

Saint Thomas the Apostle Board of Education Minutes from the Sixth Regular Meeting of the Board, Thursday, February 9, 2017

The meeting began at 6 pm and concluded at approximately: 7:15 pm.

Board Packets submitted to members on: February 8, 2017

E-mails to members:

- February 9, 2017: Questions from members regarding agenda items.
- February 8, 2017: Proposed minutes from the January meeting submitted.
- February 1, 2017: Forwarding the draft of the Diocesan Annual Statistical Report 2016/2017.
- January 14, 2017 series: Notifying the Board that there was a bulletin entry at Saint Robert's regarding a Diocesan matter previously treated as confidential (feasibility study for new Catholic schools), so the administration and Board could be prepared for potential questions/reactions.

CALENDAR ITEMS:

School Events:

February 15, 2017: Confirmation for 8th grade at the Cathedral of Saint Andrew

February 16, 2017: Finance Council Meeting

March 1, 2017: Ash Wednesday, Mass at 12:30 pm

March, 2017: State of the School Meetings: 6:30 pm on the 3rd, 2 pm on the 9th, & 8 am on the 14th

March 20, 2017: Reconciliation for 4th grade

Next Board Meeting: Thursday, March 9, 2017, from 6- 7 pm

Meeting Agenda

- I. **Opening Prayer-** Suzi Furtwangler
- II. **Visitor Communications-**
 - a. Judi Serba invited prospective Education Foundation member, James Leonard, to attend the Board meeting as a guest.
 - b. A report was provided that some parents expressed curiosity as to how the donated money would be used in light of the new option on the registration form allowing for additional donations. Gifts in the \$20-\$50 range have already been made. It was suggested that the donated money be used for additional programming and not applied to existing budget items. Gifts made using the form will be reserved for school use. A concern was voiced as to whether these donations would potentially be pulling for the same pool as potential Education Foundation donors.
 - c. The Boosters now have a new slate of officers: Amy Bocian will be president; Julie Kuhn will be vice president; Michael Trenshaw will be secretary; and Heather Schneller will be treasurer.
 - d. A report was made of some parents concern about reports of perceived inconsistent discipline in the middle school. Parents were overheard conversing about the discrepancy of one middle school student receiving detention for a violation of the haircut provision of the uniform code (standard policy), while another student who allegedly used lewd/profane language in the middle of class (and was allegedly not given detention) with the consequence being that the class as a whole was lectured about the inappropriateness of the language. The administration was aware of inappropriate language being used on the playground and will investigate this report further.

- III. **Approval of Consent Agenda Items-** John Schuring
 - a. Approval of the January 12, 2017 Minutes: motioned, seconded and approved.
- IV. **Principal's Report-** Suzi Furtwangler
 - a. **Staffing Updates:**
 - 1) Technology: Due to the departure of the long term sub, Drew Anderson, Connie Morris will teach technology for the rest of the year. The vacated technology teaching position was posted and reposted. In the interim one of the third grade teachers, Conrad Budzynski, has expressed interest in leaving third grade for the technology position next year. He is willing to become a Shared Time teacher and to meet any training requirements of the Shared Time program. Suzi expressed excitement for the switch as he is a known commodity and will bring innovation to the technology program at Saint Thomas. It is hoped that it will be simpler to hire a third grade teacher than a technology teacher given the current shortage of technology teachers.
 - 2) Spanish: Jackie Hunt will return for *Elementary Spanish and teach 3 ½ - 4 days weekly*. Saint Thomas is seeking a candidate to teach a daily middle school daily Spanish program and is working with GRPS Shared Time to find a teacher as Mrs. Perdue will not return to teach middle school Spanish next year.
 - b. **State of the School Meetings:** The schedule for the meetings and some proposed agenda topics including: uniforms, multiage classes, and strategic planning (among others) were presented.
 - c. **GRACEAC Football:** There is a proposal from GRACELAC athletic director (AD) to switch football from individual school teams to "Catholic United" east and west side teams and to change the cost structure to a per student fee (of an unknown amount) for participation. GRACELAC is the 5th to 8th grade Catholic school sports league, which has grown in recent years to have Christian school members too. Each school is charged by school (based on the number of students in the school as a whole, versus the number of student athlete participants) to participate in sports programming including football. Under the existing system, each school already pays league fees for field rental, referee costs, administration of the league, etc. The GRACELAC AD reports to the Diocesan Superintendent of Schools. One point of controversy is that the salary for the AD is only paid for by the Catholic schools and not the Christian schools. Another point of controversy is that the proposed change may reintroduce divisions between east and west side schools that feed into Catholic Central and West Catholic. An additional concern is that the creation of the Catholic United teams would necessitate obtaining new uniform jerseys, pants, helmets, etc. to represent the new team identity. These uniform/equipment costs are of particular concern to Saint Thomas as Saint Thomas just invested in new uniforms and helmets in the last year. The cost of the proposed changes was not provided and remains unknown. Saint Thomas currently does not pass costs for participating in athletics on to participating families and does not want to start doing so. Possible ways to get answers and discuss further were proposed including sending a letter to Superintendent Faber and proposing that the AD hold a meeting with parents.
 - d. **Multi-Age Survey:** Parents were still responding to the survey so it is being left open. The preliminary results indicate that students for the multiage 1st/2nd grade class want more information and that there may be enough interest for two multiage classrooms at these grade levels. Families with experience of the multiage program support its continuation. To address the request for more information and allow for questions, the school will host an evening session with the multiage age teachers in April so interested parents can receive the information and view of classrooms. The multiage teachers will

also be asked to attend the State of the School meetings so that parents may ask questions then too.

e. **Other topics** from the written administrator's report included: extending the use of strategy grouping (currently used in reading in grades 1-2) from reading to math and from 1st and 2nd grades to 3rd and 4th grades; continued efforts to secure a new writing curriculum (the Lucy Caulkins curriculum seems to be in the lead); efforts to select and obtain Next Gen science kits; the Diocesan mass marketing campaign; the change in Uniform providers; the Re-Boot Boosters meeting; and costs being assessed to the school by the Diocesan to be included in the 2017-2018 budget.

V. **Committee Reports:**

a. **Outreach & Development Committee-** Betsy Edgerton

Written report submitted discussing the Preschool and Kindergarten Roundup participation results. The report highlighted that having the highest number ever of Kindergarteners participating in full day enrichment options (a plus) has resulted in the need for an additional 2 hours of paraprofessional help weekly.

b. **Mission Effectiveness Committee-** Jessica Poelma

1) All Tuesday Talks during Lent will address an aspect of Mission Effectiveness:

currently scheduled topics include Eucharistic Adoration, Decision Point (by Jessica Poelma), Theology of the Body (by Monica Morin), and other topics being developed.

2) In recognition that many local priests (beyond Fr. Jim) support Catholic education, the classes have been asked to pray for a priest (either a relative of a student or a priest of a parish that sends students to Saint Thomas). To further recognize these priests, a program including: a tour of the school, a concelebrated all-school mass, and a luncheon for the priests is being planned for March 24. 6 priests from the 4 parishes who send students to Saint Thomas have currently been invited.

3) The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CSG) program will be "growing" forward to 1st/2nd grade. Discussion of the teachers interested in increasing their CGS training and of how the interested teacher pays for the expensive, extensive CGS catechist training because the training/certification rests with the teacher, not with the school. Interest was expressed in supporting the teacher in getting the additional training- for example: the hope that perhaps parish professional development monies could be applied to help offset the some of the expense of the training or that the diocese takes the CGS training into account when considering what "step" a teacher's compensation/raise should be based upon.

4) The school will obtain the second half of the Theology of Body pilot program. Initial teacher feedback on the program indicated that the current presentation is not teacher friendly, but that the underlying materials in the program itself are good. The school budget for 2017-2018 may need to include some monies for the Theology of Body pilot program, in case the school will be charged for the second half of the pilot program.

Jessica is working on a press release about the Theology of the Body program.

Additionally, the pastor and principal from Saint Steven's school are interested in starting a Theology of the Body program too and came to Saint Thomas to discuss our experience of the pilot program.

c. **Curriculum Committee-** Jenni Little

1) Jenni recently met with Suzi to discuss the status of the writing curriculum options (best and most expensive from Columbia University) and Next Gen science kits. The faculty is reportedly getting closer to decision and purchase on both items.

2) The proposed Welcome Home panel of high school students was not able to proceed

during Catholic Schools Week as planned. In an attempt to get feedback from recent Saint Thomas graduates on how prepared they were for high school, the curriculum committee plans to visit the students at Catholic Central and offer them a free lunch in exchange for feedback.

3) Jessica has created a systemic textbook review cycle to help keep curriculums and textbooks up to date. The proposed review cycle has presented it to Suzi for review.

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

a. **Budget Discussion-** Matt Maczka

No changes to the preliminary budget from last month. The Financial co-ordinator, Marie Miller, is taking a leave of absence so there will be a meeting at 8 am on Thursday to meet Steve Slachter, her temporary substitute. Matt and Suzi are in the process of trying to “nailing down the question marks for next year’s budget.” If Conrad Budzynski were to be accepted as a Shared Time technology teacher, offsetting the technology teacher salary to Shared Time would be a huge budgetary savings. Matt and Suzi hope to have a Budget for the Board to vote upon by April so that the Budget can be presented to and approved by the parish Finance Council in May.

b. **Fr. Jim’s Report** – Fr. Jim Chelich

1) Fr. Jim continues to be satisfied with both the individuals (Marie and Pauline) who have taken over the financial co-ordinator’s duties and with the sustainability of the changes. Steve Slachter will be taking Marie’s place temporarily.

2) Fr. Jim discussed his follow-up plans in the efforts to increase offertory giving. He will ask people to “Live with the Parish” in terms of financial support (i.e., If one gets a raise, one should also give the parish a raise) at the State of the School meetings.

3) Fr. Jim is trying to promote increased offertory giving “softly”, but is concerned and eager to close the gap between budgeted and actual income and expenses. He also anticipated that the parish may face some upcoming unexpected bills

4) Fr. Jim wants to participate in the proposed letter to the Diocesan Superintendent of Schools about the proposed feasibility study.

5) Fr. Jim also presented concerns about the parish meeting its Catholic Service Appeals (CSA) assessment. He noted that Saint Thomas has the largest CSA assessment increase in the diocese because the parish income went up, but is concerned about meeting the CSA increase with the decline in giving.

6) Fr. Jim requested a “good, stable budget projection” from the Board for school year 2017-2018.

b. **Strategic Planning-** Suzi Furtwangler/ John Schuring

1) Three Saturdays have been chosen for morning (8- 11 am) Strategic Planning Sessions: (March 11, March 18 and April 22). Strategic Planning Committee participants will be solicited to participate by messages in the bulletin, the Pieces, and invitations issued at the State of the School meetings. (Proposed additional sources to find and invite future stakeholders to participate in the strategic planning sessions included: posting on the Saint Thomas alumni Facebook page, inviting the attendees at 0-5 programming who may not yet have students in the school, outreach to the participants at Fr. Jim’s college teas, outreach to current and recent participants in marriage preparation and baptismal preparation at the parish.)

2) The goal is that the three Saturday meetings will generate a plan that can be presented to the Board for approval at the May Board meeting and then submitted to the Diocese as required.

c. **Feasibility Study**- John Schuring

1) John is working on a letter to present to the Diocesan School Superintendent, Dave Faber, addressing the concerns raised by the recent announcement of a planned feasibility study. The topic of the feasibility study is whether to introduce up to three new Catholic grade schools, including a possible *independent* Catholic grade school on the south east side of town that may be temporarily located at Saint Robert in Ada. (Although the school may be at or near Saint Robert's, as an independent school it would not be run as parish grade school.) The letter will most likely be signed by Fr. Jim and by John as Board President. A request was made to allow the Board to view the letter prior to sending it.

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

Non-Voting Ex Officio Members:

Additional Attendees: James Leonard Pastor, Fr. Jim Chelich: Partial
Principal, Suzi Furtwangler: Present Assistant Principal, Liz Peters: Present
Education Foundation Pres., Judi Serba: Present Development & Outreach, Betsy Edgerton: Excused
Home & School President, Amy Ziemer: Absent Boosters President: Absent
Co-ordinator of Finance, Marie Miller: Absent Dir. 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