

# Saint Thomas the Apostle Board of Education Minutes from the Regular Meeting of the Board on Thursday, October 11, 2018

The meeting was conducted from 6 pm until 7:48 pm.

**Board Packets submitted to members on:** October 8, 2018.

## **Board Homework:**

None coming into the October 11, 2018 meeting.

## **CALENDAR ITEMS**

**Next Board Meeting:** Thursday, November 1, 2018 at 6 pm, with photos in advance from 5:30 to 6 pm  
Diocesan Board Summit at Cathedral Square, WEDNESDAY, November 7, 2018 at 6:30 pm

### **Meeting Agenda**

I. **Opening Prayer-** Suzi Furtwangler

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

a. Fr. Jim offered gratitude and praise for the successful Auction. He noted a contrast between the success of Auction (and last year's Capital Campaign) and the persistent decline in the offertory collection. Father will have an offertory appeal next month and the Parish Finance Council is exploring creative ways to invite fiscal support. Father strongly believes that every parish family should be assisted in giving their children a Catholic education regardless of economic status provided that the family actively supports and participates in the faith life of the parish. Some families are not showing attendance and/or giving at minimal levels, yet claiming parishioner status to obtain a lower tuition rate. (Tithing is supposed to support both the parish and to help offset the expenses of the school.) Father proposed renaming and rethinking the qualifications for the parishioner rate of tuition including requirement to either support the parish as a specified level of offertory giving and/or by mandatory proof of participation in the parish's faith life by turning in the offertory envelop weekly.

III. **Partner Organization Reports-** Matt Maczka

a. **Middle School Representative-** Ian Richthammer

Ian suggested that middle school students might focus and perform better on MAP if it was all in one week rather than spread over one month. He indicated that students view the testing as being insignificant (like a quiz). He also suggested finding a way to tie it into enrichment programming, which middle school students perceive as "cool and fun". Ian mentioned that 15 minute lunch period is short, especially with popular, tasty, but "messy" hot lunch food options. He spoke in favor of retaining Physical Education classes and recess for middle school students who still need to let some energy out. His "homework" was to learn what the middle school students hope to see from the new Dean of Students.

b. **Parish Finance Council-** Nancy Kennedy

The parish Finance Counsel is looking into why the offertory collection seems to be dropping about 10% overall. Nancy also addressed the low participation rate in the diocesan Catholic Services Appeal (CSA) annual campaign. The diocese assigns an assessment amount that must be met. Fund raised in excess of the assessment are returned to the parish. Shortfalls are charged against the offertory collection amounts. Only 276 families of 729 in the parish have given to the CSA. The Finance Counsel is looking revise and the CSA process. She hopes to establish a two month CSA "season" and is exploring options to make participation simpler, habitual, and broader.

c. **Education Foundation-** Kristi Irwin

The Tuition Angel fund has provided \$35,000 in tuition assistance this year, so the Education Foundation will address other school needs beyond tuition assistance. The Education Foundation is once again offering the faculty opportunities to apply for Foundation grants. As before, the pool of grant monies will be divided into “mini” grants with an available pool of up to \$5,000 and “larger” grants from a pool of up to \$15,000. Teachers write an application that must be approved by the Principal and then submitted to the Foundation by October 26<sup>th</sup>. Grants will be voted on and awarded in November. The Foundation is trying to make sure the grants address the school’s true needs and is considering whether any of the applications also further the school’s Strategic Plan. A second round of Foundation grants will be offered in the spring.

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

a. **Auction Debriefing-** Dottie Yocca, Auction Chair

Dottie and other past Auction chairs are seeking a way to simplify and sustain Auction by creating a framework for future Auction chairs. Included in the framework would be candid assessments of what aspects of Auction have been successful as well as mistakes and/or less successful options. Another goal is to create intentionality regarding identification of the needs for which the Auction funds are being raised and deliberation regarding the amount of funding required. She also suggests evaluating whether it should remain a joint school/parish venture. These plans should reduce stress and work for the future Auction chairs and avoid “reinvention of the wheel” each Auction cycle. Some brief observations from Dottie: An Auction “theme” is unnecessary. A gathering time like the cocktail hour is essential to sustain the wonderful sense of community and celebration. The sponsorship efforts, live auction items, sign up parties, and paddle raises were among the most successful fundraising features of the evening. The kids’ art work and the FAN (Fund-a-need) tables were less successful.

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

The September minutes were motioned, seconded and unanimously approved.

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

a. **Diocesan Transportation/Bussing-** The Diocese is considering an overhaul of the bussing system including creating a new route map and utilization of a different billing policy. Under the proposed new system, the schools rather than the Diocese would bill transportation costs to serviced families (via Smart Tuition) on a monthly rather than annual basis and the school would pass those fees back to the diocese.

b. **New Dean of Students Introduced-** The new Dean of Students, Tim Gibson, attended the first part of the meeting and introduced himself. Suzi indicated that the new position will be student centered, allowing Suzi to focus more on classrooms and curriculum. Suzi anticipated spending the first few weeks helping Tim acclimate to the new position. The Board offered to help with the transition. Erin Schmuker offered to review the Strategic Plan with Tim.

c. **Athletic Director Search update-** The committee has been actively interviewing to fill the position and a decision should be announced shortly.

d. **Enrollment** remains at 333 students. The budget was based on an estimate enrollment of 343. The Board discussed offertory and CSA giving and debated Father Jim’s thoughts on possible revisions to how eligibility for the parishioner rate of tuition is determined. One option was to have parishioners fill out a form similar to those non-parishioners have to submit to their pastors to qualify for the reduced tuition rate.

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

**a. Proposed Amendments to the Board Bylaws- Christ Blum**

Three possible amendments to the Board Bylaws were presented for the Board's consideration. A vote on the Amendments will be held at the November Board meeting. Amendment One sets forth a procedure to add Directors to the Board and proposes the use of a Terms list to allow for succession planning for the Board. Amendment Two sets forth a procedure for "Executive Session" to be used when the Board needs to deliberate confidential matters. Amendment Three proposed adding a service requirement prior to being nominated to be a Board Director.

**b. Review of Strategic Plan: Mission Effectiveness and Academic Excellence**

1. The first point discussed was whether and how to obtain feedback for the strategic plan. Possible sources of feedback were identified including: the mission effectiveness survey and the annual diocesan surveys. For direct feedback, the possibility of converting a portion of the spring State of the School meetings to explicitly solicit input or by adapting an existing fall meeting (like the open house) to gather input that could then be reported on in the spring at the State of the School meeting.

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

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

Plans for Grand Friends day were revealed. Home and School is helping plan and staff the event. The effective #WeAreSaintThomas theme will be built upon this year to continue to drive enrollment. Updated student photos are being taken by volunteer photographers: Katie Morrow and Julie Balgavy. Photos of grand friends were also planned to be used to develop long term outreach to grand friends in support of the school.

**b. Mission Effectiveness- Jessica Poelma**

The Committee supplemented its written report by affirming the success of the fall Rosary and the adjustments to Adoration schedule. The Committee is planning events for May around the rosary and Divine Mercy.

**c. Curriculum Committee- Veronica Perdue**

1) Visits to 2 Blue Ribbon Midwestern Catholic schools are being considered for March. Schools being considered are St. Pius X in Granger, IN and Marie Goretti in Westfield, IN. The visiting team will be comprised of: the Principal, teacher representatives from K-2<sup>nd</sup> grade, 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade, and 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade, the ESS director and possibly one or two Board members, such as the Curriculum Committee chair. Site visits are a commonly employed practice in Education to affirm what one's own school is doing well and to acquire "best practices" and other inspiration to bring back to one's school. It was proposed that the committee or the site visit team develop a list of questions and goals that could be shaped by the accreditation standards to give direction to the site visit(s) and unify the observances from the differing sites.

2) Professional Development and Lucy Caulkins Professional Development (PD)

Efforts are being made to determine the shape of the desired Lucy Caulkins professional development training before assigning a time to it. It was suggested that the training might be able to be covered by a grant from the Education Foundation if the cost could be determined prior to the October 26<sup>th</sup> deadline. On a related issue, Jessica proposed talking to Jill Annable to identify how much time is being take up by diocesan controlled Professional Development and the ramifications it may have on an individual school's ability to seek in house PD for its' own programs. Also, a possible collaboration to share Lucy Caulkins PD costs with other schools was suggested

3) Veronica is working to create a grid of the extra-curricular programs available to our students.

4) The Committee would also like to ask Jill Annable to give an outside prospective on how to generate Map growth in light of it being a Strategic Plan goal.

d. **Finance Committee**- Elissa Williams

Additional discussion on the past Capital Campaign, the CSA situation, the offertory decline and parishioner/non-parishioner rates of tuition was renewed. The Committee otherwise relied upon its written report.

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

The Committee relied upon its written report.

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

Attempts are being made to develop a joint Capital Budget plan for parish and school.

The Committee relied upon its written report.

g. **Technology Committee**- Chuck Rushmore

The Committee relied upon its written report.

VII. **Closing Prayer**- Suzi Furtwangler

