's a very neat program that doesn't have to be tied to Green Week and it could just serve as a separate artist in residency program as well.
- **Dramatic Reading (April 24th) – Wendy W.** Wendy has not contacted Jenny Fox yet however this event will take place again at Boswell Books.

Next H&S Meeting – Wednesday, April 21st 6:30-9:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Yvonne Luzney
Secretary