

Saint Thomas the Apostle Board of Education Minutes from the First Regular Meeting of the Board, on Thursday, September 14, 2017

The meeting began at 6 p.m. and concluded at 7:38 p.m.

Board Packets submitted to members on: September 11, 2017. Graphs submitted separately on September 11, 2017

E-mails to members: Regarding information to vote on for the Strategic Plan on September 8, 2017

HOMEWORK/TO DO LIST:

Vote for Twist Table recommendations

Vote for Board Strategies to be included in the Strategic Plan

CALENDAR ITEMS:

Next Board Meeting: WEDNESDAY, October 18, 2017, 6 p.m.

Meeting Agenda

I. **Opening Prayer-** Fr. Jim Chelich

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

Fr. Jim spoke to the Board in detail about his plans and hopes for an upcoming capital campaign. A new feature of the campaign is that it will also approach non-parishioner school families for contributions. Father shared his priority list of the needs of the parish and school. He also expressed his intentions for how any funds raised beyond the targeted goal would be applied to the future facilities needs of the combined church and school campus. Fr. Jim made it clear that his goal is to prepare the parish and school for his eventual retirement by having both the facilities and the finances in good order for a possible successor. These minutes will defer to the capital campaign materials that will be provided to all school families and parishioners and the upcoming homilies on the subject for further details concerning the campaign.

Fr. Jim also spoke of his pastoral plan for the school for the year. He has been working on tools and a booklet on the Mass for children. Additionally, he is planning a series of homilies about the integration of virtues into daily life, friendships, and Sacraments such as Confirmation and Marriage. A virtues guide was distributed to parents to support learning. Additionally, Fr. Jim is continuing his efforts to build programs on parenting skills to assist parents in talking to their children about topics such as faith and the media.

Fr. Jim was complimented on one of his recent homilies and a recommendation was made to either record or provide written copies of Father's homilies at the school Masses and to make them available on the website. This would enable parents who are unable to attend the school Mass to hear and discuss the message from Mass with their students.

III. **Visitor Communications-**

a. The Education Foundation announced that it was offering a series of grants to the faculty this year to fund extras that the budget does not cover. Mini grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000 are being offered, up to a total of \$5,000. Additionally, a sum of up to \$15,000 was being offered for larger grants. Total grant money being offered is \$20,000. The specific details of how the grant process would work were still being developed by the Foundation. Any faculty member may apply for these grants by filling out an application and presenting it to the principal for approval. After approval, the

application is forwarded to the Foundation for consideration, voting, and possible funding. The faculty was to be informed of the grant opportunities, rules and deadlines at the next faculty meeting. The Education Foundation was thanked for this opportunity. Additionally, the Education Foundation was questioned about a decrease in the amount of project assistance it intends to offer this year. In the spring, the Foundation estimated that due to the success of the Angel Tuition fundraising at auction, that the Foundation would have \$40,000 to \$50,000 available to offer for school projects/needs. However, the Foundation is saying that despite projections, a large sum of Foundation monies was applied to tuition aid (a priority of the Foundation) and that a substantially smaller amount was now being offered for school projects/needs. The Foundation offered to check into and then provide more details about how the change arose.

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

a. The minutes from the May 11, 2017 meeting were motioned, seconded, and approved without amendments.

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

a. **Diocesan New School Feasibility Study-** The study was issued in late summer as projected. The results of the study are expected to be announced on October 10, 2017.

b. **Holland Home-** Holland Home is exploring opportunities to move in the next three years. Various scenarios are being considered for how the Holland Home properties might be repurposed and adapted for future use. Many details about Holland Home's intentions and plans were unknown as the plans were incidentally discovered at a meeting for volunteers and brought to the administration's attention. The materials obtained from the Holland Home volunteer meeting were provided to the Board and comprised the extent of available information. Plans are now in place for more direct communication between Holland Home and our school's administration. There are a number of concerns about the future tenancy of the Holland Home buildings and the possible changes to the nature of Grace Street. Additional concerns about safety and the learning environment if there is significant demolition and/or construction were discussed. Suzi Furtwangler indicated she will "put out feelers" to individuals she has relationships with who either sit upon the Board for Holland Home and to her contacts at Care Resources who may be moving into a portion of the vacated space. Various members of the board advocated considering this potential move and the fact that Saint Thomas is considering a capital campaign as an opportunity to explore whether at least a portion of the Holland Home property could/should be acquired to address school concerns of being land locked and to preserve safe property perimeters. The Board recommended that proposals be made to both Fr. Jim and the parish Finance Council to consider whether acquiring any of the Holland Home (or Care Resources) properties adjacent to the school grounds would be beneficial and could feature in the upcoming capital campaign. The finance chair cautioned the Board that the capital campaign was in the advanced planning stages and that the success of the proposals was therefore dubious. Discussion at this point segued into a discussion of whether the Capital Campaign list addressed what the school considered to be its biggest capital needs and whether any revisions could or should be requested.

c. **MAP results/ RIT scores:** Saint Thomas outperformed the diocese average and the national average in every area but 4th grade language use, where it outperformed the national average and was one point beneath the diocesan average.

VI. **Committee Reports:**

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

An overview of the written report and accompanying charts regarding enrollment was provided. One chart noted that 13 of the 32 new families were non-parishioners. As anticipated, the greatest enrollment of new families ranged from P3 through 1st grade. A chart noted enrollment of 3 ethnically diverse students among 42 new students. A report on the school's inclusion of children with cognitive and physical impairments will be forthcoming.

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

The written report was revised to reflect that sources for a \$500 grant were being sought (rather than writing/ applying for an identified grant) for Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) materials. Applying for an Education Foundation mini-grant would be recommended as a possible source of funding.

Wednesday adoration is off to a good start and appears popular with the parents and the students. Students feel special when they receive the notes that they were prayed for, especially when they are personalized.

Additional information was provided in the written report.

c. **Curriculum Committee-** Jenni Little

A written report was submitted with additional information.

The curriculum committee did not feel it was part of their mission to work on the steps matrix salary schedule that the school hoped to have in place prior to the next accreditation review in 5 years. Liz Peters will research salaries with the Michigan Association of Non Public Schools (MANS) and Erin Schmuker will help her polish the information.

Implementation of the new Lucy Caulkins writing curriculum is beginning. The faculty is working to develop a list of common language to be used to teach the curriculum for consistency/continuity between grades.

The curriculum committee recommends supplementing the information provided on the website about each faculty member to include a description of the educator's own education, certifications and experience. Additionally, the committee recommended promoting a general understanding of the overall curriculum utilized by the school by promoting its outline and features on the website to assist current parents and tantalize prospective parents with the school's offerings. A related informative discussion was held concerning when fees are and are not assessed for changes to the school's website.

d. **Finance Committee-** Matt Maczka

No significant updates reported at this time.

VII. **Board Deliberations and Committee Action Items-** John Schuring/ Suzi Furtwangler/
Christi Blum

a. **Auction Twist Tables-**

The faculty were consulted and provided an initial list of possible Twist Table themes/projects. Discussion was held to generate additional ideas and about what types of themes/projects are successfully funded at auction. Erin Schmuker offered to go through the list to group the faculty's proposals and add the new ideas. Members are to e-mail any additional recommendations to Erin by Sunday. She will provide an updated list on Tuesday and members are to vote by next Thursday. Erin will also liaison with the Auction committee on Twist Tables going forward.

b. **Strategic Planning and Goal Setting-**

Board input was requested to narrow the possible Board Strategies section of the

Strategic Plan from 9 to 5. Members are to e-mail recommendations to Christi Blum by Tuesday so that the input may be finalized by next Thursday.

c. New Committee Report Template-

A uniform Board Committee Report template was created by Erin Schmuker and utilized by the Mission Effectiveness Committee. A request was made to add the school's mission statement to the form, but it was otherwise praised. The template will be distributed for use by all committees in time for next month's Board meeting.

VIII. Closing Prayer- Suzi Furtwangler

ATTENDANCE:

Voting Members:

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

Non-Voting Ex Officio Members and/or guests:

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

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 at Cathedral Square
December 13(W)-Proposed social meeting off site
January 11 -
February 8 -
March 1 -
April 12 -
May 10 -
June 14 -Elections and Year-end wrap up