

School Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
February 11, 2014, 6:30 p.m.
Room 207

1. Call to Order and Prayer

Members in attendance: Lauren Beckmann, Tom Dean, Molly Gallagher, Matt Hietpas, Lisa Lesjak, Laura Maly, Kristen Reynolds, Kelly Schmidt, Kori Staab, Marcia Velde, Mariann Willing and Kathy Wyatt

Members absent: John Dulmes, Fr. Dennis Dirx and Soley Somma

Guest attending: Margy Cain

2. Guest Comments

3. Parish/Pastor Report – Kathy Wyatt for Fr. Dennis

The Milwaukee Archdiocese is in the process of redistricting. Milwaukee and Ozaukee County will be one group.

There has not been much progress on the church mission.

4. Principal's Report – Lauren Beckmann

Lauren piggybacked her report off of Tom's tuition discussion. Lauren has met with the faculty and discussed the challenges and benefits of changing to either a multi-age or specialist structure. The concern with a multi-age structure is how to manage standards of two grades. Not really sure how to do this. The negative of a specialist structure: inappropriate for your kids; cross integration concerns. Other ideas from the faculty: retooling for the teachers, planning and training – what are the concerns? Some other possible ideas: bigger classes with an aide; fresh look at school choice as an option (last discussion was in April of 2011) (the '15-'16 school year is when we would need to plan for a '16-'17 start, if we go this route); add a K-3 program; hold a benefit concert to bring funds into the school; increase strings fees.

Matt had a couple of other ideas. One idea, what if we became a smaller size school? Drop down to one grade classes, cap K-4 at 20 or 25 and have a wait list for additional. We would have to decrease our teaching staff, but then what would we do with the additional work that would be added to an already overworked staff? If we were to cap a grade this would not sit well with parents. Second idea, what would happen if we went choice? Who would leave? Schools with choice need translators for school meetings. There is quite a bit of paperwork involved and compliance to follow. We currently maintain autonomy without choice; we would not have control with choice. Lauren already had the

discussion with a school that is choice. In three years they've changed. They are now at 90% choice students and looking to become 100%.

Other Catholic schools are seeing a drop in enrollment. Lumen Christi will drop below 300 for next school year.

We have ideas. Think about it and talk with friends.

5. Finance/Budget Tuition Plan – Tom

In the past we have always had a blanket increase in tuition. With our current enrollment and future projected enrollments we have to be realistic with our tuition costs. The Education and Formation committee came up with two tuition models, one of which provides a different tier pricing for the elementary and middle school. Our middle school is recognized as being good, hence the idea of a different tier tuition. The two models provided were:

1. Traditional Tuition Model = a percentage parishioner increase from 2015 with an additional increase on the middle school.
2. *New* Parishioner/Non-Parishioner Tuition Model = four tier model (spread out over grades):
 - Kindergarten
 - 1st - 2nd grade
 - 3rd – 5th grade
 - Middle school
 - Leave discount for 3rd child

Why a tier model? As kids get older the cost of an education goes up. At the kindergarten level the cost of an education is less than the middle school, there are fewer kids and the goal starting at the K4 level is to keep families happy (many families come from daycare costs and paying tuition is cheaper than daycare). In 1st and 2nd grade there are fewer kids than 3rd grade thru middle school. Starting in 3rd grade there is an increase in technology use and more kids. Lastly, in middle school there is an increase in cost due to specialized teachers.

The board came up with another Parishioner/Non-Parishioner tier model idea and took a look at a couple of different tuition rates for each tier:

- K4 – 2nd grade
- 3rd – 5th grade
- Middle school
- Leave discount for 3rd child

As of February 6, 2015 the current registered families for the 2015-2016 school year is 223. This number is made up of 214 current families plus 9 new families. There are 80 current families who have not yet registered and 9 families who are probable/incomplete file. There are 37, 8th grade graduates in the current school year. As we look at our current enrollment numbers for next school year we need to call the families who toured the school, but decided to go elsewhere and find out why. It was pointed out that 50% of St. Robert families come from outside the 53211 zip code.

We are proposing the 3 tier tuition model. During our discussion Tom input a couple of numbers in his formulas on his laptop. If we get to 300 students using this model we would get to a positive \$55,000. If we stay with our current enrollment using this model we would get a (\$3,000). We need to hold a meeting to explain this tuition model to the parents and reiterate the tax credit that is now available to families and how it aids tuition cost. If families are unable to meet the tuition cost there are scholarship funds available. One family at the open house has applied for aid already. To increase enrollment we need to advertise with other parishes. On our marquee we advertise that families can stop in on certain days and times for a tour – no appointment necessary. Lisa is going to contact the K4 and K5 parents who have not registered yet.

If we increase tuition we will still have a balance from the \$150,000 we need to come up with in revenue increases or expense cuts.

6. Parent Survey - Lisa

Lisa and Soley met yesterday to discuss the Parent Survey. During the meeting we discussed the current format and content of the survey. How can we maximize our results and improve our response rate? Survey Monkey appears to be the best program to use for this year's survey. It will create automatic reports for us that should enable us to make better sense of the feedback and results year-to-year. Given that Survey Monkey charges a monthly usage fee of \$25.00 Lisa will not launch the program until the survey is absolutely ready to load and launch. The current survey allows parents to indicate the grade of the child and the questions are divided up into Kindergarten; 1st-5th grade; and Middle School. Should we sub-divide the grades further? In the past families with multi-grade level students have had to complete two surveys giving us blended results. Would parents be open to multi-questionnaires? Currently we are not able to tie the answers to grade specific, but we could look into the capability and at what additional cost. What about using the "comment boxes"? It would be tricky to tie these into grade specific. The data does not reflect if the same person is making the comments. We could use the time stamp to gauge this, but it would not be time efficient. Lisa will discuss this further with Soley. Should we include content to help parents answer questions (i.e. include mission statement)? Soley would like to share the survey with a small group of parents (outside of the SAB) to 'test' the questions. The goal would be to ensure that the parents understand

the questions and have the necessary information to answer them. What questions should we change, remove or add? What topics from previous questionnaires have been acted upon as a result of the survey feedback? What changes do we need to make to the technology questions? Should we add a customer satisfaction question to help gauge where parents are at, i.e. would they recommend St Robert to their friends and neighbors?

Question idea for the survey: What are the most important things about the school and why come here? How do we have parents answer this question: Identify things or broad topics and have them type in their top 5? Maybe use what was discussed in marketing focus groups conducted last year? Give some items and have the parents rank them on a scale of 1-10? We went around the room and each member of the board/guest provided their reason(s) for attending St. Robert:

- Value added education; sense of community; world language; quality education/teachers; close knit/supportive community; quality of programs/diverse; discipline and how students act at school are reflective of the expectations at home; can pray and learn about God; small class size (should we provide an additional pop-up question to this (how is it defined? Does it change by grade?)); strings program; specialist teaching performing arts and languages; core curriculum/progressive; have art/music; Catholic education; well rounded; educational discipline; two sections of each grade level; inter-generational support to school

These reasons would be narrowed down for use on the questionnaire.

We need to be careful what we ask on the questionnaire. What are we realistically able to take care of? Let Lisa know what questions your committees would like to see covered in the questionnaire. Lauren has sent an email to the teachers asking for any questions they would like to see covered.

Lisa would ideally like to see the survey completed by the parents and results ready by our April meeting. If possible Lisa would like to send the survey out during the last week of February and give the parents two to three weeks to complete it (over two weekends). Lisa will meet with Soley for more ideas.

The Principal Evaluation Survey is still available in Survey Monkey and ready to launch. Matt will send an email to the teachers and the SAB when Lisa let's Matt know she is ready to launch Survey Monkey.

Good news shared by Lisa: the Annual Fund is currently ahead from last year due to an increase in donations. We are where we were in March of last year.

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:

- March 11, 2015 – Molly will provide the snack and prayer
- April 15, 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 9:12 pm.

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

*Due to the timing of spring break, the SAB and H&S meetings will be moved to the third and fourth Wednesday evenings in April.