

Saint Thomas the Apostle Board of Education Minutes

September 12, 2024 (6:00pm to 8:00pm)

Opening Prayer - Fr. Jim

Pastor Report -

2 Passions:

The early childhood center is progressing well, and we're excited about the positive impact it's having on the community. It's helping define our identity and what St. Thomas represents to those we serve. Father has expressed his special thanks and deep gratitude, especially to the staff who came out this past Sunday to walk our parish through the center.

Father has encouraged Brian to create a Board of Education manual, which has already proven to be a valuable resource. This manual will help streamline understanding and navigation of board responsibilities. We'll provide printed copies, and it will also be available digitally.

St. Thomas's development is becoming increasingly noticeable. Betsy has been invited to submit a proposal for naming the childhood center. Prayers at 1:00 9/13, chances that we'll reach our fundraising goal.

Additionally, Father Jim has approved the addition of three new members to the board.

Mission Moment - Michelle Morrow – Principal at Saint Paul.

St Paul Root Beliefs - bringing the beliefs to forefront on 3 core beliefs. (stemmed from previous years and expanding)

Mission to shape the child in likeness of God.

- Excellence happens on purpose
- God is at the center of our lives
- We are made for more

To enhance their faith families, they began their official year in 2019 by starting each morning with a gym session that brings together students from grades K-8. For grades 5-8, this session serves as a foundation-building activity with staff members participating. They've introduced a creative "handshake" tradition, which includes a fun Friday competition centered around these handshakes. This initiative helps students connect with the weekly theme and fosters a sense of community.

As students walk down the hallway, they're encouraged to greet their peers with a handshake, reinforcing our cross-grade interactions. This approach, which they call "Organized Chaos," creates purposeful noise and lively discussion, channeling students toward constructive human interaction.

They also focus on connecting lessons to Christ, ensuring that every lesson reflects our faith. Each classroom features a saint, chosen by the staff, who has personal significance to them. As students progress through grades, they become increasingly knowledgeable about these saints, deepening their connection to our faith.

Themes every year - upon entering building plaque "live your mission" constant reminder on how your acts are contributing to mission. Love is in the details, micro details have the biggest impact to move a mission forward!

St. Paul is Growing:

- Four (4) new classrooms over the past 7 years at St. Paul - callout by Ryan -
- K-3 co teaching, 30-35 students per grade level (2 certified teachers) The teachers work together planning and teaching together.
- 4-5 Collaborate 3 teachers
- 6-8 multiple teachers

St. Paul requires students to complete 6 mandatory volunteer hours each month, these hours must be completed outside of school hours and outside of the St. Paul community and family unit.

In Phase 2, we are considering implementing service hours for parents as well, with an option to "buy out" of the requirement. We will look to other handbooks, such as those from Notre Dame, for ideas and best practices to inform our approach.

Visitor Concerns - None (Visitors Dismissed)

Limited Jurisdiction/Training (see attached training in 9/12 board folder)

We are a board of limited jurisdiction. This training is coming from the diocese making sure governance is maintained accordingly. Reviewed together with the board, further training is available to gain further understanding (videos/digital copies of bylaws/etc)

Reminders:

- GOOGLE: Grand Rapids Dioceses to find further info.
- 2024-2025 Board of Directors Roster and Terms (all existing and new members shown)
- St.Thomas Board_Oranization Files_-School Board Member Bylaws

Diocesan Survey

Worked together to complete the survey.

Coleman - Questioned financial funding and how best to navigate. **Brain tabled for later discussions**

Partner Organization Reports

Finance (Carla Grant/Mark-absent)

- Reports are available in Google Drive, and timelines are being reviewed by Carla and Mark. We still need to establish goals, aiming to finalize them by the October board meeting.
- It's crucial that the preschool becomes profitable, especially since the PPE funds received years ago, currently utilized at \$100k per year, will be depleted by the end of 2026. We need to gain a better understanding of this to ensure financial sustainability. (This needs to be reviewed as Ryan mentioned this may not be true)
- Regarding the school budget, it's too early in the school year to draw significant conclusions.

Marketing Refresh (David)

- Building a consistent message of branding/logo for St. Thomas education and Parish. Many elements were cleaned up to create a more structured and formal mark. Traditional/Scholarly Look
- Blended elements of cross built in church/celtic cross/door hardware around school to build the logo moving fwd.
- Parish Paint Codes (more reverent) provided for all the colors utilized for St. Thomas. (white/greens/golds...) Font: Cormorant SC and Darker Grotesque
- Alt Paint Codes for School (more vibrant colors)
- Requesting approval from board members along with Ft. Jim. for all the colors/fonts at some point tbd.

Foundation

- We meet monthly to discuss various topics. This month, we'll focus on creating a newsletter for St. Thomas's 100th anniversary, highlighting our legacy and history.
- Auction tickets are still available for purchase until the deadline on September 20. Tickets are \$85 each, with tables priced at \$1,000. We're accommodating new families who need to join with others.
- Based on feedback from 2022, where the main complaint was insufficient time, we've decided to start the event half an hour earlier and extend it by an hour.
- We recently recreated a 1925 photo, which attracted hundreds of families and served as a powerful reminder of our school's rich history.

Boosters

- All equipment provided for Golf outing. New mats in Gym (hornets logo). Trying to get a picture with all the boosters to send out. Oct 11 next CC Tailgate. Next event tentatively scheduled for Jan/Feb.

Home and School (Genevieve Boyle)

- 30 new families, reached out to all new families and set up mentoships.
- Picture Day, looking for volunteers to help.
- If there are other families that you know need help, please advise.
- New family (preschool) - husband teaches at WC and offered up a large shout out to St. Thomas which is why they're here!
- Next month, Betsy is going to ask each member to call on several families to call on behalf of education (scripted).

Committee Reports

Building and Grounds (Coleman)

- Reset goals:
 - Implementing safety and priorities (cleaning up last 5%, long term efforts)
 - Making the school more accessible
 - Long term sustainable
- Met with Ted and Don, getting a better understanding of how the school is being kept up.
- Objective: Dont fix things that aren't broken
- Objective: Removing the curb into missionary center
- Roofers engaged to complete on top of the main school area this fall.
- Concerning - rectary roof, needs new roof. (able to wait approx 1YR)
- ECC: all design is complete, intention is to be complete Nov 25.
- Residents (majority) will not use parking, the building will be apartments with criteria. You cannot be on the national sex registry. 40 total, 20 temp-20 permanent. Housing will serve 60% AMI (right at poverty line). November, Go-Live. Tours for Board Members.

Marketing (Mark)

- Refer to written report and refresh above.

Policy & Planning (Molly Kennedy)

- Final oversight of the employee handbook that's still ongoing.

Mission Effectiveness (James Wilson)

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Committee on Directors (Meredith Maczka)

- Recruiting - trying to build out for committees. Constantly recruiting!

Principal/Assistant Principal Report -

- Special Thanks to Jerimiah.

Board Deliberations

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Previous Meeting Minutes Approval

- Motion was made via email from Brian Hillary (9/12) to approve the minutes from our August meeting, the motion was seconded by Brian. All were in favor, none opposed.

Concluding Prayer

Attendance

14 Voting Directors:

Chair, Brian Hillary: Present

Vice Chair, Elissa Williams: Present

Secretary, Jake Smith: Present

Building and Grounds Committee chair, Coleman Baar: Present

Finance and Fiscal Development Committee chair, (Mark Fjelsted)

Marketing Committee chair, (David Shankins)

Mission Effectiveness Committee chair, James Wilson: Present

Policy & Planning Committee chair: Molly Kennedy: Present

Board of Directors Committee chair: Meredith Maczka: Present

At Large Member, Michelle Anderson: Present

At Large Member, Jamie McCabe: Present

At Large Member, Mary Vonk: Present

Ex Officio Members and/or guests

Pastor, Fr. Jim: Present

Principal, Ryan Corcoran: Present

Jeremiah Sluggett

Development & Outreach chair, Betsy Edgerton: Present

Financial, Carla Grant: Absent

Home and School, Genevieve Boyle: Present

Boosters: Ashley Emmerson

Visiting, none