

School Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
January 11, 2012, 6:30 p.m.
Room 207

1. Call to Order and Prayer – Laura Maly and Liz Haas

Members in attendance: Laura Maly, Lisa Lesjak, Lauren Beckmann, Jane Connell, Liz Haas, Trish Ognar, Karen Hunt, Marcia Velde, Catherine Mercuri, Fr. Dennis Dirkx, Michele Weinschrott, and Dan Davis

Members absent: Fr. Kevin McManaman, Peter Christenson, and Nancy Knight

2. Pastor's Report – Fr. Dennis Dirkx

The Stewardship drive is coming to a close. The committee has been aggressive and as a result, more people have made a pledge this year than last year. The total pledge amount is up about \$150,000 over last year.

Catholic schools week is coming up soon.

Fr. Dennis wants Bishop Hying to come to St. Robert and say mass at some point during this semester. Lauren will provide Fr. Dennis with three possible dates. Michele volunteered to help coordinate this, if necessary.

It was verified that the parish has posted an opening for a part-time stewardship person. It would start at 25 hours per week, with the possibility of going full-time in the future. We have received two applicants so far. Michele volunteered to help with this process.

3. Discussion Item - Budget

The majority of the meeting was spent discussing the budget for the upcoming school year.

The school has chosen to use Smart Tuition for managing tuition collection for next year. There are some additional benefits to this vendor:

- a.) The company will manage all receivables, not just tuition.
- b.) They will be able to itemize discounts and reflect those discounts when viewing your account online, for example. The discounts include the parish subsidy or benefits from fundraising.
- c.) Parents will have the ability to pay tuition and other fees online.

Tuition Smart will charge each family \$45 to use this service. Lauren felt this was not a cost that the school should pass on to each family, in essence charging them a fee to pay their bills. Therefore, the school will pay the fee

for each family which totals \$9900, and it will become a line item in the school budget.

Registration fees for the upcoming school year will be staggered. For reference, the registration fee for last year was \$110, but families paid Tuition Management Services \$20-\$40 for the ability to pay their tuition using an installment plan. This year, St. Robert will pay the fee for each family because participation is no longer optional, but mandatory.

Current families will pay the following amounts for each child registered:

| Dates | Registration Fee |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| By February 29 th | \$135 |
| March 1 st - April 30 th | \$150 |
| May 1 st -June 30 th | \$200 |
| July 1 st and beyond | \$250 |

New families will be charged \$250 per student whenever they register. The amount remaining, based upon the chart above, is applied to tuition. Starting July 1st, the entire registration fee is used for registration purposes, and nothing is applied to tuition.

A copy of the budget was distributed to the SAB. The following statements were highlights from the budget:

- a.) Tuition increased 5%.
- b.) Health insurance premiums increased 15%.
- c.) Salaries increased 4% due to small raises for some employees and the addition of a half-time kindergarten teacher.
- d.) Workbooks decreased \$12,000.
- e.) Online subscriptions increased \$3,000.

With these changes, the budget reflected about a \$35,000 deficit. Therefore, some changes would have to be made because you cannot operate from a budget that starts with a deficit.

In regard to health insurance, for the upcoming fiscal year, all employees with single coverage will begin to pay a portion of their health insurance premiums. These changes will affect all employees in the parish, not just school employees. Currently, the cost to the parish of single coverage for health insurance is \$630 per month for each employee.

Two options were proposed that would address this issue. After looking at the numbers, the SAB felt very strongly that employees with single health insurance should be required to pay only 7.5% of their premiums. Many of these employees are our lowest paid employees and having them pay 15%

could prove to be a burden to them. The following table illustrates the savings to the school for both options:

| Premium paid by employee | Employee cost per month | Yearly cost saving to school per employee | Number of single insured employees | Total savings to school for all employees |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 7.5% | \$47.25 | \$567 | 14 | \$7938 |
| 15% | \$94.50 | \$1,134 | 14 | \$15,876 |

Clearly, this change would not eliminate the projected deficit. The topic of tuition came up. Catherine produced a chart comparing the tuition rates for members and non-members for the following parishes: St. Robert, Holy Family, St. Monica, St. Eugene, and Lumen Christi. Our non-parishioner rate was significantly lower than all of the other parishes, at least \$1,000 less than the next closest parish and about \$1500 less than the most expensive parish. It was suggested that we should increase the amount non-parishioners pay for full-time tuition by \$250 per year. There are approximately 50 students that are non-parishioners, so this could generate almost \$13,000.

Another tuition topic was raised. Currently, the majority of families enrolled at St. Robert have two children attending school. There are 67 families in this group, with 63 of those being parishioners. Due to the 5% tuition increase, along with the elimination of the second child discount, these parishioner families will see their tuition increase 10% for next year. It was also calculated that parishioner families with four children will see their tuition increase by 15% next year. In order to be equitable, it was decided that we should be sure that parishioners are not paying a greater percentage increase in tuition than non-parishioners. Therefore, the non-parishioner tuition would increase 9%, for an overall increase of 12%, after the changes to their sibling discounts are calculated.

After all of our comments, it was decided that Lauren would look over the budget and factor in our changes. We will continue the discussion next month. It was felt that the major decisions regarding tuition and registration fees needed to be decided tonight in order for that information to go home with the registration materials tomorrow.

In a related matter, Lisa distributed copies of the covenant that parents sign each year, where they commit to support the school and parish. The SAB reviewed the covenant and approved it as is. Lisa mentioned that a committee is working hard at developing methods for helping families comply with both signing the covenant in a timely manner, and then also following through with their commitment to contribute to the church at an appropriate financial level in order to receive the discounted parishioner rate of tuition.

4. Parent Survey

Due to the lengthy discussion of the budget, the parent survey will be discussed at the meeting next month. In the interim, Michele said she would send an email to everyone with some themes and/or parental concerns that could be addressed during the discussion next month. This will give Lauren an opportunity to obtain accurate information and/or statistics to address those concerns.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

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