

St. Robert School Advisory Board  
Minutes for 10-Feb-2010 meeting

Present:

Lauren Beckmann, Jane Connell, Dan Davis, Michael DeMichele, Matt Hietpas, Karen Hunt, Lisa Lesjak, Laura Maly, Trish Ognar, Bill Schlise

Meeting began with a prayer at 6:40 with several members late due to a First Communion preparation meeting.

Reports:

**Home and School**—Karen

1. A check list for host families will be developed to make sure a variety of key information is related to new families, helping them acclimate to the SRS program and join in our social events.
2. Sally Zale is organizing a “Pack the Mass” schedule with various ad hoc groups of SRS parents. Each group is organizing around a different theme.
3. This years’ Middle School Showcase will be *Honk*. To help cover the salaries of the director (\$2000) and the musical director (\$1500), a \$25 enrichment fee will be charged each participant.
4. Mrs. Dodge proposes to shift the school Talent show from annual to biennial. As up to 80 acts audition, the judging and staging are time-consuming and emotionally taxing. Though it will definitely be missed in off-years by students and parents alike, the board defers to Mrs. Dodge.
5. The magazine drive has grossed \$21,000 this year. The net is not yet known.
6. The Book Fair was judged to be very successful, with \$1200 in sales in a single day.
7. Emerald Auction preparations are coming nicely, with locations for dinner and silent auction reversed this year. A system of hand-held bidding devices should, it is hoped, optimize the bidding action.
8. Dan will represent the SAB at the next H & S monthly meeting.

**Education and Formation**—Bill

1. Lunch program update—
  - a. Equipment that will allow the use of the school’s flatware is being investigated.
  - b. Child–height Refrigerated Food Bar—ordered and due in shortly.

- c. Upright Freezer--will be ordered this summer. Taher's commodities order for 2010-11 school year will reflect its availability—fewer canned, more fresh-frozen fruits and vegetables.
- d. A new cook recently began work—early reports are positive.
- e. Greater detail in the published menu is being sought so that parents know exactly what is being served.

## 2. Art Program Update

- a. Faculty feedback on the committee's proposal to raise minutes to Archdiocese mandates was as follows:
  - i. Mrs. Bailey sees more advantage in adding time to middle school art than to grades 1–5, which already incorporate lots of art integration.
  - ii. If we decide to stay with the 1<sup>st</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> proposal, it was requested that we add 6<sup>th</sup> grade as well. (They could accommodate this by eliminating a study period.)
  - iii. IE period is not valued above the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level, opening up possible time at the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade levels.
  - iv. No one wants to consider the reality of having to cut back on any other programs to accommodate this.
  - v. On a related subject, Mrs. Demet has requested that Spanish be scheduled in three 30-minute blocks at the 5<sup>th</sup> grade level, instead of the two 45-minute periods in place now.
- b. The committee will continue to push for this along the following lines:
  - i. Visual and musical arts are tools for creating meaning that are as basic as language arts.
  - ii. 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 minutes allocations toward the Archdiocese mandates.
  - iii. We will support the faculty Arts Integration Team in steering the visual and musical arts curricula toward goals similar to those of the language arts curriculum. Though this may seem to orient SRS as an “art school,” our position is that this approach, in an age of multi-media communication, orients it toward basic literacy.

## 3. Needs Assessment Update—Lauren presented last month's tabulation/summary of our survey on Assessing Students' Special Needs and reported the following:

- a. Faculty received the results (with no discussion) at the January meeting.
- b. Leadership team has framed out a chronology of follow-up steps which will be presented and discussed on Wednesday.

4. Survey of 2009 Graduate Parents is almost ready to go out on survey Monkey. A question about what grade parents would give to the school in “good people”, after the marketing slogan, will be added to the survey this year.
5. Committee Membership/Succession—the committee is actively seeking and has several good prospects for addition to the committee.
6. The committee’s February minutes are attached.

**Development**—Lisa reporting for Michele

1. The January Alumni Parent reception/potluck was a small, but a high-quality gathering.
2. Need-based Scholarship funds are most urgently needed. Four years ago, about \$32K was available for these; currently only \$24K, which Lauren estimates to be about \$17K short of the need for these funds. The shortfall may have enrollment repercussions. The committee aims to build up the Father Hank Scholarship.
3. The Annual Fund is on pace with last year. Envelopes included in the *Blueprint* are coming in.

**Marketing**—Lisa reporting for Michael

1. Enrollment for next year is currently at 262 students, with “probables.” K-4 is currently at 18, with 2 classes seeming likely. Lisa is working on K-5.
2. Lots of school tours are scheduled.
3. Ideas are being discussed for re-recruiting 5<sup>th</sup> graders for the middle school grades. Reasons offered for leaving at this time do not seem entirely compelling to the Board. The Education and Formation Committee hopes to shed additional light on this through its spring survey of graduate parents.

**Policy**—Trish

Nothing to report. Drafts of both peanut and epi-pen policies are expected next month.

**Technology**—Matt

1. With some major work station purchases badly needed, a cost-benefit comparison of Mac and PC is in the works. The committee visited Lumen Christi to gather information about its technology program and support system, which includes student help. A detailed report of the comparison is expected next month.

2. Problems with managing the Help Desk requests were recently discovered. Bill Brousseau and the Committee are working to iron this out.
3. The possibility of sharing IT support with St. Monica's and/or Holy Family was discussed and may be proposed once we decide what support will be required for our new gear/user situation.

#### **Environment—Dan**

The committee has finalized its Long-Range Facility Plan, which is attached. It includes both 5-year and long-range time horizons. The 13 items currently in the 5-year plan are detailed and prioritized.

#### **Budget and Finance—Tom**

1. Budget--A 5% tuition increase is proposed, based on an anticipated 330 enrollment. Some of the key factors influencing this decision are the rising cost of benefits and the level of Parish support. The at-risk components of the budget are the Annual Fund (\$200K budgeted), the Parish subsidy and, in these unusually difficult financial circumstances, enrollment—three of the four major revenue streams. The budget does not include any monies for IT purchases or support.
2. Tom emphasized that this budget proposal deals with the current situation; it is not a sustainable strategy. Lauren is checking whether, and under what terms endowment monies can be used to make up a shortfall.
3. SRS tuition is comparable to other Catholic schools in the area.
4. The budget is approved as written.
5. Tom proposed forming a special committee, to include at least 2 teachers, to begin a badly-needed philosophical discussion of, and to draft a new salary policy.
6. The Board would also like to understand better the parish finance committee's estimate of the school's relative importance to the parish mission and how this relates to the parish's financial support of the school.

#### **Principal's Report—Lauren**

1. SRS students placed second overall at the St. Dominic Academic Competition, bringing home four individual awards and four French awards—an excellent performance in a match-up with some larger schools.
2. Two SRS students are participating in the Web-based programs of replacement courses for academically advanced students, one in the *Discovery Project*, the other in

WCATY, Wisconsin Center for Academically Talented Youth. Lauren judges this participation as very worthwhile.

3. Milton Creagh's presentations were very well-received, and may serve as the foundation for some follow-up work within our school community. One of the topics spinning off the faculty's discussion of Creagh's ideas is a concern about exposing students working at the Emerald Auction to people using alcohol irresponsibly. The Board questions this judgment.

4. "Pack the Mass" ideas are being brainstormed by both the H&S board and various subgroups of the SAB Marketing committee. Two ideas that have risen to the top are guest musicians and guest homilists.

5. Parish Initiatives:

a. Paulist Missions – a 3-yr. project focused on evangelization that will begin with impromptu Lenten gatherings of small "faith groups" that work to build community and faith, with an eye toward developing a parish-wide action plan for evangelization.

b. Annual Parish themes – ideas around which parishioners may rally

c. Lenten Uganda Book Drive – for the benefit of the St. Jude School in Uganda

6. School Activities/Events

a. President's Day Geography bee

b. Grandparent's Day Art and Science Fair

c. Ongoing with the faculty: -Curriculum mapping  
-Accreditation self-study

### **Other Business**

1. Parent Survey highlights were presented by Lisa. Programs receiving the lowest numeric scores were after-school enrichment and hot lunch. The lowest scores among the faculty's responses to the survey were for consistent enforcement of student conduct, the Olweus program and hot lunch. Opinions were split on the importance of improving arts instruction, with parents rating it higher than the faculty. Lisa is posting a summary of results in *Family Matters*. Copies of the narrative comments are available from Lisa upon request.

2. Tuesday June 8<sup>th</sup> is proposed for the June Discernment meeting date.

3. For next month:

- a. committee action plans
- b. Principal Evaluation
- c. Planning Annual Stakeholder meeting
- d. Accreditation self-study drafts due

Next meeting is 10-March.

Respectfully submitted by Bill Schlise.