

School Advisory Board Meeting Minutes  
September 11, 2013, 6:50 p.m.  
Room 207

1. Call to Order and Prayer

Members in attendance: Lisa Lesjak, Lauren Beckmann, Jane Connell, Laura Maly, Matt Hietpas, Marcia Velde, Kristen Reynolds, Fr. Dennis Dirkx, Molly Gallagher, Fr. Kevin McManaman, John Dulmes, Kelly Schmidt and Marion Gottschalk

Members absent: Tim Henkhaus

2. Guest Comments

Matt said he would provide those comments later on during the meeting on behalf of another parent.

3. Parish/Pastor Report – Fr. Dennis

St. Robert and Holy Family Parishes have created one joint Pastoral Council that will oversee Church ministries and how they are implemented. The Council had its first meeting in August. It will take some time to transition between the two former Parish Councils to the new joint Pastoral Council. The Parish Councils used to oversee issues such as finance and facilities, but not any longer. Now, the focus will be on pastoral issues. The first task of the Pastoral Council will be to create a Pastoral vision for both parishes. The Council will facilitate the process, but the parishioners from each parish need to take ownership. The second task of the Pastoral Council is to create five commissions that will deal with the following areas: school, Christian formation, prayer and worship, human concerns, and stewardship. These commissions will be separate for each Parish in the beginning, but will be combined in the future. The Christian formation is already combined. Prayer and worship at St. Robert does not have a chair yet, so it cannot be combined. Both parishes have excellent stewardship committees. The human concerns will be the last commission that is combined because St. Robert does not even have a committee dealing with this yet. The Pastoral Council will iron out any problems as time goes on. Fr. Dennis also mentioned that if you get asked to join a commission, please, accept the offer so St. Robert has a voice. Lauren asked if we should consider changing the name of the School Advisory Board to the School Commission, but Fr. Dennis said it was not necessary at this time.

On November 3, 2013, 1:00-4:00 p.m., there will be a meeting with the leadership of both parishes in order to prepare for the Diocesan Synod on June 8, 2014, which will decide the pastoral goals for the Archdiocese for the next 5-7 years. It is important for SAB voices to be represented. They will be taking a look at the

Archbishop's Pastoral Letter, "Who do you say that I am?" which is available on the school's website. This meeting will have a retreat setting, with people working in small groups. Afterward, the findings will be summarized and further refined at the Synod level.

Fr. Dennis assured the SAB that there are absolutely no plans to merge the two parishes. We are sharing ideas and resources, not merging.

#### 4. Introduction of new members and review of SAB functions and duties

All the members of the SAB introduced themselves and identified their roles on the board.

Lauren disseminated information about school advisory boards to the members. She stated that we have had many years of success with our current model. She went on to explain the handout entitled, *Overview of Purpose, Structure, and Responsibilities*. Participation from the Pastor is crucial. The right people should be selected and appointed to serve on the SAB. New models of governance are needed. One size does not fit all. And, leadership is critical to the success of the school. The SAB must strategize, have important work to address, and have well-developed sub-committees. The SAB does not manage the school, nor does it decide curricular issues. SAB members need to be visionary, intentionally selected with specific skills, and committed to the school's mission. The SAB should move toward having 75% of its membership coming from outside of the school organization. The board should focus on the following items: mission, planning, policy, finance, advancement, facilities, and self-evaluation, even at the end of each meeting. Cultivating effective sub-committees is crucial. Of the seven committees, finance, marketing, and development should be the main focus, according to recommendations from the Archdiocese. The meetings should be effective and results-oriented. The board has influence, not power.

Lauren also distributed an article entitled, *National Standards and Benchmark for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*. She reviewed Benchmark 5, Governance and Leadership. Lauren asked the SAB members to read the document on their own time. She also shared another handout, entitled, *Basic Functions of a Board*, and then distributed the *St. Robert School Advisory Board By-Laws*.

#### 5. Overview of SAB meetings

Matt said he will try to keep the meetings moving along and finished in two hours. Items that will be discussed need to be on the agenda in advance. New ideas will be put on the "Tot Lot" and placed on the agenda of a future meeting. Attendance at the SAB meetings is important. The Chairs will report at the SAB meeting. They will share what their committees are working on and discuss items as necessary. This should take about 2-3 minutes per Chair. The Chairs need to

inform Matt in advance if something needs to be on the agenda. When a Chair is absent, they should try to find someone from their committee to attend the meeting. Lauren's report is vital and there should be enough time for her to present it. If SAB member have questions, they should wait until she is finished to ask their questions.

Matt mentioned some concerns given to him by a parent. The first concern was a request to have the uniform policy revisited. Lauren said she normally will not change a policy after just one year because change is difficult and you expect some resistance at first. But, by the end of the second year, she said we would make any necessary revisions. This will go to the "Tot Lot". The second concern dealt with paying for field trips all at once at the beginning of the school year. This parent wanted to pay as you go throughout the year. She also objected to the averaging of all field trips across the entire student body. This issue will also go to the "Tot Lot".

6. 2013-14 Calendar

The Stakeholders Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 17, 2013, with refreshments served at 6:30 p.m., and the meeting scheduled to start at 7:00 p.m. Home and School will also be asked to make a report to the parents. Last year, only 22% of students and only 18% of families were represented by a parent at the meeting. The classroom with the highest percentage of parental attendance will receive an out-of-uniform pass. Molly said she would publish something in Family Matters about the meeting. She also suggested some additional ways to communicate the importance of this meeting with other parents. One suggestion was to have the classroom ambassadors send an email to all of the parents in their class. Also, for something this important, a hard copy advertising the meeting should be sent home. We need to decide on a focus for the meeting. Matt will email some ideas for topics. Lauren suggested curricular ideas or safety issues.

7. School Improvement Plan

Lauren distributed copies of the School Improvement Plan. The SAB members were divided into three groups and each group reviewed a few goals. Kelley, Marion and Jane worked on Improvement of Student Learning. Kristen, John and Laura worked on Climate and Culture. Marcia, Molly and Matt worked on Sustainability. Lauren and Lisa assisted groups as questions arose. We were asked to look for data sources and make sure they were objectively measurable. Future committee work should be tied to what is found in the School Improvement Plan. The chairs will take the forms to their next committee meetings for further review. At our next SAB meeting in October, the chairs should submit their changes.

8. Assign prayers and snack for the year

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. It is still undecided if there will be a meeting in December. Therefore, the remaining meeting dates are:

- October 9, 2013 – Marcia will provide snacks and prayer
- November 13, 2013 – Marion will provide snacks and prayer
- December
- January 8, 2014 – Kelley will provide snacks and prayer
- February 12, 2014 – John will provide snacks and prayer
- March 12, 2014 – Kristen will provide snacks and prayer
- April 9, 2014 – Molly will provide snacks and prayer
- May 14, 2014 – Laura will provide snacks and prayer
- June 11, 2014

9. Round Table

SAB members should identify ideas for the agenda for the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:31 pm.

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