

St. Robert School Advisory Board

Regular Meeting – 10/14/09 – 6:30 PM – Room 207

Attendees: Lauren Beckmann, Lisa Lesjak, Michael DeMichele, Matt Hietpas, Bill Schlise, Laura Maly, Father Dennis, Trish Ognar, Michele Weinschrott, Chris Schorse

Excused Absences: Tom Zale, Dan Davis, Jane Connell

1. *Call to Order – 6:30 PM*

2. *Pastor's Report – Fr. Dennis- 6:35 PM*

- a. Parish not doing well – pledges down from last year.
- b. In order to break even need \$118,000 by end of October.
- c. Have shared staff with Holy Family which has saved money but not getting it done.
- d. Have eliminated full time cleaning service in favor of part-time employees in the school.
- e. What ministry's or personnel do we cut? Or do we look to the school and what major things do we do?
- f. There is a finance committee meeting tomorrow night and he requests one member from the SAB be present – 6:45 parish lunch room.

3. *Principal's Report – Lauren - 7:00 PM*

- a. General Overview – many things going on right now
 - i. Budget – Last year's expenses were under by \$51k. But, we were substantially off by tuition revenue. The policy is to not change the budget once the year starts. The new thinking is that we need to keep the revenue number closely related to the actual even after a closed number. Last year revenue budget showed \$913,000 and actual was \$821,000.
 - ii. Right now the parish subsidy number is \$188,000 – it has been a plug number. There is thinking that the subsidy may be better derived by a per-student contribution. Therefore, as enrollment increases, the subsidy would as well.
 - iii. Discussion ensued about the cancellation policy and the refunding of tuition. Current policy is a full refund pro-rated to the time enrolled. Policy committee will review the policy and consider a proposal for next meeting.
 - iv. Teachers are working hard on 4 major initiatives:
 1. Math program – seeing results
 2. Accreditation
 3. Curriculum mapping/Diary mapping
 4. Classroom webpage – Ed-line. Start by posting classroom news and calendar info. Will add content gradually while it is being figured-out.
 - v. Technology acquisition – 2 new smart boards. Looking at a purchase of handheld assessment device that integrates with smart boards.

4. Vision, Mission, and Core Values Statement Committee- Michele Weinschrott - 7:45 PM

- i. Refer to Handout with examples and proposals.
- ii. Reviewed other local schools examples to compare.
- iii. Discussed proposed Mission Statement and Core Values.
- iv. Brevity of proposed mission statement is appreciated.
- v. Faculty and marketing committee will review and provide feedback.

5. Committee Reports – 8:50 PM

a. Budget and Finance (Tom and Lauren) - 8:52 PM

- i. The enrollment projection process for K4 has begun. Projecting 15 siblings, 6 parishioner prospects, plus 10 additional currently unknown prospects = 31 total.

b. Development (Michelle and Lisa) – 8:58 PM

- i. Current Annual Fund Gifts at \$7,000 – approximately where we were last year notwithstanding that we had the fall party already at this time last year.
- ii. 2-4 matching gift sponsors have been solicited.
- iii. Fall letters come out the week of the party – October 30th.
- iv. Parish 100th Anniversary 2012, School 100th Anniversary 2015

c. Education & Formation (Bill and Laura) – 9:05 PM

- i. Minutes of September and October meetings can be found at the end of these minutes.

d. Environment (Dan absent, but filed a report) - 9:25 PM

- i. Scheduled to start elevator car installation this week.
- ii. Lifts are done.
- iii. Both to be inspected together in late October and depends on the availability of the elevator inspector.
- iv. Punch list underway.

e. Marketing (Michael) - 9:40 PM

- i. Existing Projects underway
 1. The Blueprint is close to being published.
 2. Ed-line is almost ready to come online – templates are being created.
 3. A new Coffee label and tag line is underway.
 4. Old Befana – a musical about the epiphany is being scheduled to be performed at the gym in early January. (Jan. 10th) A winter all-community event a la St. Bob's Backlot Cinema movie night.
 5. Open House – January 31
 6. Student section of the Website is coming on-line. We are exploring content.
- ii. On the Horizon
 1. Brochure
 2. St. Robert Brew.
 3. Advertising Analysis. Best bang of for the buck.
 4. Video.

f. Policy (Trish)

- i. Crisis plan.

g. Technology (Matt) – 9:05 PM

- i. Committee is yet to meet.

6. Home and School (Karen Hunt) – Absent – Sally Zale filed a report.

- a. Rummage Sale revenue \$15,391.25 – more may come in and there are some expenses to be deducted.
- b. Portraits in the park had 24 families registered
- c. Wayne Tews' Incredible Tech Crew is considering a new apprentice– Kent Maly.
- d. H & S policy is getting three or more written quotes for proposals over \$500 ILO \$300.
- e. There is a significant decrease in magazine sales to date.

7. Parish Council (Chris Schorse)

- a. Talked about Scrip program as a way to use regular spending to help the parish.
- b. Deacon Carmello is available to assist at St. Robert, already involved at Holy Family
- c. Life teen program started and they had good attendance at Holy Family Sunday afternoon mass and next semester is here....nice to see turnout of 150 teens.

8. New Business –

- a. Hot topics –
 - i. Good reviews for the Media Center. The next step is building the collection.
 - ii. “Ringing of the doorbell/answering the phone” - should the school have office hours and be closed so there is not an all-school open policy whereby there is an expectation that someone will answer the door and be available at any time.
 - iii. The issue was raised that there are perceptions among some parents that St Robert focuses on “high-ability” students and students with a great deal of special needs, but not as much on the needs of moderately struggling students? To be discussed at next meeting.

9. Next meeting – November 11, 2009

Meeting Adjourned – 10:15 PM

Education and Formation Committee
Minutes of 21-September-2009 meeting

Present: Lauren Beckmann, Jane Boland, Sara Coffou, Jane Connell, Margaret DeMichele, Liz Haas, Barbara Henderson, Laura Maly, Bill Schlise, Clara Weir

After a brief tour of the remodeled library-media room, and a round of introductions for the benefit of our newest member, Margaret DeMichele, our meeting began at 6:45 with a prayer.

I. Library Update

A. Circulation – Mrs. Weir and a good cadre of volunteers have all of the desired hours covered. Training the volunteers is ongoing.

B. Curriculum development – Exactly as with *digital technologies*, the archdiocese doesn't consider *library research* a subject, per se.

i. Development of library research skills is to be done as part of studies in the recognized subject areas. The library-media specialist, Vicki Bennett, will coordinate her efforts to teach students research skills with the subject area teachers, evaluate students' achievement in the research aspects of their projects, and send her evaluations to the subject teachers who will incorporate them into their project evaluations.

ii. *Keyboarding* is taught to 2nd and 3rd graders and is considered part of language arts, just as handwriting.

iii. Student access to digital technology – Teachers must (and can) discreetly discover whether this is a problem for students. If there are more students with this problem than can be accommodated by public access computers at the public library, we will find a way to make school computers accessible after-hours.

C. Acquisitions – the need to rebuild the collection is considerable and must be undertaken methodically.

i. Non-fiction – 1) Consultations with the subject teachers about needs for their research projects, 2) a review of resources reasonably available at public libraries, and 3) a Title-Wise analysis will help prioritize needs in our own library.

ii. Fiction – Liz Haas continues very generously to devote part of her summers to reviewing and assembling a list of the best grade-school level fiction. Her list will be the initial proposal for acquisition, subject to review by the literature teachers.

iii. The Usborne Book Fair is scheduled for the end of January. Lists of library needs should be assembled well in advance of this event for consideration by prospective donors of books at the fair. More pressing needs will be published to prospective donors, including H&S, as necessary.

- II. Art program update – At the center of the discussion remains our commitment to *raising the status of the visual arts and integrating them into the curriculum on a co-equal model*. How to do it is now the question. The answers:
- A. This is the goal of one of the faculty leadership teams, composed of the art specialists. We will establish and maintain contact with this team, which meets 3rd Wednesdays at 2:15, to find out their plans and needs, and support their work however possible. Bill will initiate this.
 - B. We will review the block schedules (to be distributed by Lauren) of every grade to see where more time for the study of artistic technique may be borrowed from other subject areas with overages. Since we are viewing the visual arts art as a means for making and communicating meaning that may be employed in students’ exploration of other subject areas, same as language arts, our goals are
 - 1. to find sufficient time to meet the archdiocese mandate for instructional minutes for art as a stand-alone subject; and
 - 2. proposing a reasonable mandate for system-wide collaboration on projects involving art (e.g. one project per year)
- *Editor’s comment: As oral and written English are, by far, our most common, but certainly not our only, currency of signification, the question of where the reasonable balance lies between the visual and language arts will have to be re-visited periodically. We should be giving thought to what kind of data may help settle the question.
- C. Continuing the Art for Youth program which helps students build up their “visual vocabulary.”
 - D. Establishing the school art gallery containing a mixture of student and other work. The room is currently under construction.
 - E. Researching and reporting examples of environmental artists and projects that we would like to imitate. (This is ongoing homework, everyone!)
 - F. A related topic, ideas for the student contribution to the Emerald Auction this year include grade-level collaborations on environmental pieces, to be auctioned as donations to the school, with ‘thank you’ card reproductions for the donors.

III. Codifying the committee’s process of setting and achieving goals

- A. The current list of information we will review annually (at very least) will include:
 - 1. Parent survey responses
 - 2. Grad parent survey responses (Sara will distribute a.s.a.p.)
 - 3. Iowa Test of Basic Skills report (Lauren will distribute next month)
 - 4. Exit interviews
 - 5. Enrollment trends
- B. Ideas for change need not be born of this information. Reviews of scholarly literature and, in some cases, other reliable sources of information may provide sufficient basis for proposing an initiative. The case for any initiative will be made to the SAB.

IV. Topics to be explored in our goal setting meeting of 6-Oct.

- A. Guidance counselor
- B. Culture of Tolerance and Care
- C. Food Issues/ Hot Lunch
- D. Other ideas may be added if there is time. For each of these we will develop a list of, and divide up the work of getting the information we anticipate will help us decide whether the issue deserves further consideration.

V. After-school program update

- A. Staffing needs for the planned three 6-week sessions are met.
- B. First session begins 29-Sep with Mad Science, Kids' Stage.
- C. The 8th grade English teacher may be willing to work on re-establishing a school newspaper.
- D. Toward making participation in chess more palatable for middle schoolers, Margaret will check on the chess club format used by University School.

Next meeting is Tuesday, 6-Oct. Meetings will resume on first Mondays thereafter.

Education and Formation Committee
Minutes of 7-Oct-2009 meeting

Present: Lauren Beckmann, Jane Boland, Cara Coffou, Margaret DeMichele, Liz Haas, Barbara Henderson, Laura Maly, Bill Schlise and Clara Weir

Our thoughts and prayers are with Jane Connell this evening as she recovers from her recent illness.

I. Integrating art across the curriculum in co-equal model

- A. Jane B. provided an excellent draft of the strategic goal and action steps for this proposed initiative. We all will review and suggest revisions to this so that it may be formalized next meeting.
- B. Margaret, Jane B. and Bill reported leads on various student environmental art installations which they hope to be able to present next meeting. We all continue to search for good examples of these.
- C. With the block schedule information now in hand, Barb and Sara will prepare a spreadsheet comparing the mandated minutes with those actually in the SRS schedule for review by all prior to the next meeting. The goal is to meet or exceed instructional minute mandates for art. These mandates currently are not met at any grade level.
Note: Lauren explained that the Intervention/Enrichment blocks in the schedule are devoted to remediation and/or special focus on student needs, at the teacher's discretion. The time is reported to be well-filled.
- D. Editor's note: Items B and C above illustrate, among other things, that work may proceed on a variety of issues related to a perceived problem even as the strategic goal related to this problem is being drafted. We'll continue revising our goals as necessary in light of the information we find during this process.

II. Data Review

- A. After a Q & A with Lauren about the Spring 2009 ITBS test data, we recommend that all of it be published on the school web site, accompanied by narrative conclusions and plans to address problems.
- B. Lauren will circulate the Data Action Plan provided by the ITBS data consultants at or before next meeting. The Data Action Plan will be incorporated into the School Improvement Plan, of which the work of this committee is part. As noted in the previous minutes, review of this data will be part of our annual information gathering/goal setting process.
- C. The response rate to our 2007 Grad Parent Survey circulated in spring of 2008 was a somewhat disappointing 5 of 22. As we hope to present the data that results from this survey directly to teachers, we are determined to achieve a higher rate by:
 - i. circulating it earlier in the year--not later than early March
 - ii. sending reminders to prospective respondents of the importance of this data
 - iii. providing some yet-to-be-determined incentive to fill them out.
- D. In a related discussion, regarding the current Parent Survey, we recommend a

multi-pronged approach to increasing response rate:

- i. send hard copies home before conferences
- ii. offer a second copy at conferences
- iii. include envelopes and install drop boxes at doors for all hard copies
- iv. offer an online option for responding

III. Exploring other perceived problems

- A. Overworked Principal—Lauren will prepare a time study of her roughly 70-hour work weeks between now and our next meeting, in order to help us assess whether some of her efforts might be better allocated to others (e.g. assistant principal, guidance counselor, etc.)
- B. Meeting specialized needs of students—Jane B. will draft a survey for the faculty to see whether they recognize “cracks” in the SRS process of screening and remediation of various student problems including social, emotional, behavioral and academic.
- C. School mealtime/Hot lunch—We’ll open up this topic next meeting. Bill will draft an invitation to other interested parents for Family Matters.

IV. Enrichment—Regarding chess, Margaret provided information about the Wisconsin School Chess Federation.

- A. Membership provides excellent opportunities for non-athletic competition with other schools and socializing among students.
- B. Running this at SRS will require parent involvement comparable to that for sports teams. It was asked whether the Athletic Association might take this operation under their authority, but generally assumed that they wouldn’t. Margaret will, therefore, draft a letter for Family Matters seeking indications of parent interest.

Meeting adjourned at 9:25.

Next meeting is Tuesday, 3-November.