

Saint Thomas the Apostle Board of Education

Minutes from the Fourth Regular Meeting of the Board, Monday, December 12, 2016

This meeting was conducted exclusively by conference call due to inclement weather. It was limited to conversation regarding setting tuition for the 2017-2018 school year with and ancillary discussion of enrollment projections and broad budgetary concerns. The meeting departed from its normal structure in that only the Board Deliberation portion of the meeting occurred. The meeting began at 6:00 pm and concluded at approximately: 7:00 pm.

Board Packets submitted to members on: December 9, 2016

E-mails to members: December 9, 2016

HOMEWORK/TO DO LIST: Nothing from the December meeting. However, if you have not already done so, please review the e-mail from Suzi from November 19, 2016 and add to the strategic planning document attached to the e-mail.

CALENDAR ITEMS:

School Events: Not discussed

Next Board Meeting: Tuesday, January 12, 2016, 2017 from 6- 7 pm. Proposed meeting topics (from the schedule that was issued at the August retreat) include: MAP results and possible class/teacher configurations, programming, and marketing.

Next Committee Meeting(s): Please notify Christi of any upcoming committee meetings for publication.

TAKE NOTE ITEMS:

None mentioned.

CARRY OVER ITEMS:

None raised at the December conference call. From the November meeting, the Board had planned to continue its discussion on strategic planning and formation of a Strategic Planning Committee. Discussion regarding the formation of a Technology Committee was also previously on the Board's agenda.

Meeting Agenda

- I. **Board Deliberations and Committee Action Items-** John Schuring/Matt Maczka/Suzi Furtwangler
 - a. On Friday, December 9, 2016, the Board was notified by e-mail of the need to once again change its proposed December meeting. The Board needed to approve a tuition rate proposal to present to the Parish Finance Council. The Finance Council moved its meeting from Thursday, December 15, 2016 to Tuesday, December 13, 2016, which required the Board (of necessity) to meet on Monday, December 12, 2016 at 6 pm. Cancellation of school due to inclement weather lead to the Board holding the meeting exclusively via telephone conference.
 - b. Finance Committee chair, Matt Maczka, presented the Board with a bulleted commentary and a rough draft of the budget on December 9 and December 12.
 - c. **The proposed tuition rate increases for 2017-2018 were: 2.5% for grades K-8 and 1% for the pre-school grades.**
 - d. The tuition rate is primarily derived as a function of: tuition/enrollment, salaries/benefits and other relatively fixed costs outside of the schools' control. For the 2017-2018 school year, Saint Thomas

anticipates a possible drop in enrollment due to the graduation of a large class of eight grade students-many of whom are either only children or the last child in a family. (The number of departing students cannot be offset by merely admitting a greater number of pre-school or kindergarten students for a number of reasons: space limitations, increased staffing requirements for younger children, and the lower tuition rates charged corresponding to the half day curriculum for those grades and the preschool program being a partial week.) Saint Thomas also anticipates the possibility of having to assume some salaries that may have been previously funded through the GRPS Shared Time program and the possibility that due to staffing changes, the school may have to provide additional insurance and other benefits of employment.

- e. Matt and Suzi developed and presented a fiscally conservative and responsible school budget that also consciously attempted to be sensitive to the effect of increasing the tuition costs on families who have had substantial tuition increases that outstripped the rates of inflation over the last few years.
- f. Preschool tuition rate: The tuition rate charged at Saint Thomas for preschool is already one of the highest in the diocese. It was proposed that by lessening the tuition increase at the preschool level, Saint Thomas would hopefully lessen the cost differential between it and peer preschools. This effort to be price conscious pairs with the 0-5 Outreach/Development efforts that were initiated to help drive enrollment to the school overall. Often, if the school can get parents (especially those from the SE side of town) to enroll students as preschoolers, a majority of those students typically progress into the grade school. Whereas, if the students enroll elsewhere for preschool, the parents do not seek new admission as frequently at the Kindergarten or 1st grade levels.
- g. Grades K-8 tuition rate: 2.5% was thought to be a modest increase compared with recent years, but not so low as to unsustainable in the future. Peer Catholic grade schools have not released their numbers yet, but were thought to be considering comparable rate increases. It was pointed out that an additional 1% or 2% (to 3.5% or even 4.5%) increase in tuition rates does not generate substantially more income within the school budget, but could affect families. Discussion was presented on how the budget was developed with several "worst case scenario" factors in mind, including a very conservative projected enrollment figure and projecting on the higher end of benefit and salary expenses in case some of these projected costs were not borne, as they had been historically until this year, by the GRPS Shared Time program, and omission of potential revenue sources such as the before school Open Gym child care option and possible revision of Homework Haven rates.
- h. A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved to recommend a tuition increase for the 2017-2018 school year. The recommended generalized increase was 1% for the preschool grades (P3, P4) and 2.5% for all other grades (K-8). (The effective per pupil tuition increase breakdown may be slightly less than the proposed rates at a straight across the board increase of 1% or 2.5% would indicate depending upon the number of enrolled students within a particular family.)
- i. A report back to the Board following the Parish Finance Council meeting indicated that the Parish Finance Council rejected the proposed tuition rate of 2.5% for grades K-8 for the 2017-2018 year. The Finance Council issued a counter proposal of a 3.5% increase for grades K-8. The rate increase of 1% was accepted for the preschool classes.

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: Present
Development & Outreach co-chair, George Sharpe: Present
Policy & Planning chair, Stacy Slomski: Absent
Mission Effectiveness chair, Jessica Poelma: Present
Curriculum Committee chair, Jenni Little: Present
Joanne Swan Jones: Present
Tracy Bandlow: Present

Non-Voting Ex Officio Members:

Additional Attendees: None	Pastor, Fr. Jim Chelich: Absent
Principal, Suzi Furtwangler: Present	Assistant Principal, Liz Peters: Present
Education Foundation Pres., Judi Serba: Present	Development/Outreach, Betsy Edgerton: Present
Home & School President, Amy Ziemer: Absent	Co-ordinator of Finance, Marie Miller: 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 2017-2018 year
December 1	-Proposed social meeting
January 12	-MAP results, -Possible class/ teacher configurations, programming, and marketing,
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 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