

School Advisory Board Minutes
February 11, 2009
6:30 p.m.

Members present: Lauren Beckmann, Clark Gridley, Matt Hietpas, Lisa Lesjak, Jane Boland, Laura Maly, Joe O'Neill, Matt Linn, Dan Davis, and Jane Connell

Members absent: Fr. Dennis Dirx, Michael DeMichele, Bill Schlise, Tom Zale, and Michelle Frazier

- 1.) Call to Order & Prayer – Clark Gridley and Jane Connell
- 2.) Pastor's Report – No report due to Fr. Dennis' absence.
- 3.) Principal's Report – Lauren Beckmann
 - a. Open House was successful.
 - b. There is a core group of faculty members busy planning for Lent. The seven weeks of Lent will focus on the last seven words of Jesus. In addition, the hallways will be cleared of all artwork. The classrooms will create some artwork to demonstrate the Stations of the Cross and that is what will hang in the hallways.
 - c. The faculty is working on improving the curriculum standards and the information literacy standards.
 - d. St. Robert School won First Place at the Dominican Academic Challenge. There were 19 schools in the large school category. Our team was comprised of 7th and 8th graders representing the following categories: Math, Science, Social Studies, Religious Studies, Spanish, English, and Visual and Performing Arts.
 - e. During these painful economic times, there are many families in our community that are without work or are very concerned about losing their jobs. The Tuesday night masses will now be dedicated to praying for these families. In addition, Elizabeth Cleveland is contemplating forming a support group for people in this situation.
 - f. The first draft of the budget is due to the Parish Council on March 20, 2009. The library remodeling project will be presented to the Parish Council on April 28, 2009. Approval came from the State concerning the building plans, which are progressing nicely with a few minor changes.
 - g. There are some concerns about the current lunch program, such as the menu choices and the quality of the food preparation. Should we consider other vendors? An invitation will go out to the parents to form a task force to further investigate this issue.
 - h. A concern was raised about the First Eucharist instruction. What is the purpose of the meetings with the parents and families of the communicants? Aren't the children getting all the instruction they need while in school? It was suggested that there might exist an equity issue

between the kids that attend St. Robert and the public school kids. They have recently reinstated the weekly religion classes for the public school kids. It was also suggested that a separate, but equal program might be the way to go, along with a greater emphasis on doctrine instruction for all kids.

4.) Home and School – Joe O’Neill

- a. There is a positive outlook for the Emerald Auction, but they could still use some items to auction off.
- b. The Mother & Son Bowling Event was sold out and was very popular.
- c. The Pancake Breakfast had sporadic attendance. It was very busy after the 8:30 a.m. Mass and then had very little attendance before or after the 11:00 a.m. Mass.
- d. The Teacher Appreciation Luncheon was very well received, even if it ran out of vegetables.
- e. The Talent Show was an enjoyable event.
- f. The teachers won the student-teacher volleyball game this year during Catholic Schools Week.
- g. Little People’s Basketball is a unique program. Our kids end up being well-prepared for competitive basketball in the 5th grade. So much so, they are contemplating joining a more competitive basketball league.
- h. The first event from the Battle of the Books has already occurred.
- i. The Rice Bowl will occur on Ash Wednesday.

5.) Committee Reports

a. Policy Committee – Jane Boland

- i. A discussion took place concerning children carrying their own Epipens. Joe O’Neill will investigate the possibility of obtaining the State Statute concerning this issue, if one exists.

b. Education and Formation Committee – Laura Maly

- i. Members of the SAB really appreciated receiving a copy of the minutes from this committee in advance.
- ii. In order to summarize those minutes, the following items were mentioned: the expanding art program, the library update, revitalizing the school newspaper, and the 8th grade multimedia presentation.

c. Development Committee – Lisa Lesjak

- i. They are pleased with their progress toward the Annual Fund goal this year, and confident they will meet the goal, even with this bleak economy.
- ii. There was a lengthy discussion concerning Faith in Our Future, and the funding order for the projects to be completed. Do they need to be completed in the order listed? Does all the money pledged have to be collected before the projects can be started? The pledges that have been collected so far have been subjected to a 60/40 split with the Archdiocese. Any money pledged from now on will have an 80/20 split.

d. Marketing and Recruitment Committee – Clark Gridley and Lisa Lesjak

- i. The Open House had fewer families in attendance than last year, but more than the year before that. But, more importantly, there was a higher conversion number, the number of students that converted to an enrolled student, this year, than last. A special thanks should be extended to the teachers who graciously greeted families in their classrooms and the wonderfully enthusiastic student tour guides who made very powerful impressions on the prospective families. Thanks also to Mrs. Beckmann for her wonderful presentations that surely left people secure in their choice of St. Robert School.
- ii. Our enrollment for next year looks good. The number of current students that still have not registered for next year has dropped from 53 to 43. We still have seats available in all grades, but especially K4. Currently, the budget for next year is based upon maintaining our enrollment budgeted for this current year, which is 337. Our current enrollment is just beyond that at 339. It is entirely possible that we will not meet this number for next year and adjustments will have to be made as a result.

e. Technology Committee – Matt Hietpas

- i. This mostly teacher member committee's primary goal is to keep information technology running properly. This is going better this year than last. Their guiding force is a document entitled, *21st Century Learners*. This document identifies a skill set that students need before leaving school, including inquiring knowledge, drawing conclusions about that knowledge, sharing that knowledge in a variety of ways and pursuing personal and aesthetic growth as a result of that knowledge.
- ii. Some computer skills will still be taught in a direct manner, but many skills can be integrated into projects. Students need to be visually literate without compromising critical thinking skills.

f. Environment Committee – Dan Davis

- i. The design continues on the library with the State recently approving the project. The asbestos testing has delivered good news. They will be able to “pull the trigger” in May if the money is available to complete this project this summer.
- ii. The accessibility issue is also moving forward with all three parts, an elevator from the Riley Hall entrance that reaches all three floors, a lift from Riley Hall to the basement rooms that currently house the Music room, and a lift from Riley Hall down to the Gym. Two classrooms will have to be moved as a result of the elevator taking up so much space.

g. Budget and Finance Committee – Lauren Beckmann

- i. No updates this month.

6.) Parish Council - no report due to Michelle Frazier’s absence.

7.) New Business

a. School Culture

- i. A lengthy discussion ensued over a variety of issues, such as some of the following thought provoking questions: How do our values mesh with our practices in the realm of consumerism? Are we prepared to be a counterculture to the messages that surround us? Should students get stuff, prizes, awards, etc., just for showing up at events? Does this kind of “stuff” interfere with the development and maintenance of intrinsic motivation? What should kids get for achievement? Recognition? Gifts? What are the issues surrounding the existence of incentives? Should we still have them?
 - ii. It was decided that a value statement should be developed. We will also create a list of events or programs that may need to be reexamined and could possibly be changed.
 - iii. Further discussion will continue next month.
- b. The issue of Spring Elections will be discussed next month, as well.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jane Connell.