

Saint Thomas the Apostle Board of Education Minutes from the Regular Meeting of the Board on Thursday, March 1, 2018

The meeting began at 6 p.m. and concluded at 8:15 p.m.

Board Packets submitted to members on: February 27, 2018.

Meeting Reminder e-mail on: February 23, 2018

Request for Advice on Band/Choir at CC: February 12-13, 2018

Board Homework: Make recommendations for potential new Directors for the Board, particularly those who may have a desired skill set such as professional experience in Development/Fundraising.

CALENDAR ITEMS:

School Events:

State of the School Meetings: March 6 & 7, 2018

In Service/ Off School Day: March 16, 2018

Easter Break: March 30 to April 8, 2018

Next Board Meeting: Thursday, April 12, 2018 at 6 pm

Spring Diocesan Board Summit: Thursday, April 26, 2018 at 6:30 pm at Cathedral Square

Meeting Agenda

- I. **Opening Prayer-** Suzi Furtwangler/ Fr. Jim Chelich
- II. **Pastor's Report-** Fr. Jim Chelich
 - a. **Parishioner Tuition Rate Monitoring-**

Fr. Jim spoke to the Board about continuing efforts to prevent possible abuse of the parishioner tuition rate by those who nominally claim parishioner status without participating in the parish community and the offertory collection. Courtesy calls are placed to those who claim parishioner status but who do not turn in envelopes to signify their participation in the parish community. If no change occurs or only excuses are made, the family will be switched to a full tuition payment plan. If improved participation in parish life is seen, the family retains the parishioner tuition rate.
 - b. **Vigilance on Bullying or In-groups/Out-groups-**

Fr. Jim proposed a two-fold objective in the approach to minimize the opportunity for and the effects of bullying. The first objective is to act quickly to resolve the aggression. The second objective is to provide children with strategies to proactively protect themselves individually or within a supportive group. Fr. Jim wants children to realize: they are not alone; they are not weak; and they are not victims. He senses that children need to develop confidence and the skills necessary to equip themselves to be proactive in the defense of their selves now and for the lifetime ahead. Fr. Jim noted the difference between isolated actions taken in the heat of the moment versus repeated behaviors. Regardless of the classification of the underlying behavior, Fr. Jim advocates informing parents and handling things quickly.
- III. **Concerns of Visitors-** John Schuring
 - a. **Auction Update**

Dottie Yocca, the Auction Chair provided the Board with an update on plans for Auction for fall 2019. Her team's goal is to promote community participation by helping

everyone realize that attendance and participation at Auction is both affordable and great fun. The purpose of Auction is to fund the Home and School budget for the next two years. It has grown to address limited capital projects for parish and school (for example: hymnals, automated water fountains, technology requests not met by the budget or the capital campaign, and enrichment/inclusion programming expenses) and to fund Angel Tuition (a funding source that is reserved to help those with greatest financial need as determined by the SmartAid program and/or unexpected changes in financial status during the school year afford to attend Saint Thomas.) Auction is trying to determine the needs of the Home and School budget as well as the needs of the Angel Tuition budget to see if an additional paddle raise at the end of the night could be directed to an additional need of the Saint Thomas community beyond Angel Tuition. Currently, Auction plans to offer: table sponsorships to meet specified needs (formerly called "Twist Tables", now called "Fund-A-Need" tables), live auction items, silent auction items, sign up party options, and one or two possible "paddle raise" opportunities at the end of the evening.

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

a. The minutes from the prior meeting were unanimously approved without amendment.

VI. **Administrator's Report-** Suzi Furtwangler

a. **Enrollment Update:** So far 335 students have enrolled of the budgeted 340 and hoped for 350 students to keep enrollment essentially even. Tours of prospective students remain steady. As anticipated, the school is close to closing enrollment in the entry point/early childhood grades: P3, P4, and Kindergarten. The school has 13 available classrooms and potential class configurations are been considered.

b. **Holland Home-** Bishop Walkowiak has approved Saint Thomas's request to attempt to purchase the parking lot directly behind the preschool playground from Holland Home. A Letter of Intent to Purchase is being submitted to Holland Home. However, the Bishop will not permit the purchase of properties that have asbestos- as Holland Home presently does. To purchase any Holland Home property, the pieces must either not have asbestos or the asbestos must first be removed. A potential buyer is interested in buying Holland Home and continuing its current use as affordable senior citizen housing. However, it is looking for a partner to use the space that it will not need. The Holland Home Committee and the potential buyer are trying to arrange a meeting in the next two weeks to see if a partnership is possible. The buyer anticipates using the western 3 acres of the 5.5 available.

c. **Spanish Teacher/ Foreign Language Update-** A written update was provided and not discussed during the Board meeting.

d. **Education Support Services (ESS) Matrix-**Missy Meighan

ESS was discussed as part of Board deliberations.

e. **Site Visits to Other Catholic Schools**

The principal indicated her interest in discussing possible visits to other mid-western Catholic schools with the Board at a future meeting.

VII. **Board Deliberations-** John Schuring/ Suzi Furtwangler

a. **2018-2019 Budget Process Overview Refinement-** Matt Maczka

The finalized budget will need to be approved at the April Board meeting. The Board may need to adjust revenue projections and cut some expenses prior to final approval.

Matt discussed how the subtle decline (projected \$50k shortfall in giving to date) in offertory giving has a direct correlation to the school budget. Fr. Jim promises the school may have up to 37% of offertory giving (versus the 35% diocesan cap), but

Matt notes that in reality due to the complexity of accurately targeting both enrollment and offertory giving (both are fluid, not fixed) the school budget has ended up being about 33% of the parish offertory for the past 2 years and will likely be the same for the 2018-2019 school year.

Matt affirmed that the enrollment figures were strong. He suggested refining the enrollment number and projected tuition offerings as closely to actual numbers as possible as close to the budget deadline as possible. Matt indicated that whenever possible the funds with the most restrictive use available to fund an expense (for example, Angel Tuition funds) will be applied to the applicable expense first. He also discussed ways of holding previously budgeted funds from the assistant principal's salary in the budget to address any administrative needs (up to and/or including filling the vacated position) caused by the departure. Of the former salary, \$8,000 has been allocated to stipends for those performing specified delegated duties previously performed by the assistant principal. Another \$20,000 of the former salary is being reserved to consider adding additional administrative assistant time, if the Assistant Principal role will remain vacant.

Matt also discussed the steps that were being taken to determine the costs of the ESS program separately from related school budget items (including breaking out the costs of those in the program's salaries and benefit expenses). By identifying ESS expenses, funds from the newly created ESS fund in memory of Audrey Jandernoa can be used and tracked. Additionally, Saint Thomas can begin to develop a true picture of the ESS's program's cost that can also be used to set effective and meaningful fund raising goals for events like the 80's Prom that help fund the services offered. Matt also addressed the middle school band and choir opportunity at Catholic Central and asked the Board to consider (if the Saint Thomas did not participate in the program, but allowed individual students to do so), whether the Board favored of offering a stipend to help offset the costs of the program. He acknowledged that this band/choir stipend would probably be one of the first cuts if projected expenses needed to be trimmed.

Matt also highlighted that moving from the government funded hot lunch program and its paperwork has caused Saint Thomas to assume \$6,000 in expenses for the free and reduced lunches offered at school. A question was asked whether free and reduced meal costs could be met by Angel Tuition funds. It was also asked if the Board could inquire about making a small portion of Angel Tuition funds available to support the final transition to Educational Outfitters as the uniform provider as there could be an anticipated shortage in available approved free uniform table offerings.

If possible, Matt may request thoughts on the Budget by e-mail prior to the April Board meeting to hopefully streamline discussion and approval at the actual meeting.

b. **Bullying Policy Update**-Suzi Furtwangler/ Christi Blum/ Jessica Poelma

Suzi lead the discussion regarding the bullying policy. Suzi was not previously aware of a couple of parents' concerns about bullying because the concerns had not been brought to her by the students, parents, or the staff that the students/parents initially spoke with and she is concerned that they did not come to her first. She has spoken with those families who had concerns. Additionally, due to instances concerning middle school students, she has spoken about the issue with the middle schoolers and requested input from them as well. The chief message from the middle schoolers is concern about retaliation for reporting bullying. Another concern raised by the topic of bullying is "the Stream" of social media/ technology based communications- i.e. the

constant connectedness provided by technology. The effect of “the Stream” is there is less respite for middle school children affected by bullying/ostracism concerns as the onslaught is felt not just at a school, but around the clock via text/ chats/ on-line posts etc. and compounded by the fact that students often don’t distinguish between what is occurring at school from those they know from school engaging in these conversations away from school/ after hours.

Suzi has requested that all allegations of bullying be brought to her directly going forward so that there will be knowledge of all alleged incidents and constancy in how the issue is addressed. Suzi is promoting a teachable moments approach and healing skills approach. Suzi mentioned the creation of the ReportIt@Stthomasgr.org e-mail. Some students have begun using the “ReportIt” e- address to report their concerns. Members questioned whether older students who may realize that the reporting will not be anonymous as it will show their e-mail address will use it or remain silent for fear of retaliation. Suzi announced that she will be working with Monic Morin to identify and implement further best practices to reduce the opportunity for and/or impact of student bullying.

Some discussion identified the characteristics of bullying, which occurs in repeated instances when a child doesn’t have the ability to self-advocate or is in an unequal power relationship vis a vis other students versus children of equal footing engaging in poor choices/behaviors. A suggestion was made to work on informing students and parents about the key differences between poor behavior choices versus bullying. Additionally, the “Community Check-Up survey” approach was suggested as a tool to promote behavioral awareness and discussion among students. The survey asks students about behaviors they have: a) done, b) received, or c) witnessed that could be bullying. Providing helpful materials to parents was recommended. Jo Jones also offered some parent training materials. Other suggestions included: ways to schedule an automatic disconnect “the Stream” at a certain time, apps that simulcast messages from the child’s device/ online activity forwarded to the parents, as well as identifying and circulating age appropriate technology guidelines. Discussion on this topic was adjourned in the interest of time to allow for discussion of other agenda items.

c. **Education Support Services-** Missy Meighan

Missy Meighan spoke to the Board about the Education Support Services (ESS) program. ESS was formerly known as the Resource Department. Missy holds a Master’s Degree in special education and is currently enrolled in the Program for Inclusive Education (PIE) through the Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) at the University of Notre Dame- an 18 credit hour program focused on inclusive education. She shared her passion for and excitement about inclusive education. The Education Support Services team currently has both an enrichment component (Jeanne Walsh leading the 6th grade Chinese web cultural exchange program) and an assistance/intervention component lead by Missy Meighan (director/teacher) and supported by Sarah Faber (teacher), Cheryl Coderre (teacher) & Joni Poggi (parapro). ESS provides services to students in small groups or individually on a case by case basis. Additionally, ESS staff partner with classroom teachers to provide them with alternative teaching and assessment strategies to use in the classroom. One of the touted benefits of the ESS program is how the ESS instructors “push in” to the classroom by providing services in small groups in the classrooms. The “push in” aspect increases the number of students reached, makes the supplemental instruction concurrent with classroom instruction to increase individual responsiveness, and helps reduce potential negative

peer stigma associated with receiving help. Children can still be “pulled out” of the larger classroom setting for individualized instruction if needed.

While the stated goal of ESS is, “Giving support to all who need it for all students to be successful,” constraints imposed by the availability of both staff and learning space mean that the assistance/intervention services aspect of ESS program is limited to approximately 60 of the K-8 students at Saint Thomas, roughly 17%- 20% of the school population (60/350 students). The program cannot currently help everyone. More staff would be needed to help additional students. Some of the staff are trained in Orton Gillingham instruction methods (a multisensory approach that is applies primarily to reading instruction but can be applies to mathematics), LIPS (a phonemic awareness program compatible with Orton Gillingham methods), and Edmark (a whole word approach reading program) to assist children who face barriers to reading phonetically. Programs are also available for children facing barrier to learning mathematics/number sense.

32 of the 60 students currently receiving ESS services have a diagnosed disability which may include, but is not limited to: Autism, Cognitive Impairment, ADHD or anxiety/depression. Generally, there has been an increase in the number students facing sensory processing and sensory integration barriers. On occasion, a few Pre-K students may also receive help from ESS.

Other students receiving ESS services may have test scores (DIBLES scores or other national testing with performance under 20%) and/or other triggering factors that have indicated the need for intervention efforts. Additionally, 21 of the 60 students served are K-2nd grade students receiving early interventions. The class room based strategy group sessions for all students in grades K-2 on Tuesday and Thursday mornings also assist the early intervention efforts as the sessions serve to identify and provide intervention for these early learners contemporaneously with the student’s initial learning. The hope is that many children who receive successful early intervention will be able to transition away from ESS services.

A student’s eligibility for ESS is based not just on the numbers (grades and test scores), but on conversations with teachers and parents to determine a clear picture of wither there could be a learning barrier or if the poor performance is caused by other factors. Classically, student’s educational needs have been assessed as falling within one of three tiers. A student classified as being in Tier 1 has no identified barriers to learning in the classroom and would only be eligible for the enrichment services from ESS. A student described as being within Tier 2 is a child who may show signs of some lag behind his peers (for example, the child may have test scores in the 20 to 50% range), but whose needs could be met by extra attention in the classroom or by a different teaching approach or assessment strategy. A student who is considered to be within Tier 3 is one who qualifies for individualized instruction and is likely to have a 504 Plan, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), or an Individual Services Plan (ISP) or Personal Learning Plan (PLP). These students face learning barriers and are have below grade level performance despite varied instruction, additional classroom attention, and varied performance assessments.

When asked what the top 5 immediate needs for the ESS program were, Missy asked for further time to think, but suggested a Sensory room where the students with sensory processing and integration challenges could “cool off” and additional staff if the program is to reach more students. Missy generously indicated a willingness to answer additional questions from the Board as they arise.

VIII. **Committees and Organizations: Reports and Action Items**

a. **Reminders from the Board Chair-** John Schuring

Due to term limits, we will need to seek additional Board Directors for next year. Please think of possible candidates.

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

Enrollment is strong. Early childhood grade levels were almost full.

c. **Mission Effectiveness-** Jessica Poelma

The chair requested to be excused from the final 15 minutes of the meeting due to personal circumstances. The Committee's written report was relied upon. The Board was given a handout at the meeting entitled "A Visit to the Eucharist Chapel" prepared by Fr. Jim Chelich in 1996.

d. **Curriculum Committee-** Jenni Little

Due to the low response rate to the initial middle school parent survey (sent immediately before the Winter Break) Jenni recommend: seeking and providing parents with more information about the middle school band and choir opportunities that Catholic Central is offering with an emphasis on what the students who would go to Catholic Central for Band/ choir would miss and what meaningful instruction the students who remained would receive. She proposed letting those who are interested still pursue the musical opportunities. Jenni also proposed resending the survey once additional information was available to get a more accurate gage of parent's interest and willingness to participate.

e. **Finance Committee-** Matt Maczka

The proposed budget was discussed during Board Deliberations as described above.

f. **Policy & Planning Committee -** Christi Blum

A call was re-issued for committee to submit their proposed plans for next year. Otherwise, the Committee's written report was relied upon.

g. **Building & Grounds Committee -** Tracy Bandlow

The chair requested to be excused from the second half of the meeting due to a conflicting appointment and deferred to the Holland Home Committee report.

h. **Holland Home-** John Schuring

The chair primarily relied upon the discussion provide during the Administrator's briefing. He offered a brief summary stating that Saint Thomas had been authorized to pursue a possible partnership with the potential Holland Home purchaser.

i. **Fundraising/ Development-** John Schuring

John verbally indicated his willingness to hand off duties for heading up this committee.

j. **Finance Council-** Nancy Kennedy

The representative requested to be excused from the meeting due to other obligations.

k. **Education Foundation-** Judi Serba

The representative requested to be excused from the meeting due to other obligations.

l. **Boosters-** Amy Bocian

The Board was reminded of the upcoming "Golf Fore Sports" event on May 11. The representative requested to be excused from the meeting due to other obligations.

m. **Home and School-** Amy Ziemer

The representative requested to be excused from the meeting due to other obligations.

IX. **Closing Prayer-** Suzi Furtwangler

ATTENDANCE:

Voting Members

President, Board Effectiveness Committee chair, John Schuring: Present
Vice President, Finance Committee chair, Matt Maczka: Present
Secretary, Policy & Planning Committee, Christi Blum: Present
Development & Outreach co-chair, Bryan Rellinger: Excused
Development & Outreach co-chair, George Sharpe: Present, Partial
Mission Effectiveness chair, Jessica Poelma: Present
Curriculum Committee chair, Jenni Little: Present
Curriculum Committee, Stacy Slomski: Present
Policy & Planning Committee, Joanne Swan Jones: Present
Building and Grounds Committee chair, Tracy Bandlow: Present, Partial
Fiscal Charitable Giving Committee, Erin Schmuker: Excused
Finance Committee, James Leonard: Present
Technology Committee, Chuck Rushmore: Present

Non-Voting Ex Officio Members and/or guests

Additional Attendees: Missy Meighan, Monica Morin, Dottie Yocca Pastor, Fr. Jim Chelich: Partial
Principal, Suzi Furtwangler: Present Assistant Principal,:
Development & Outreach Dir., Betsy Edgerton: Present Education Foundation Pres., Judi Serba: Excused
Home & School President, Amy Ziemer: Excused Boosters President, Amy Bocian: Present
Co-coordinator of Finance, Marie Miller: Absent Dir. Religious Formation, Patti Reynolds: Absent
Parish Finance Council Chair, Nancy Kennedy: Excused

Proposed Schedule of Topics for the 2017- 2018 Year

August 30 -Retreat
September 14 -Facilities planning and annual goal setting
October 18(W) -Vote on Adoption of Strategic Plan
November 9 -Diocesan Board Training/ Board Summit at Cathedral Square
December 14(W) -Implications of Holland Home Move discussion
January 11 -Visit from the Superintendent of Catholic Schools
February 8 -Setting the tuition rate for the 2018-2019 school year
- Initial 2018-2019 Budget Discussions
- Ongoing Holland Home Property Discussion
-Continuing Strategic Planning
March 1 - 2018-2019 Budget Planning
- Bullying Policy
- Educational Support Services Overview
April 12 - Budget Finalization
May 10 -
June 14 -Year-end wrap up