

Saint Thomas the Apostle Board of Education Minutes from the First Regular Meeting of the Board, Thursday, September 8, 2016

The meeting began at 6 pm and concluded at approximately 8 pm.

Board Packets submitted to members: on September 8, 2016 at 1 pm

E-mails to members: September 7, 2016, 7:20 am and September 5, 2016, 7:12 pm

HOMEWORK/TO DO LIST:

The October 13, 2016 meeting topic is: beginning to plan the budget for the 2017-2018 school year.

A request was made for the annual placement report of STA students at Catholic Central/ West Catholic.

CALENDAR ITEMS:

School Events: New Family Meeting, Thursday, September 22 at 6:30 pm

Next Board Meeting: Thursday, October 13, 2016, 6- 7 pm, Topics: Budget Process Begins and carry over Strategic Planning discussion

Next Committee Meeting(s):?

TAKE NOTE ITEMS:

Please sign up to bring the “snack” to a Board meeting at: www.TakeThemaMeal.com

Diocesan website materials about School Boards can be found at: www.schools4u.org

MEETING AGENDA

- I. **Opening Prayer-** Suzi Furtwangler
- II. **Visitor Communications-**
 - a. None Requested
 - b. Relayed comments: Mention made of parent comments regarding perceived lack of input on uniform changes.
 - c. Relayed comments: Decision made to announce Board Meetings in the Pieces Newsletter and to create a Board of Education e-mail account.
- III. **Approval of Consent Agenda Items-** John Schuring
 - a. Prior Meeting Minutes- none to approve
- IV. **Principal’s Report-** Suzi Furtwangler
 - a. The written report submitted as part of the Board packet was relied upon in lieu of a presentation.
- V. **Committee Reports-** Various Presenters
 - a. **Finance-** Matt Maczka
Parish Finance coordinator, Dawn Olney, is retiring in mid September. As part of her retirement, the Board of Education will have more input/ control over the school budget and over the grounds and buildings.

b. **Development and Outreach-** Betsy Edgerton

Overall the enrollment is in good shape. Enrollment in P4 was low, but P3 was wait listed.

c. **Mission Effectiveness-** Jessica Poelma

Presentation and discussion of additions to religious curriculum via participation in a pilot program of a children's i) Theology of the Body for all grades and introduction of the book, ii) Decision Point, to be used for Confirmation formation in Grades 7 & 8. The question of whether to extend use of the iii) Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program was raised.

i) Theology of the Body- STA is participating in a pilot program from Ruah Woods. STA has been given 1/3 of the total program to use as the pilot. Proposed that ideally, Theology of the Body would be taught as a supplement/support to the current religious textbook in Grades K- 4 and then as the "core" of the religious curriculum from Grades 5-8. Jessica Poelma will be giving a sample Theology of the Body lesson at the October 25th Tuesday Talk.

ii) Decision Point- This book is a Confirmation discernment tool. Goal in using the book: Confirmation should be a consciously reasoned choice made by students. Book will be used in 7th and 8th grade in addition to Theology of the Body. Jessica suggested presenting more on this topic to parents near Pentecost. (FYI: Pentecost will be May 15, 2016 this year.)

iii) Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS). STA uses this program in P3, P4 and Kindergarten. Consider using it more. STA pioneered use of CGS, but peer schools (All Saints, Sacred Heart, and IHM) now have more extensive programs than STA. Mention was given to the recent Faith magazine article highlighting Mrs. Bridge and her training in CGS. Pros of extending CGS: It integrates well with other curriculum areas and keeps us competitive with peer Catholic schools. Cons of extending CGS: STA would have to purchase the rest of the curriculum. CGS: a teacher must be trained in each level prior to and including the grade level s/he is teaching. The training is extensive and costly. It would take time to implement and/or a teacher(s) with the requisite would have to be added. Would current STA teachers be willing to do the training?

iv) A discussion about how to get families better informed of these religious changes included the following options: a parent information night, a Tuesday Talks presentation, commencing a family dinner night or using the class based parent gathering parties.

v) Various informational sheets have been e-mailed to the STA parents regarding the changes.

d. **Pastor's Report-** Fr. Jim Chelich

i) Fr. Jim spoke in support of the addition of the pilot program in Theology of the Body because it integrates well into the religious curriculum. He affirmed that this is not a new theory, but is one that will need evaluation and explanation. He proposes parent panels to learn how parents should talk to their children about their bodies and about faith.

ii) Fr. Jim is preparing bulletin articles on the topics of: virtues, prayer and love. These articles will also be share with the school community via the Pieces Newsletter. He also emphasized that the school is a service to the whole parish.

iii) Fr. Jim spoke on the opportunities that the lack of a Spanish teacher provided for alternatives, including using a young man to teach some basic language and to speak on related topics.

iv) Fr. Jim spoke of the retirement of Dawn Olney as Finance Coordinator for the parish and the plans to move to a service that does work for other parishes/schools in the diocese and to a part time bookkeeper.

v) Fr. Jim also spoke on the deliberate steps that are being taken to ensure that families claiming parishioner status for the lower tuition rate are participating in and supporting the life of the parish. A new tuition commitment form has been developed to emphasize what is expected to receive in parish tuition rates. (A copy was presented at the Board Retreat in August.) Fr. Jim also spoke on the value and importance of registering with a parish.

VI. **Board Deliberations and Committee Action Items-** John Schuring and Suzi Furtwangler

a. **New Member Introductions and Approval-** John Schuring

i) New members: Stacy Slomski, Jo Jones and Tracy Bandlow were introduced, and a motion to add the proposed members was made, seconded, and voted upon. The new members were unanimously approved to join the Board.

b. **Discussion of SWOT Analysis; Faculty, Parent and Student Surveys and the Accreditation Report-** Suzi Furtwangler

i) Due to time constraints (this item was reached after 7 pm) discussion was limited to the Accreditation report and the surveys since the S.W.O.T analysis had been partially reviewed at the retreat and a report of the S.W.O.T. analysis was shared with the Board on 9/5/15.

ii) Vigorous discussion followed on both the accreditation reports and survey results. Discussion was suspended at 8 pm. A recap e-mail regarding the discussion was sent by Suzi on 9/9/15.

1) Topics discussed at the meeting included, but were not limited to:

aa) This accreditation study differed from past studies in terms of implementation of national standards which had different/higher standards/benchmarks and which called for a greater reliance upon written documentation.

bb) Discussion about the meaning, interpretation, and use of the accreditation scores.

cc) New faculty requirements with respect to lesson planning and curriculum pieces were presented.

dd) Additional training and introduction of instructional coach for faculty introduced this year.

ee) Extensive discussion held on the general strengths/weaknesses of the curriculum and vertical integration of the curriculum. Comments made regarding the writing curriculum and the Spanish curriculum. Changes to strengthen religious curriculum were presented earlier in the meeting.

ff) Discussion about the tension between (and need to balance) faith and academics so both are strong.

gg) Mention of bullying in the surveys.

hh) Communication: two types of communication were discussed: School to Parent communication and Teacher with Parent communication. Discussed the effectiveness of school to parent communication and whether there are actual problems or perceived problems due to lack of knowledge/ communication of success stories. Questions posed included whether the frequency, form and

content of the communication were reaching the intended audience and ways to improve. The parent/teacher communication discussion explored whether the communications are timely, informative, and responsive.

ii) There was discussion on what STA's measures of success are and should be, i.e.: what are the provable results of how STA students are performing with respect to both successes and failures.

VII. **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, Brian Rellinger: Present
Development & Outreach co-chair, George Sharpe: Present
Policy & Planning chair, Stacy Slomski: Present
Mission Effectiveness chair, Jessica Poelma: Present
Curriculum Committee chair, Jenni Little: Present
Joanne Swan Jones: Present
Tracy Bandlow: Present
Development & Outreach member, Betsy Edgerton: Present

Additional Attendees: None

Non-Voting, Ex Officio Members:

Principal, Suzi Furtwangler: Present Assistant Principal, Liz Peters: Present
Pastor, Fr. Jim Chelich: Partial Coordinator of Finance, Marie Miller: Absent
Home & School President, Amy Ziemer: Absent Athletic Boosters President: Absent
Director of Religious Formation, Patti Reynolds: Absent

Proposed Schedule of Topics for the 2016- 2017 Year

August 27 -Retreat
September 8 -Strategic planning begins
October 13 -Budget process begins
November 10 -Propose tuition for next year
December 1 -Proposed social meeting (location TBA)
January 12 -M.A.P. Results,
 -Possible class/ teacher configurations, programming, marketing initiatives
February 9 -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 the following year,
 -Begin review process for principal (to be completed by May Board meeting)
 -Second reading of the proposed budget
 -State of the School meetings for parents
April 19 -Approve budget
May 11 -Vote upon and welcome new officers and board members,
 -Year end wrap up