

School Advisory Board Meeting Minutes  
February 8, 2012, 6:30 p.m.  
Room 207

1. Call to Order and Prayer – Laura Maly and Michele Weinschrott

Members in attendance: Laura Maly, Lisa Lesjak, Lauren Beckmann, Jane Connell, Liz Haas, Trish Ognar, Karen Hunt, Catherine Mercuri, Fr. Dennis Dirx, Michele Weinschrott, Dan Davis, Fr. Kevin McManaman, and Peter Christenson

Members absent: Nancy Knight and Marcia Velde

Guest: Wendy Wallace

2. Pastor's Report – Fr. Dennis Dirx

Elizabeth Cleveland has resigned from her position at St. Robert to take a full-time job at Holy Family effective February 10<sup>th</sup>. But, Elizabeth has agreed to continue her duties until a replacement can be hired. Her job has been posted and they are waiting for applicants. They feel they may need to make some adjustments to the job description in order to clarify the stewardship duties.

They will be working on the budget this week.

3. Emerald Auction – Wendy Wallace

For the past two years, a special appeal has been made to those people attending the Auction to contribute to a scholarship fund. Typically, the money was needed to fill immediate scholarship needs. They generated \$22,000-\$25,000 each year.

The scholarship fund has a great need again this year, but we may want to consider raising money for another purpose. Some other ideas that were suggested included:

- bonuses for teachers,
- replacing the lights in the school,
- replacing the fire alarm system,
- purchasing new technology (ipads and a cart),
- installing a key card entry system,
- adding a librarian, and
- adding a guidance counselor.

Another admirable suggestion was to raise money to increase our endowment fund. But, it was agreed that people don't usually understand what that means and aren't as like to contribute to something so intangible.

Nevertheless, Mrs. Beckmann has knowledge of three families with a total of six children enrolled at St. Robert that are in need of financial assistance. Currently, there is about \$4,000 left in the scholarship account. She estimates that they will need about \$12,000 more before the school year is over. We have used about \$24,000 so far this year.

Just to clarify the process, families needing financial assistance apply to an outside agency. That agency determines the level of financial assistance for which they are eligible. Mrs. Beckmann then awards the families an amount of money somewhere between the minimum, which is zero, and the maximum recommended amount. No family is ever awarded the maximum amount, or the total cost of tuition for that matter. Every family must contribute something toward tuition. Currently, there are 17 families with 27 children enrolled at St. Robert that receive some financial assistance.

The two main ideas for the special appeal at the Auction were for scholarship money and teacher bonuses. We agreed that the scholarship money is important because it actually comes back to the school as part of our operating budget. The teacher bonuses are important because we are still so far behind the goal of getting most of our teachers to the 80% parity with the current Shorewood Public School pay scale for their teachers, while those at or above that parity level haven't had a raise in years. Although, a comment was made that we may be setting ourselves up for the expectation from teachers that this will happen again.

After much discussion, the SAB recommended that the special appeal at the Auction go for teacher bonuses. The scholarship fund will raise money in a "sign-up party" format. Wendy said that Home & School will work out the details of how this would transpire, such as allowing people to contribute any amount, not a set amount as with other sign-up parties, and allowing people to continue to contribute throughout the evening.

Michele volunteered to make the request at the Auction for the special appeal. Wendy said she would also inquire at Home & School to see if there is someone else that can fulfill that role. The deadline for submitting information to be included in the catalog is 10 days away.

#### 4. Endowment Board Proposal – Lauren Beckmann

This board met for the first time last Friday, with Fr. Dennis, Lauren, the two trustees, Parish Council president and Lisa in attendance. They discussed taking some of the principle out of the fund in order to make some capital

improvements. The fire alarm system in the school needs to be replaced by May 2013, and the cost will be \$87,000. We have asked for a one-year extension, but the longer you wait, the higher the cost. The other improvement is to replace all of the light fixtures in the school, which will cost \$44,000. The bulbs will be unavailable soon. We can choose to replace the fixtures and begin to save money with energy costs, or we can purchase some extra bulbs to try to postpone the project for another year or more. As with the fire alarm, the longer you wait to complete this project, the higher the cost.

The Endowment Board decided to withdraw \$67,000 from the fund which is worth about \$1,200,000 to put toward the fire alarm replacement project. The Parish and the school will need to raise the remaining \$20,000 and split the cost between the two parties. It was also decided that the Parish and the school should also split the cost of replacing the light fixtures. Therefore, the school will need to find \$32,000 to pay for these two projects.

The school has \$107,000 in a Restricted Gifts Fund. Pending Parish approval, the SAB recommended using \$11,000 to cover the deficit for this year. And, it recommended using \$10,000 to pay the school's portion of the fire alarm replacement project. The SAB recommended delaying withdrawing the \$22,000 for the light fixtures until we have a clearer picture of our financial situation for the coming school year. In early May, we should know about any insurance premium increases. In addition, the fiscal year ends June 30. Hopefully, we will be able to notify the company in April or May at the latest, so they can plan to do the work this summer. It is the same company that is going to install the fire alarm system.

5. Parent Survey

Survey participation has gone up each year that we have conducted the survey. The percentage of parents that wrote comments has also increased, going from 24% up to 42%.

Michelle compiled a list of common concerns from the survey responses and sent it the SAB members via email prior to the meeting. It was decided that we would take this list and determine who would be responsible for addressing each concern.

Number	Concern	Responsible Party
1	Parent-Teacher Conferences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scheduled prior to report cards and therefore ineffective</li> <li>• Middle school conferences were too short</li> </ul>	Teacher Calendar Committee  Faculty

2	Disruptive students taking up too much of the teachers' time	School Advisory Board
3	Tolerating a few substandard teachers after numerous complaints from parents	Mrs. Beckmann – short term and Teacher Compensation Committee – long term
4	Downplaying the role of the athletic program	Athletic Board should provide suggestions
5	School is too rigid	Education and Formation Committee needs to communicate PBIS
6	Parents are not welcoming to minority students/families	Home and School Association – maybe we need a grade level ambassador that would extend the Host family duties
7	Lack of programming for gifted students and placement of students into special programs	Education and Formation Committee – focus on communication about our individualized curriculum and our enrichment programs
8	Too much attention spent on special needs students	School Advisory Board
9	Inadequate playground supervision	Ad hoc Policy Committee with teacher input to obtain consistent assistance
10	Math Program	Already addressed at a presentation with parents - Coffee with the Principal
11	School has too many new initiatives for teachers	Education and Formation Committee
12	Programming expansions coming at the expense of increasing teachers' salaries	Budget and Marketing and Recruitment Committees need to increase the awareness and value of the programs and the real reason for the increase in costs, which is health insurance premium increases
13	St. Robert gives less homework than other schools	Falsehood and not actionable
14	Middle school parents are uninformed	Mrs. Beckmann will conduct a meeting with current 5 <sup>th</sup> grade parents

An extremely lengthy discussion ensued about the two issues delegated to the School Advisory Board. The behavior issues are the major concern and we may not have adequate resources to deal with all of them. It was mentioned again that a time study should be done for Lauren so we can best decide how to assist her with her responsibilities. This should help us determine if we need to add an additional staff member, such as a school psychologist, guidance counselor, assistant principal, dean of students, etc.

6. Stewardship Covenant

The SAB has been informed that a significant number of school families, who are getting the parishioner discount for tuition, have not returned their stewardship pledge forms to the Parish by the January 1<sup>st</sup> deadline. These families agreed to fulfill this obligation when they signed their Covenant upon enrolling their children in St. Robert School. The Parish Council wants the SAB to make a recommendation as to how it should proceed with this issue by their meeting on February 21<sup>st</sup>. The SAB recommended that we find the people who are abusing the system and inform them that they are no longer eligible for the Parish tuition discount until they have fulfilled a number of steps, such as submitting the stewardship pledge and making an attempt to honor that pledge.

A question was raised about religious education families. Are they going to be expected to submit a stewardship pledge and honor that pledge, too, or are only school families being targeted?

7. Topics Postponed

Due to the length of the meeting to this point, it was decided that we would postpone the discussion of the budget and tuition until next month. As important as the issues are, it was felt that we would wait and discuss those issues at our next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

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