

## Saint Thomas the Apostle Board of Education Minutes from the Regular Meeting of the Board on Thursday, November 8, 2018

The meeting was conducted from 6 pm until 8:20 pm.

**Board Packets submitted to members on:** November 5, 2018.

**Board Homework:** No homework coming into the November 8, 2018 meeting.

For the December 13, 2018 meeting, please prepare your Board profile information: 1) why you serve on the Board, 2) your committee assignment, and 3) your occupation to be posted on the school's website under the Board of Education section with your photo. An e-mail requesting this information was sent on November 8, 2018.

### CALENDAR ITEMS

**Next Board Meeting:** Thursday, December 13, 2018 at 6 pm

### Meeting Agenda

- I. **Opening Prayer-** Fr. Jim Chelich
- II. **Pastor's Report-** Fr. Jim Chelich
  - a. Fr. Jim reported on attempts at mutual reconciliation between the parties involved in the events that lead to the decision of the former Athletic Director to step down.
  - b. Fr. Jim spoke in affirmation of the new Dean of Students and praised his proactive interest in our students, his levelheadedness, and his availability as an accessible source of counsel to the students.
  - c. Fr. Jim is eager to bring resources to parents and stated that he believes doing so will be important to the school going forward. He previewed a list of upcoming programming for parents including:
    - 1) How to talk to children about faith;
    - 2) How to talk to children about sex and their bodies;
    - 3) Offering a Parenting with Love and Logic session on an upcoming Sunday afternoon;
    - 4) Offering a program and panel discussion on Anxiety; and
    - 5) Offering a showing of the movie Screenagers.
- III. **Partner Organization Reports-** Matt Maczka
  - a. **Middle School Representative-** Ian Richthammer
    - 1) Report- It Program: Ian reported on three perceived challenges with the efficacy of the "Report-It" anti-bullying efforts, particularly the e-mail address one is to use to report perceived instances of bullying:
      - a) Middle school students would prefer an anonymous reporting system;
      - b) Middle school students joke about it/ don't take it seriously and/or threaten each other with "reports" to the system; and
      - c) Concerns over appropriate reports and questions of how effective the reporting system is in preventing bullying.
    - 2) Ian reported a request for in-class enrichment options or a deeper dive/higher tracks learning options.
  - b. **Parish Finance Council-** Nancy Kennedy  
The parish is starting to contact those have not responded to the CSA appeal. The process

revealed a significant lag in the diocese's reporting of CSA donations/pledges. The calls have brought in an additional \$10,000, but the parish was still \$40,000 short of required CSA assessment amount. The parish hoped to wrap up the CSA appeal by November 30<sup>th</sup>.

c. **Education Foundation-** Kristi Irwin

No written or verbal report was submitted. The Foundation is trying to encourage bigger thoughts about the school's needs with respect to the Foundation grants.

d. **Home and School-** Shawn Schuring

No written or verbal report was submitted.

e. **Boosters-** Kyle Wohlgemuth

No written or verbal report was submitted.

**IV. Concerns of Visitors-** Matt Maczka

No visitor concerns presented.

**V. Approval of Consent Agenda Items-** Matt Maczka

The October minutes were motioned, seconded, and approved pending a correction to the Curriculum Committee summary.

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

a. **Follow-up to the Middle School Report-**

Suzi Furtwangler indicated that middle school students do use the Report-It e-mail and seem to use it appropriately. Many students enjoy writing to the principal. During the discussions on Report It, questions were asked about whether the reporting would transfer to the Dean of Students position and if a method for anonymous reporting could be considered/developed.

b. **MAP Scores Presentation for Parents-**

Suzi Furtwangler spoke about her upcoming parent presentation about MAP scores. She has added new slides since the spring. She highlighted a new MAP feature that allows more direct comparison of scores between schools using MAP and those using other forms of national testing- .i.e., an ability to compare the public and private school scores.

c. **Screenagers showing-**

Suzi Furtwangler elaborated on the plans to offer parents information on Anxiety as well as regarding the proposed showing of Screenagers. Funding to show Screenagers could be requested from either the Education Foundation or from Home and School.

d. **8th grade survey-**

Erin Schmuker offered assistance with the proposed survey of 8<sup>th</sup> grade families.

**V. Board Deliberations-** Matt Maczka/ Suzi Furtwangler

a. **Vote on three Possible Amendments to the Board Bylaws-** Christi Blum

Christi Blum provided an overview of the Amendments that had previously been distributed to the Board for review and comment. The possible Amendments were described as: 1) A Process to Add/Vote on New Board Directors; 2) A Process for Discussing Confidential Topics/ Meeting in Executive Session; and 3) Adding a Service Requirement Prior to Serving on the Board.

Discussion was held. A motion to approve the Amendments concerning a Process to Add/Vote on New Board Directors and a Process for Discussing Confidential Topics/ Meeting in Executive Session were moved, seconded and approved. The Amendment to add a service requirement prior to becoming a Board Director was dropped. As part of the discussion on Board Service, the Board expressed a desire for additional ways to get involved and get more training, considered ways to become more visible to families (including wearing the Board nametags more often), being featured in the parish booklet for volunteer opportunities, and using the Donut gathering after Mass during Catholic Schools Week as outreach for prospective involvement in committees and as prospective Directors. Extending personal invitations to get involved and reaching out to

newly enrolled families to request participation were suggested as methods of driving involvement and helping with student retention.

**b. Strategic Planning-** Erin Schmuker

Academic Excellence was the focus of this meeting's review of the Strategic Plan. The discussion touched briefly upon the introduction of the new Diocesan curriculum. Progress on the efforts to create a textbook cycle was reported. Plans to reach out to the Catholic high schools to continue work toward comprehensive enrichment programs, particularly STEAM programs, that prepare our students for high school were also briefly discussed. There was a brief discussion about the possible use of assessments for MAP growth. (Additional discussion specifically focused on reading assessments occurred later in the meeting.) Plans for possible visits to observe Blue Ribbon schools in February and March were discussed in detail. (Observation is a standard best practice used by educators.) The focus of the visits will be on academics and on supportive education services, such as the ESS program at Saint Thomas. It was proposed that the Board, faculty and Committee should develop a template with observational goals and proposed questions so that a set of similar, prioritized information would be gathered at each site visit. The discussion also considered whether it would be beneficial to visit local Blue Ribbon schools (including a discussion on whether it mattered if the schools were public or private) to gather information on local offerings, to get experience observing, and to offer perspectives regarding the trips to other Midwestern Catholic schools. The conversation also discussed potential methods of teacher evaluation including the possibility of reviving teacher surveys and the Administration's use of the Marzano's Teacher Appraisal. The Board was informed that the school would handle the teacher appraisal side of the strategic plan. (Strategic planning review will be adjourned during Dave Faber's visit in January, and the review will pick up with a review of Operational Vitality in February.)

**VI. Board Committee Reports and Action Items**

**a. Marketing & Outreach Committee-** Judi Koepnick/ Betsy Edgerton

1. The Committee is working on a spreadsheet of January to June activities.
2. The #WeAreSaintThomas is using group photos in color and groups of crisp, black and white photos of individual student portraits as part of the Facebook publicity campaign. Recognition and gratitude were extended to photographers Katie Morrow and Julie Balgavy as well as to Cammi Lawrence for her work on the Facebook campaign.
3. Betsy Edgerton has rejoined the Saint Thomas staff. She will focus on driving enrollment and assist with school tours. She will remain on the Board as a non-voting member.
4. While the satellite Lap Time sessions at area nursing homes are successful; the closing of Holland Home means that the sessions are no longer drawing families to the Saint Thomas campus. Therefore, Betsy will explore ways of offering a 90 minute parent/child session at the school again to help drive enrollment and involvement in the school.

**b. Mission Effectiveness-** Jessica Poelma

On February 1<sup>st</sup> as part of Catholic Schools Week, Fr. Stephen Durkee (Head of the Office of Priestly Vocations) will be a keynote speaker at Saint Thomas. As part of his visit, parents will be invited to a vocations luncheon with him. Also discussed were the roles and intersection of the Parent Ministry committee and the Mission Effectiveness committee. Jessica Poelma is looking for additional people who would be willing to work on building additional service opportunities for the Saint Thomas community.

**c. Curriculum Committee-** Veronica Perdue

The Committee discussed the role of reading assessments: including identification of current best reading assessment practices and whether the school is following them. The Board was informed that reading assessments are distinct from the MAP assessments in reading and

language usage, although the MAP reports do provide (in fine print) a suggested Lexile level. The Committee wonders if there is effective communication with families about the assessments used, what mandates govern the assessments, why the current assessments are used/ chosen, and the assessment results. It was proposed that reading specific assessments could become a valuable part of parent conferences that offer information about a student's reading growth, how the reading groups are shaped, and in guiding parents in selecting student specific appropriate reading materials. During the discussion the Board was informed of the school's recent investment in AIMS reading assessments for early readers. The school has been favorably impressed with the quickness of the assessment which nonetheless provides lots of information. So far the preschool and kindergarten classes have been tested and the school is considering expanding the AIMS assessments to all students from K to 5<sup>th</sup> grade to maximize the investment. Other reading assessments mentioned in the discussion include: Lexile and Fountas and Pinnell.

d. **Finance Committee**- Elissa Williams

Jason Leonard attended the Finance Counsel meeting this month. The Parish has not yet met its CSA assessment. The parish is exploring whether the drop in giving (to both the offertory and the CSA) is temporary or permanent due to changing demographics. If the giving drop is permanent, the parish and school may need to jointly re-evaluate how to fund the school. The current funding model is based a year in advance on a percentage of projected offertory giving. Any changes to a funding model would need to be broadcast well in advance, especially if significant changes are anticipated.

The proposed re-evaluation of the Parishioner/Non-Parishioner Tuition Policy may occur more quickly in light of the funding concerns. The current practice of determining whether one is participating in parish life (when tracking envelopes are not turned into the offertory collection as requested) requires lots of monitoring since many sources are checked for signs of participation in parish life. One proposal proposed to eliminate some of the budgetary guesswork was to see if parents would be willing to forecast or pledge their anticipated giving levels to the offertory and CSA as part of the school registration paperwork. (For example: "I am a Saint Thomas parishioner and am requesting the parishioner rate of tuition. I plan to donate \$ X weekly to the offertory collection and to give \$ X to the CSA.") Another proposal was to charge a single rate of tuition and then use a scholarship system to award parish assistance to those who are active parishioners. Issues to be clarified as further proposals are developed and considered include who (school or parish) should create and enforce the policy and/or determine the qualifications of what it means to be a parishioner to qualify for a tuition reduction.

The Auction may be moving to fall under the oversight of the Board. Changes to Auction for its long term viability and maximum effectiveness are still under consideration, including whether there should be a part time employee tasked with coordinating the Auction or whether to downscale into smaller fundraisers.

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

The Committee relied on its written report. The Committee hopes to present the Board with the new Extra-Curricular Policy for comment at the December meeting to allow for a vote to adopt the policy at the January meeting.

f. **Building & Grounds Committee** – Josh Szymanski

The Committee relied upon its written report.

g. **Technology Committee**- Chuck Rushmore

The Committee is looking into ways to increasingly move to online registration to avoid re-entry of data. The Committee is seeking information on current efforts and seeking input on possible

improvements as well as how to make things user friendly. The Committee was warned of requirements that some forms must remain paper copies: the Concussion Policy form and the Acceptable Use (of Technology) Policy. Additionally, the Committee expressed a goal of making sure any technology can feed an end use, for example CAD programming ties to the proposed 3D printer.

Mention was made of the efforts to push people to use the school website as the primary source for everything for both current and prospective families. The school is in the process of updating the school's website.

VII. **Closing Prayer-** Suzi Furtwangler

