

School Advisory Board Meeting Minutes  
December 10, 2014, 6:30 p.m.  
Room 207

1. Call to Order and Prayer

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

Members absent: John Dulmes and Kori Staab

Guests attending: none

2. Parish/Pastor Report – Fr. Dennis Dirx

Fr. Dennis had no updates at this time.

3. Principal’s Report – Lauren Beckmann

The first “*Coffee with the Principal*” meeting will be scheduled sometime in January. This will be the first of a two part series discussing the Common Core standards and grading.

Compensation Committee Plan - after the holiday season Lauren will take a look at this.

Sock and milk update – so far there have been no issues with the revised sock policy. There have been a few changes, more so in the middle school classes (small logo’s and flats worn with no-shows). Lauren will go ahead and write-up the new policy for the Board to approve at our January meeting. The addition of chocolate milk to the Wednesday lunch menu has been very popular and greatly appreciated by the students. Lauren has received quite a few thank-yous from the students.

Report cards are expected to go out this Friday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, along with log-in information for parents to access their child’s online grade book. Grading is no different from last year, but uploading the common core standards created tech support issues that made it a slow process. This time it was the English/language arts. There are 4 courses (reading, writing, grammar/spelling and speaking) in which we went from about 70 standards to approximately 180+ standards. It was a navigational nightmare prioritizing it to the common core. The elementary school students will see strictly the rubrics score (1-4) while the middle school will receive a rubric score and grade mix at this time.

4. Finance/Budget – Tom Dean

Tom provided an update on the school budget and the parish financial situation. The message remains steady from previous updates. We need to increase our revenues and provide a balanced budget. At the end of our fiscal year (June 30<sup>th</sup>) we will be reporting a loss. The archdiocese is aware of this and will leave us alone for now. However, if we are unable to provide a balanced budget by our next fiscal year-end reporting in 2016 the archdiocese will get involved and we will lose our autonomy. Not every Catholic school can make their own financial choices. We have been given the privilege to do so and we need to come up with solutions to keep this. Matt interjected that we need to come up with ideas and an execution plan. Some ideas we tossed around were: how do we increase school enrollment (at 8:30 Mass there are quite a few young couples; there are 120 kids currently in our religious ed. at our parish; increase marketing; etc); what about changing our current tuition structure; how do we make sure we retain our current students; tracking not only why parents made the choice to attend or not attend our school, but why families leave. We will continue to discuss these ideas.

5. Marketing – Molly Gallagher

Molly provided us with a number of updates:

Currently there is a push for fundraising as we near the end of the year. The Annual Fund party is being moved to January 9<sup>th</sup> and will be held at Molly's home.

The yard signs that we always see in January leading up to Catholic Schools Week have been updated to reflect the Life Smart campaign. The top half will have a green background with *St Robert School* in white letters. The bottom half will have a white background with *Life Smart* in green letters. There will be a black border around the text to help it stand out on the sign. Signs will be ready to blanket the lawns in Shorewood and the East side in early January in time for the Open House on January 25<sup>th</sup>.

As part of the promotion for the Open House and because they needed to be updated, we have new photography for a new campaign for posters and print. Many thanks to Patrick Manning for his time and skill with the photography, as well as, Karen Parr and Amy Hietpas for their artistic direction and organization of the shoot. The posters and cards created from this will incorporate elements of the Life Smart campaign and highlight all the “extras” at St. Robert. They are fresh, current and creative.

In an effort to try and target when and why families leave St. Robert, we are going to take a look at the statistics Lisa has kept on this. A group lead by Carl Cahill will be heading this initiative. We are hoping that being aware of how, why and

when this happens can help us plan to anticipate and perhaps change certain trends.

We have been discussing the fact that we put a great deal of marketing effort into attracting young, kindergarten age families, but we need to focus some efforts on the middle school market. This tends to be another time that families switch schools.

Finally, we continue to focus on better communication and more “touches” with incoming families. In conjunction with H&S, we are trying to reinstitute host families. We have instituted a program that has a current parent follow up with anyone who makes an inquiry into St. Robert.

Lisa’s new email system has been well received and is more efficient. We welcome thoughts, suggestions and direction. Happy parents and students are the best marketers!

6. Development – Marcia Velde

Our goal this year for the Annual Fund is \$200,000. We generally see quite a few donors in December and June with others trickling in during the rest of the year. The Home and School Association has been approached with a request that all members make a donation to the Annual Fund. It was mentioned during our meeting that all members of the SAB make a donation as well.

St. Robert will be celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2015. The development committee is working on ideas to celebrate our Centennial. One task is figuring out a way to run a major gift campaign. The goal would be \$400,000-500,000. Who are our biggest donors? We have regular donors for the Annual Fund so how could we approach them to donate to both? Some people are more willing to give a donation if it is earmarked towards something specific, for example, saving a program. Campaign gifts are typically from alumni and parents of alumni, not current parents.

7. 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:

- January 14, 2015 – Laura will provide the snack and prayer
- 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 8:52 pm.

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