

School Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
January 12, 2011, 6:30 p.m.
Room 207

1. Call to Order and Prayer – Jane Connell

Members in attendance: Laura Maly, Michele Weinschrott, Catherine Mercuri, Michael DeMichele, Lisa Lesjak, Peter Christenson, Allie Pierson, Lauren Beckmann, Fr. Dennis Dirkx, Rob Frediani, Karen Hunt, Trish Ognar and Jane Connell

Members absent: Dan Davis

2. Pastor's Report – Fr. Dennis Dirkx

He is working on the budget in order to present it to the Parish Council at the meeting in April.

Concerning the recent announcement of the archdiocese's bankruptcy filing, as parent leaders, we should remain positive. Wisconsin has strict incorporation laws. According to Michele, we should feel confident that the parish and school assets are safe. But, we shouldn't be surprised if there are attempts made to go after them. A bankruptcy judge has already ruled that the health insurance funds are safe. In addition, the Faith in our Future funds are safe. The most stringent protections were put into place when that trust was set up.

Fr. Dennis distributed a pamphlet about how people can improve their parishes and also a copy of an editorial about bullying and how to care for children.

3. Principal's Report – Lauren Beckmann

Lauren announced that a leveled reading program has been piloted in 2nd and 4th grade classes this year. The school has purchased subscriptions to Reading A to Z and Raz Kids. These programs provide print reading materials at various levels and reading activities. In addition, the school is able to provide reading lists of books in our library on various reading levels. This should help us to implement a guided reading component next year and to encourage more break-out instruction during reading for skill development.

Upcoming events include a birthday celebration for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day next Monday in the morning that includes a Folk Fair sponsored by the 3rd grade classes with dances, art work and food from countries around the world. In the afternoon, there will be a performance from an African dance and drum group.

Catholic Schools Week is coming up which will include the usual activities from past years along with some sort of fundraising/outreach activity that is still in the planning stages. The Ask Us Why campaign will be starting soon, with signs going up next week. The students will be asked to write thank you letters to their parents. Multimedia projects will be conducted and hopefully, displayed during Open House on January 30th. And, there will be an inspirational speaker, a former MUHS graduate, who will address the student body.

Grandparents Day has been moved to Thursday, May 12, 2011. It will be performance oriented, with the possibility of a scene from *Music Man*, the middle school showcase selection this year, along with an art show, classroom visits and a light lunch.

4. Discussion Item – Parent Survey Results

This was the fourth year of the parent survey and the third year of similar questions. The response rate has greatly increased over the last three years:

- '08-'09 had 45 responses
- '09-'10 had 96 responses
- '10-'11 had 122 responses

The SAB discussed the survey responses, noting trends. Most responses were more positive than in past years, but a few stayed the same and/or worsened. We also went through the written comments and noticed some recurring themes. Allie will share some information about the Education and Formation committee in an upcoming issue of Family Matters as a response to some comments in the survey for a need to share information about various initiatives under that committee's direction.

The mass attendance questions were also discussed. Overall, it appeared that people answered honestly, which is appreciated. Some conclusions can be drawn from the comments such as people are looking for a more "family friendly" mass. Also, because St. Robert church is so large, with enough seating for 800 people, a moderate crowd looks small and is spread apart which gives the impression of isolation. To move forward, Lisa will survey the Religious Education families and all parishioners with the same mass attendance questions. This information will be used to guide Fr. Dennis and the Parish Council.

5. Committee Reports

- a. Budget – Catherine Mercuri

A lengthy discussion took place concerning the budget for the school. The school is in a deficit situation because of two reasons: four teachers needed to be on long-term medical leaves this year and more people enrolled in the health insurance plan than expected. If no changes occur, we will start the next school year with a \$20,000 deficit. There are only so many options available to the SAB to resolve this issue: increase tuition, increase registration fees, decrease sibling discounts and/or reduce expenses by eliminating staff and/or programs. The SAB decided to do the following:

- Increase full-time parish member student tuition by 3.5% for next year.
- Increase half-time parish member student tuition by 10% for next year. Although this seems excessive, it is quite costly to have half-time kindergarten programs because the bulk of the classroom material expenses are the same for both full- and half-time kindergarten. For instance, both classes cover the same academic curriculum and need the same workbooks.
- Decrease the parish member sibling discount rate to 10% for the second child, and 20% for the third child, but actually increase the discount to 40% for the fourth child.
- Similar increases and decreases will be instituted for non-parish member students, too.

If these changes are made, this will allow the school to maintain their outstanding existing programs, as well as to accomplish the following:

- Increase the salary for 12 of the 32 teachers that are still below 80% parity of Shorewood public schools at a cost of about \$30,000. The other 20 teachers will go without a salary increase for the third year in a row!
- Add a vital technology support contracted service for about \$15,000.
- Add a much needed half-time academic support position for about \$15,000.
- Provide non-instructional staff with a 3% salary increase (for the first time in three years) at a cost of about \$5,000.

We will be able to publicize the tuition rates at Open House, which is very important. Registration materials will come home tomorrow. Current families have priority for registration for two weeks before registration is opened up to the general public.

b. Marketing and Recruitment – Trish Ognar

The committee met last week. As was mentioned earlier, they will be putting up the Ask Us Why signs next week. They are busy promoting Open House with posters and postcards being distributed to area pre-schools.

The Host Family program will include distributing a free T-shirt once they register. It was also suggested that the Auction planning party be eliminated because of a general feeling that it is not very productive. It might be a better use of funds to plan a party for new parents before the school year begins so they can feel welcomed into the St. Robert community.

c. Development – Lisa Lesjak and Michael DeMichele

The development reports were disseminated via email prior to the meeting. We had a very productive December, with about \$50,000 coming in.

d. Environment

No report was given due to Dan's absence.

e. Education and Formation – Allie Pierson

They are planning to get approval next month from the Parish Council for installing the vertical garden. Allie is planning on sharing information about initiatives her committee is addressing with the parents by writing an article that will be included in an upcoming issue of *Family Matters*. This should help to address some concerns that were raised in the parent survey narratives.

f. Policy – Michele Weinschrott

There are two main policies that she is working on right now, an epi pen policy and the crisis plan. She will communicate this with parents as a response to the results from the parent survey. She also suggested that it may be wise to write a policy that addresses other health issues, too, such as the storage and availability of inhalers.

g. Technology – Peter Christenson

No report was provided because the committee did not meet this past month.

6. Home and School – Karen Hunt

In response to some concerns raised about excessive 8th grade fundraising activities, it was stated that the plan was intentionally front-loaded and they are now finished raising funds.

The Home and School Association is assessing all fundraising activities in order to determine which ones to eliminate, and how to make others more productive and to focus on those. They are trying to find another big fundraiser in order to eliminate some of the less lucrative ones. The raffle, usually held in conjunction with the auction, will be moved to coincide with the Parish Fair in June. They are still working out the details of that arrangement.

7. Parish Council – Rob Frediani

The Parish Council discussed the archdiocese's bankruptcy proceedings at the last meeting. They also worked on how to promote the individual ministries and how to communicate that with the parishioners. Also, Rob suggested that the school should keep the parish in mind when developing ideas for collaboration between the two entities.

8. School Improvement Plan

In February, the SAB will present the School Improvement Plan to the Parish Council. In preparation for that meeting, Laura asked that each committee chairperson review the plan with their respective committees.

9. New Business

A discussion of the lice outbreak took place. It has been contained to students in the third grade and one sibling in fourth grade. Based upon discussions that Lauren has had with the Health Department, our policies are adequate.

The meeting adjourned at 9:22 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jane Connell, School Advisory Board Secretary.