

Saint Thomas the Apostle Board of Education Minutes from the Second Regular Meeting of the Board, on Wednesday, October 18, 2017

The meeting began at 6 p.m. and concluded at 7:50 p.m.

Board Packets submitted to members on: Friday, October 13, 2017.

E-mails to members:

Strategic Plan Strategies Choices: September 8, 2017

Auction Twist Table vote topics: September 18, 2017

Auction Twist Table vote outcome: September 22, 2017

Committee Report Template distributed: October 6, 2017

Meeting Reminder: October 10, 2017

Strategic Plan submitted for review: October 12, 2017

Board member profiles topics/questions: October 17, 2017

HOMEWORK/TO DO LIST:

The Board should submit “wish list items” for the future of the school and the implementation of the strategic plan to be turned in to Erin Schmuker for compilation by November 8. There will be a special Board meeting on Tuesday, November 14, 2017 at 6 pm to discuss and prioritize the proposed plans. Erin will prepare the notes/minutes from the Special Meeting.

TALKING POINTS: None identified

CALENDAR ITEMS:

School Events: Grandparents’ Day, Friday, October 20 at NEW TIME of 1:30 pm

Upcoming Board Meetings: The next meeting will be on Thursday, November 9th. **However, it will be held from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm on the second floor of Cathedral Square in conference room A.**

Additionally, the Board will have a meeting on TUESDAY, November 14, 2017 at 6 pm in the School Library to discuss plans for the implementation of the Strategic Plan and to address other visions for the future of the school. The Board’s December meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 1

Next Committee Meeting(s): The Curriculum Committee typically meets on the last Sunday of the month.

Meeting Agenda

- I. **Opening Prayer-** Suzi Furtwangler

- II. **Visitor Communications-**John Schuring
 - a. Uniform concerns- At the request of a parent, the Board held a limited discussion about whether the Uniform Code should be amended to permit Lands’ End polos and fleeces with logos to be worn “for the life of the item”. A variety of concerns (including: a) financial affordability to obtain new items, b) the wastefulness of discarding usable items, c) enforceability of the code when items come from various providers and new items are only to come from the specified uniform provider, not former providers, d) fairness to families who had followed the rules and bought from each new uniform provider as directed, e) circumvention of the existing rules, etc.) from a variety of viewpoints were discussed. Ultimately, it was determined that the uniform code would

not change. Lands' End items (except plaid jumpers and skirts) will no longer be allowed after the end of the 2017-2018 school year. Flynn O'Hara items will be allowed "for the life of the item." New uniform items are to be purchased from Educational Outfitters.

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

a. The minutes from the September 14, 2017 meeting were motioned, seconded and approved pending a clarification from Judi Serba of the total amount of grant monies available for mini and larger Education Foundation grants. Clarification was subsequently obtained, the minutes were clarified and submitted.

IV. **Principal's Report-** Suzi Furtwangler

a. **Feasibility Study Update-** The Diocesan Feasibility committee for the proposed Ada Cascade Catholic school has made its recommendation to the Bishop. A communication from the Diocese will be issued to everyone simultaneously once a decision about whether to create the new Catholic grade school in Ada/Cascade is made.

b. **Holland Home Move Status-** For clarification, Suzi Furtwangler indicated that Holland Home is the nursing home adjacent to the property and that Care Resources is a Senior Daycare facility. Suzi planned to meet with Care Resources on November 3 (two weeks from Friday) to discuss Care Resources' hopes vis a vis Holland Home's planned departure. Suzi had also been in contact with the VP of Operations at Holland Home, who indicated that the move is progressing faster than projected. The Holland Home VP of Operations also indicated that due to the 3 year transition, prospective development corporations were hesitant to commit to the property. A lengthy discussion was held regarding whether the Board
The discussion transitioned to focus on the opportunities and challenges created by Holland Home's decision to move away from Fulton over a period of 3 years especially in light of having a defined capital campaign issued prior to awareness of these changes. Mention was also made of improvements that the school needs to undertake within its existing walls. Collaboration with other neighbors/partners regarding the challenges, impact, and possibilities of this move was recommended. Collaboration with parents with skills sets in relevant fields was also urged. Ideally, programming should drive facilities use, renovations and growth. Accordingly, the Board was asked to develop a wish list of programming and campus aspirations/dreams to be discussed at Board meeting dedicated to those topics to be held on Tuesday, November 14th. "Dream" topics are to be submitted to Erin Schmuker for compilation by Thursday, November 9 (wish list "dream" topics mentioned in passing included: a new gym, a playground, new/updated labs, day care, classrooms dedicated to "specials", sensory rooms, and rooms for inclusion and a Grotto prayer space).

Recommendations to tour Ada Christian for general innovative ideas was proposed. Additionally, a tour of the Grand Rapids Aviation High School was proposed to see innovations regarding STEM.

Ultimately, Suzi Furtwangler said she would reach out to all of the neighbors potentially affected by the Holland Home move including: the Holland Home VP of Operations, the Holland Home Board, to Care Resources and to Children's Healing Center. George Sharpe offered to check in with some of his site developing contacts to see if there were any proposed plans for the Holland Home site.

c. This year a new methodology of teacher assessments following the Marzano method has been implemented by the Diocese and will be used at Saint Thomas. Both

formal observations with advanced notice and informal observations without notice will be performed.

c. **MAP Scores:** This is the Measure of Academic Progress test administered twice a year to determine actual student growth against projected student growth. The fall scores are back and teachers are attempting to use the “drill down” feature of the testing to develop individualized plans for each student’s needs. Mention was made of pursuing programming available from Kahn Academy that customizes and links the computerized programs offered to an individual student to his/her own MAP scores so that each student received level appropriate challenges. It was suggested that IXL is helping math scores remain strong and that perhaps IXL for language arts could be used to greater effect. A series of question arose about the measure of growth indicators for both the school’s growths and the student’s growth, since both sets of numbers appeared to be low. Further investigation on the topic and scores was promised.

V. **Committee Reports:**

a. **Outreach & Development Committee-** on behalf of Betsy Edgerton

Grandparents’ Day plans were in progress, but being adjusted due to a funeral adjusting the time schedule. No written report was submitted.

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

A written report submitted. Jessica added information about Wednesday Adoration: 1) anyone can drop in and pray for whatever available time one has on Wednesdays if one does not have time for a full prayer shift, 2) Jessica is looking for ways to encourage parishioners to participate in the Adoration program, 3) For those who are uncertain what to do during Adoration a prayer guidance sheet is provided, and 4) young children are welcome to attend the Adoration with a parent.

c. **Curriculum Committee-** Jenni Little

A written report was submitted. Jenni provided information about the Tuesday Talk held to encourage participation on Board Committees, including the curriculum committee. Jenni reported that parents are seeking more extracurricular activities such as: theater, Lego robotics, Spelling Bee participation and Science Olympiad participation. A discussion was held on whether it was better for these activities to be teacher lead or parent lead. Teachers face burn out from too many job demands. Parent led activities are prone to continuity issues when the parent in charge steps away from leadership.

d. **Finance Committee-** Matt Maczka

A written report was submitted. Matt Maczka provided a capital campaign update. Matt mentioned that there appears to have been a glitch in the SmartAid software as \$50,000 more than projected in financial aid was awarded this past year and that this affected the availability of the funds that the Education Foundation had pledged to the school. There are many questions regarding how the decisions surrounding the determination of need are made and funded. Matt expressed the intent to make the aid awarding process more transparent, less subjective, and more collaborative. Matt also indicated that he continues to explore the \$50,000 discrepancy between projected and actual tuition revenues. Although the enrollment target was met, allegedly a different student population mix (more kindergartner and preschool

families paying at a lesser rate of tuition) has skewed the projections. Some funds may be picked up in increased Kindergarten enrichment enrollments and additional transfer students. However, the school needs to remain cautious in its discretionary spending.

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

A written report was submitted. Christi indicated that the Board's vote on what to include as Board Goals in the Strategic Plan would in turn shape the goals for the Policy and Planning Committee's work.

f. **Building and Grounds Committee-** Tracy Bandlow

A written report was submitted. Tracy Bandlow indicated that she too had been attempting to e-mail leadership at Holland Home for details about the proposed move and future plans for the space.

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

a. **Auction Twist/Fund-A-Need Table Recap-** John Schuring/ Erin Schmuker

Twist Tables have been re-named as "Fund a Need" Tables. The Auction Committee accepted the Board's top three recommendations for table topics (STEM needs, Sensory/Specialized/Resource department needs, and automated water fountains). The Auction Committee proposed that the remaining two table topics be funding accessible doors for the Church and funding for Fr. Jim's 70th birthday celebration. The Board discussed the suitability of the doors and party as Auction table topics. Accessible entrance doors may already be part of the Capital campaign. Funding for Fr. Jim's party might be better handled by approaching interested individual donors. The Board requested that the Auction Committee consider replacing the accessible doors and party table topics with Auction table topics in support of funding technology needs and funding for Battle Creek Science kits. Additionally, the Board asked if there was a sheet about how Auction funds are to be distributed among the parish, school and Home & School.

b. **Approval of the Strategic Plan-** Suzi Furtwangler, John Schuring, & Christi Blum
The draft version of the Strategic Plan was discussed. A few requests for changes were made including: to remove the word "common" from the description of the new Diocesan curriculum description to avoid possible confusion with "common core curricula," to change the wording of the measures of third party funding and student population growth to allow for the possibility of successful expansion of the programming, and to use the description of "physically and cognitively diverse" rather than neurodiversity. The changes were agreed upon. The Strategic Plan was then voted upon and adopted with the proposed changes. Suzi Furtwangler and Christi Blum will meet on October 23rd to incorporate the requested changes to the Strategic Plan and forward the finalized plan to Board Members.

c. **Diocesan Board Summit for next meeting-** John Schuring

The Board will attend the Diocesan Board Summit meeting on Thursday, November 9th at 6:30 pm at Cathedral Square. Further details will be sent via e-mail. Additionally, the Board will hold a meeting on Tuesday, November 14th at 6:30 pm to discuss ideas for the future of Saint Thomas relative to the Strategic Plan. The focus of the meeting is will be on how programming and offerings will drive the use of existing space, improvements to the campus, as well as any anticipated future physical campus needs.

VII. **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
Mission Effectiveness chair, Jessica Poelma: Present
Curriculum Committee chair, Jenni Little: Present
Curriculum Committee, Stacy Slomski: Excused
, Joanne Swan Jones: Excused
Building and Grounds Committee chair, Tracy Bandlow: Present
Finance Committee, James Leonard: Present
Development/ Charitable Giving Team, Erin Schmuker: Present

Non-Voting Ex Officio Members and/or guests:

Additional Attendees: None Pastor, Fr. Jim Chelich: Excused
Principal, Suzi Furtwangler: Present Assistant Principal, Liz Peters: Present
Education Foundation Pres., Judi Serba: Excused Development & Outreach Dir., Betsy Edgerton: Excused
Home & School President, Amy Ziemer: Excused Boosters President, Amy Bocian: Excused
Co-ordinator of Finance, Marie Miller: Absent Dir. Religious Formation, Patti Reynolds: Absent

Proposed Schedule of Topics for the 2017-2017 Year

August -Retreat
September 14 -Facilities Planning discussion and Annual Goal Setting
October 13(W) -Approval of Strategic Plan
November 9 -Diocesan Board Summit at Cathedral Square at 6:30
December 14(W) -Proposed combined business and team building meeting
January 11 - Initial 2018-2019 Budget discussion
February 8 -
March 1 -
April 12 -State of the School meetings for parents
May 10 -Approve 2018-2019 Budget
June 14 -Vote and welcome new officers and Board members
Year-end wrap up