

School Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
January 14, 2015 6:30 p.m.
Room 207

1. Call to Order and Prayer

Members in attendance: Lauren Beckmann, Tom Dean, Fr. Dennis Dirx, John Dulmes, Molly Gallagher, Matt Hietpas, Lisa Lesjak, Laura Maly, Kristen Reynolds, Kelly Schmidt, Soley Somma, Kori Staab, Marcia Velde, Mariann Willing and Kathy Wyatt

Members absent: None

Guest attending: Margy Cain

2. Guest Comments

No comments

3. Parish/Pastor Report – Fr. Dennis Dirx

For the 2015-2016 budget we will need to cut \$350,000 from the parish budget. The SAB is working on \$150,000 of it from the school budget while the parish will come up with the other \$200,000. There are three things we are looking into to accomplish this task. Increase revenue, use of interest on investments (not very big) and cutting expenses. A couple of revenue items were mentioned:

- Contributions for 2015 – a number of people have attended the cook out, the State of the School meeting and the two dinners separate parishioners held with Father and Tom Dean in attendance. Contributions have increased.
- The Archdiocese has looked at the unused area of the parish center (the old convent). They are willing to rent space to provide housing for a start up young adult program. The program consists of a mixed group of college graduates volunteering in the Archdiocese in young adult or youth ministry roles. They will be working within the radius of the Milwaukee metro area. We are currently asking for \$20,000 in rent and are waiting for the Archdiocese's response to this amount. The Archdiocese is looking to see if their insurance will cover this amount. A donor donated \$12,000 to help with some needed repairs to the area. The bathroom was repaired and some painting has been done. They are looking for another donor to help with other updates. Since we already heat the space in winter the use should not be of additional cost to us.

This past Sunday a survey involving a Mass change was distributed at each Mass. Between September and May there was an average of 600-750 in attendance for all four Masses. We will be eliminating one Mass which could reduce heating

and musician cost by about \$15,000. So far 260 have responded to the survey, with 44 suggestions to merge the 8:30 and 11:00 Masses into one Mass. The survey will be available again for all four Masses this weekend. The pastoral staff will compile the results and then provide them to the pastoral council for review. They will also take a look at the average attendance on Super Bowl weekend and Good Friday to help with the decision. Hopefully by the summer we will have more specifics and a new schedule.

Catholic Schools Week will kick-off with the 8:30 Mass on Sunday. An Archdiocesan dinner is planned for the Tuesday of that week at Marquette University with Mike Lovell as the main presenter. He is currently a parishioner at Holy Family. Donors are sponsoring two tables on behalf of St. Robert School/Parish.

A new Chair is needed for the St. Robert Fair, this is a critical need. Those who have been approached have responded with “not this year”. Everything is already set up for the fair. The only thing the Chair will need to do is make sure everything is ready. We are looking for a “couple” or two to take on the role or two or three individuals. The position is a two year commitment. Deb Scheid has a list of what needs to be done. As a fund raiser the fair has raised an average of \$40,000 net annually. We spend about \$130,000 on the fair.

4. Principal’s Report – Lauren Beckmann

Lauren recently attended meetings with the faculty and the parish finance council to discuss the \$150,000 budget cuts we need to make.

Lauren updated us on the enrollment projection for the 2015-2016 school year. There are 15 siblings for K-4 and one new enrollment. We are looking at 294 students between the elementary (174 students) and the middle (120 students) school. We know we will lose some and gain some, but it’s an unknown today. At one time we used to be able to more accurately determine our enrollment from year to year, but over time it has become more unclear. It’s very important that parents submit their registration forms early so that we are able to see our enrollment. This aids in our revenue and expenses discussion.

The finance council and faculty may work on developing three separate budgets for next year based on decreased, stable, and increased enrollments.

Revenue enhancements could be derived from tuition income, income operational support from the Home and School Association, target the auction appeal pitch and the School Society Fund. A number of ideas were given for tuition income:

- Come up with creative tuition ideas. What about a higher tuition structure for middle school? We need to be careful that we do not out price ourselves for the North Shore area. What if we increase the tuition

\$250/head or could we go \$500 more (just a thought). We need to submit our budget by March.

- Use four different benchmarks based on income?
- Scholarship funds to fund special education support services. In the last three years we had one need, one family has inquired and one family is coming in. Many Catholic schools do not have this to offer. Could we be the first to do this? For grants we can show that we are being innovative (we stand out). Can the Archdiocese reduce our assessment to help with grant access if we do this?
- Marketing efforts = target the middle school and reach out to parishioners in the religious education program. Father Dennis mentioned looking at Baptisms from four years ago (Lisa has been).

Lauren mentioned writing six short articles for the bulletin on our school ministry's core values, if Father is okay with this. He had no issues with it.

To reduce expenses a number of ideas were mentioned:

- Staff reduction = possibility if we see our enrollment decrease. If we are at 294 students, what level would cause another discussion? Tom is in the process of putting together a tuition model for us to look at.
- Move to a different instructional model, for example multi-age classes like Lake Bluff. How could we market this idea? Some teachers are against it due to short timeline for change in instruction. Would it scare some families away?
- Utility buy co-op in which school spending is managed by a large buying consortium – do not use WE Energies, but a co-op (we could lock in our prices).

5. Parent Survey and Principal Review – Lisa

How can we improve participation in the parent survey? Pitch what we did with last year's survey. What questions does the committee want raised? Do we go back to Survey Monkey to get better reports, but then there is a cost? A survey summary from last year is posted on-line, but not broadly communicated. Lisa would like to have the survey ready by February. Lisa and Soley are working on the survey and will have an executable plan put together for next meeting.

We did a principal review in 2012 and 2013, but not in 2014. The questions on the review are provided by the Archdiocese and given to the facility and staff and the SAB members for completion. The results are then provided to Father Dennis, the Chair of the SAB (this year it would be Matt), and Laura Maly. One or all then traditionally would have a discussion with Lauren.

6. Education and Formation – Kelly

Kelly recently attended a Catholic Education Seminar. She mentioned that there were some interesting points and she will email us an article from one of the speakers, “*What has happened to Catholic Schools*”? Why the change? There was a focus on urban Catholic schools. “Can Catholic schools be saved”? We need to be innovative. If federal money can be used for such things as Pell Grants and the GI Bill and the recipient is allowed to use it to attend Catholic schools, then why can’t we get it? With the closing of Catholic schools in high poverty areas the crime rate increases; choice schools do not affect the crime rate, but Catholic schools do. Having an innovative and dynamic team between the pastor and principal keeps a school going. Do any Catholic Colleges have endowment or grants for Catholic schools?

7. Finance/Budget – Tom

Has there been a review of technology dollars? What is our current software license cost with the shift away from text books? We had to spend money in the past for Smart Boards and the COW. Where are we with hardware today? What are our maintenance expenditures? Soley will take a look at the technology expenditures after the Open House.

Tom will send tuition information to us to review for our next meeting. He will also have a hard copy draft of the budget.

Tom noted that on our expense line items we had an expense reduction of \$53,000. Better than last year.

8. Development - Lisa

Postcards about the Open House are going home tomorrow in the home folders. Parents can give these cards to prospective families. Lisa does have a current list of prospective families. Our new *Life Smart* signs should be ready by this Friday and families should see them in their yards shortly. All are invited to attend the Open House. Lisa feels that there is a bigger, positive buzz this year than last.

The Annual Fund party went very well. So far we have a commitment of over \$130,000.

The 2015 calendar raffle did well. The Home and School Association made the budgetted goal on it.

9. Open House/Marketing – Molly

Our *Life Smart* campaign is in place. Our next step is to create a perception that becomes a reality (like buying a car) – what is our particular brand. We need to take a step back and take a look as an outsider. At the Open House parents, along with students, will give tours.

10. Meeting Dates

The SAB will continue to meet on the second Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m., with the exception of July, when no meeting is held. Therefore, the meeting dates are:

- February 11, 2015 – Marcia will provide the snack and prayer
- March 11, 2015 – Molly will provide the snack and prayer
- April 8, 2015 – Kristen will provide the snack and prayer
- May 13, 2015 – John will provide the snack and prayer
- June 10, 2015 – Tom will provide the snack and prayer

The meeting adjourned at 8:42 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Mariann Willing, School Advisory Board Secretary.