

Saint Thomas the Apostle Board of Education Minutes from the Eighth Regular Meeting of the Board, Wednesday, April 19, 2017

The meeting began at 6 p.m. and concluded at approximately: 8:05 p.m.

Board Packets submitted to members on: April 13, 2017

E-mails to members: April 17, 2018: that the Budget and Agenda are forthcoming,
April 18, 2017: with Budget and Agenda

HOMEWORK/TO DO LIST: Think of strategies to address the 5 rubrics identified by the Board as areas for growth to be incorporated into the Strategic Plan. See details in the agenda below.

CALENDAR ITEMS:

School Events: State of the School Meeting on April 29th at 8 a.m., First Communion on both April 23rd and 30th, Kindergarten Visitation on May 3rd, and Rummage Sale on May 6th

Next Board Meeting: Thursday, May 11, 2017 from 6- 7 p.m.

Next Committee Meeting(s): The next Strategic Planning meeting will be held on Saturday, April 29, 2017 from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. in the church basement.

Meeting Agenda

I. **Opening Prayer-** Fr. Jim Chelich

II. **Fr. Jim's Report-** Fr. Jim Chelich

a. **Concerns About Institutional Financial Health:** Fr. Jim projects that the parish could face up to a \$60k shortfall this year. His projections are based upon: the increased Catholic Service Appeal (CSA) assessment of \$190K vs \$170K, various new cost and fees apportioned from the Diocese among the parishes/schools (like advertising/ participation in the Bishop's school enrollment initiative, Catholic United teams, etc.), concerns over whether STA will have to cover teaching positions previously funded thru GRPS Shared Time, projected capital expenses of roofing and re-paving, and decreased offertory giving. Although "the ship won't fold", Fr. Jim is considering "drastic cuts" to programming, particularly youth ministry, but is concerned because in order to have a vibrant parish, the church needs to provide youth ministry/options for children/religious education, excellent music, and look clean/orderly/in good repair. In the fall, Fr. Jim would like to form a committee that will go out and talk to parishioners about the importance of offertory giving as part of a program of health for both the parish and the school. If each of the 750-800 parish families were to give \$10 a month more, the parish could make over \$70,000 more a year. Fr. Jim wants people to ask themselves, "Can I increase my support of an institution I love to help save it?" and to also consider growing with the church- i.e. as one's income grows, one's donations to the offertory/ church grow in a corresponding manner.

b. **Prospective Plans for a Limited Capital Campaign:** Fr. Jim announced that in the fall, the Parish Finance Council wants to propose a limited capital campaign to raise money to repair the back drive and the roofs of the STA buildings. The school will benefit from these repairs and should support the campaign. Fr. Jim also referenced the need to plan for \$5K - \$15K a year in technology spending on behalf of the school as part of a capital fund drive. However, it was unclear if the money for school technology expenses was to be part of the limited capital campaign, part of a different capital

fund drive, or to come from budgeted moneys from the parish “fund balance” that appears to be funded in part through capital campaigns.

c. Discussion of the “Fund Balance”: Fr. Jim stated that the decisions of when make capital improvements and to hold a capital campaign is in part based upon the “Fund Balance.” The parish has been trying to build up savings, but is facing offertory giving shortages and projects increased expenses. Any income over a prudent amount is traditionally placed into the capital improvement fund.

d. Catholic United proposal/ Sports- Fr. Jim indicated that he will leave it to the Board (and Boosters?) to determine whether the cost of playing sports needs to be passed on to families, despite the tradition of not having done so in the past, as he has no strong philosophical views on the subject.

III. **Visitor Communications-**

a. None reported.

IV. **Approval of Consent Agenda Items-** John Schuring

a. The minutes from the March 9, 2017 meeting were motioned, seconded, and approved.

V. **Principal’s Report-** Suzi Furtwangler

a. Enrollment- Committed enrollment is at 346 students, with perhaps 6-7 more students yet to enroll. “Excellent” enrollment would be in the 350s. The 3rd grade is full and enrollment for 3rd grade will be closed. With 42 enrolled 1st graders, the first grade may also close its enrollment soon. Enrollment for other grades remains open.

b. Classroom configurations and hiring for 2017-2018 school year- Two teaching positions for the 2017-2018 year have been posted locally and on other regional, university-affiliated job boards. The teacher assignments and classroom configurations are being worked out and will be announced shortly.

c. Update on new curriculum purchase/implementation- The new writing curriculum (Lucy Caulkins) and the Next Generation science kits have been selected by the faculty and are being ordered.

d. Budget- Parish Finance Council indicated caution over the proposed 3% percent wage increase in the school budget as it would affect parish salaries too. It recommends continuing wage raises at only 2%, the rate used for the 2016-2017 year.

e. Diocesan Feasibility Study- The study process will be starting soon. Suzi shared a letter from the Diocese announcing that Meilter of Milwaukee will lead the feasibility study. Per the letter, “The study will include an analysis of community demographics, parish and school data, as well as a market research survey in the proposed school area.” The proposed schedule offers data research and analysis to occur in May and June with the goal of creating a successful market survey over the summer. The created survey will be issued in August and September to ensure families are at home able to provide responses. A final report will come after completion of market research.

VI. **Committee Reports:**

a. Outreach & Development Committee- Betsy Edgerton

A written report, delineated by grade, was submitted detailing projected enrollment of 346 students. The report also indicated if a grade had new families enrolled. Disenrollment figures and “not yet enrolled” projections were also included. Additionally, the report provided a website analytics pages for the school’s website and Facebook page.

b. Curriculum Committee- Jenni Little

The curriculum committee would like the school to make a commitment to having textbooks for every child due to the age of some of the texts in use. Discussion was held

on whether students sharing books was a perception or reality and on efforts already in place to ensure sufficient texts. The committee is continuing its efforts to create a Lego Robotics club. The curriculum committee is also continuing its efforts to establish regular cycles for curriculum and textbook review.

VII. **Board Deliberations and Committee Action Items**

a. Board Terms- John Schuring

The Board was reminded that two members, Bryan Rellinger and George Sharpe, may be at the end of their terms. Board members were asked to consider serving again. If a member wishes to withdraw from the Board, s/he should notify the Board President for planning purposes. Board members should continue to make strategic recommendations for additional Board members with helpful skill sets and experience.

b. Budget discussion- Matt Maczka

i. Proposed 2017-2018 School Year Budget:

Matt began the budget discussion by highlighting changes: Enrollment was increased to 346, the higher projected tuition figure was attained by decreasing the planned cushion for potential disenrollment, an after-school stipend of \$4000 was added, funds were budgeted for a Spanish teacher in case GRPS Shared Time is short staffed again, and funds were added for some new textbooks.

Matt presented several budget options, all within the permitted range (i.e. up to 35% of projected offertory giving), for the Board to consider. Mindful of its duty to advocate for the needs of the students/school balanced with respect for the expressed financial concerns of the larger Saint Thomas community, the Board carefully discussed whether the proposed budget was adequately meeting the school's projected long term and short term needs and whether the budget needed to be adjusted for items such as: textbooks, new curriculums, technology, salaries and/or professional development. The Board discussed whether to keep salary increases at 2% or to raise the increase to 3% as originally proposed. Contingency plans were discussed as to how the budget could be adjusted to respond if the Parish Finance Council did not approve the proposed budget and re-submitted it to the Board. After careful deliberation, the Board motioned, seconded, and approved submitting a 2017-2018 school year budget of \$177,494.00, (34.5% of projected offertory giving) to the Parish Finance Council for its approval.

ii. Proposed Management of Remainder of 2016-2017 School Year Budget:

At present, due to careful management and larger than projected enrollment, the school anticipates being approximately \$70,000 ahead of budget. The Board discussed possible ways to use these available funds to anticipate and address school related needs now rather than later. Possible investments in textbooks, technology, lab materials and the faculty were among the suggestions.

c. Strategic Planning- Suzi Furtwangler

i. Update on Progress- The community portion of the strategic planning sessions was reported as going well. The next meeting will be delayed a week (from April 22 to April 29) to in order to allow the moderator, who has been a valuable asset to the process, to continue her role with the group. Results from the final meeting will be shared with the Board and school community and will be used "populate the map" of the Strategic Plan.

ii. Board Portion of Strategic Planning

The Board had been asked to review two sections of the Accreditation Study results (Section 5: Governance and Section 10: Operational Leadership and Vitality) in order to collectively identify 5 rubrics where growth is needed with a view to including

these rubrics as Board goals in the Strategic Plan. The Board collectively identified the following 5 rubrics: (The rubrics are listed in order of how they were discussed at the meeting):

aa.) 10.7 “The governing body and leader/leadership team provide families access to information about tuition assistance and long term planning for tuition and Catholic school expenses.”

bb.) 10.2 “Financial plans include agreed-upon levels of financial investment determined by the partners involved who may include but are not limited to parishes, dioceses, religious orders, educational foundations, the larger Catholic community, and responsible boards.” (STA score: 4, Accreditation team’s score: 3 with comment “There is not diverse funding set of funding sources or investments.)

cc.) 5.1 “The governing body, representing the diversity of stakeholders, functions according to its approved constitution and by-laws.” Scores: 2 from both STA and the Accreditation team with no comments.

dd.) 5.6 “The governing body engages in formation and on-going training and self-evaluation for itself and the leadership team to ensure faithful execution of their respective responsibilities.” Scores: 3 from both STA and the Accreditation team with no comments.

ee) 10.3 “Financial Plans define revenue sources that include but are not limited to tuition, tuition assistance/scholarships, endowment funds, local and regional partnerships, public funding, regional cost sharing, (arch) diocesan and/or religious communities’ assistance, foundation gifts, entrepreneurial options and other sources not listed.” (STA score: 4, Accreditation team’s score: 3 with comment: “Lack of evidence of benchmarking against best practices.”)

The Board began discussing interpretation of the rubrics and the results as well as possible ways to implement improvement to be included as part of the Strategic Plan.

Board members are asked to come up with suggestions for implementing improvements with these 5 identified rubrics in mind for the next meeting.

VIII. **Closing Prayer-** Suzi Furtwangler

ATTENDANCE:

Voting Members:

President, John Schuring: Present
 Vice President and Financial chair, Matt Maczka: Present
 Secretary, Christi Blum: Present
 Development & Outreach co-chair, Bryan Rellinger: Excused
 Development & Outreach co-chair, George Sharpe: Present
 Policy & Planning chair, Stacy Slomski: Excused
 Mission Effectiveness chair, Jessica Poelma: Excused
 Curriculum Committee chair, Jenni Little: Present
 Joanne Swan Jones: Present
 Tracy Bandlow: Present
 James Leonard: Present

Non-Voting Ex Officio Members:

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| Additional Attendees: Steve Slachter Parish Finance | Pastor, Fr. Jim Chelich: Present |
| Principal, Suzi Furtwangler: Present | Assistant Principal, Liz Peters: Present |
| Education Foundation Pres., Judi Serba: Present | Development & Outreach, B. Edgerton: Excused |
| Home & School President, Amy Ziemer: Absent | Boosters President: Amy Bocian: Present |
| Co-ordinator of Finance, Marie Miller: Absent | Dir. Religious Formation, Patti Reynolds: Absent |

Proposed Schedule of Topics for the 2016- 2017 Year

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| August 27 | -Retreat |
| September 8 | -Strategic planning begins |
| October 13 | -Budget process begins |
| November 10 | -Propose tuition for 2017-2018 year |
| December 1 | -Proposed social meeting |
| January 12 | -MAP results |
| February 9 | -Possible class/ teacher configurations, programming, and marketing, -First reading of the proposed budget, -Plan State of the School presentation |
| March 9 | -Review Board term charts, suggest and contact possible new Board candidates establish Executive Committee for following year -Begin review process for principal (to be complete by May Board meeting) -Second reading of the proposed budget -State of the School meetings for parents |
| April 19 | -Approve budget |
| May 11 | -Vote and welcome new officers and Board members -Year-end wrap up |