



Saint Mary School Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 9, 2021

In attendance: Jeannie MacDonough, Fr. Michael Rose, Beth Berg, Colleen Clifford, Gabriel Beltran, Brigit Carlson, Tom Kennedy, Courtney Mayo and Kristin Scheffel. Matthew Beaton was in attendance by phone.

Call to order

Opening Prayer

January 12, 2021 Minutes accepted (motion made by Mr. Kennedy, second by Mrs. Scheffel. Motion passes unanimously).

Principal's Report:

Mrs. MacDonough began by addressing Catholic School's Week. Since our last meeting in January the School celebrated Catholic Schools Week. Once again, we partnered with Boroughs Cares for Troops to do a collection for them. We will also do a card making activity.

For Valentine's Day, our students made cards for the Senior Center which are always well received.

Our School Spirit Day (out of uniform) fundraiser raised \$1500 for Shrewsbury Youth and Family Services.

Teacher Appreciation Day and Student Appreciation Day were a lot of fun. While we were not able to gather with our parish community for our annual pasta dinner to kick off Catholic School's Week, we still managed to have a lot of fun.

Our SMPA is trying to think of engaging and different ways to raise funds. Currently they are offering Cards for a Cause which features 30 different cards which comes out to be \$1/card. They are also planning to do a new and improved walk-a-thon which they will call a "fun run." This event will be held on May 21 and they have a company assisting with this event. They will feature an online platform that incentivizes prizes. We're excited to have this new activity. We are targeting financial aid and chrome books as our designated areas to use the funds that we

hope to raise. Dining for dollars every month and has also been very successful thus far. We are grateful to Mrs. Amy McCormack, one of our parents who took over this fundraiser two years ago.

The School held MAP testing in January which was covered over eight (8) weeks. Because of this time frame, the numbers were a little skewed. We will do the testing again in the spring to monitor student growth. We will spend our March 19th professional day for teachers looking at this data from the MAP testing.

For the Lenten season, we are continuing in our participation of Boroughs Cares for Troops. Currently, paper chains line the walls of the School halls for students' good deeds they perform for Lent. We are also collecting goods for St. Anne's Church. We are sending the students to mass this week. One class per 8:30 Mass and our pews are reserved from the public. Each class will go to mass before next week. Students are reading Stations of the Cross this Friday night. We will also try to do the Stations within the School before Easter. Reconciliation services will be scheduled for the older kids.

Over February vacation Mr. Beltran and Mr. McLoughlin worked on the new phone system which is now Cloud based. We eliminated our land lines. This should save money over time and solve other technology issues we had been experiencing.

Recently, the Commonwealth announced that educators can begin vaccination on March 11th. Many teachers have already been able to get their vaccines. A large number have had at least their first shot. We will keep our eyes and ears open for certain days that are to be designated for educators at mass vaccination sites.

In January, we had a couple of cases of COVID report in the middle school. When this occurred, the middle school went remote for Tuesday through Friday. Students had remote classes all day with their teachers. Work was assigned. Teachers and students who were identified as close contacts all tested negative. Our preschool through fourth grade were able to stay at the school. Recently, the Commonwealth released new guidance for transportation, however, we only have about 9 students who ride the bus.

Today, new guidance was issued from DESE for the return for K-5 on April 5. The Commonwealth wants students 3 feet apart but 6 feet without masks for meals. Students cannot face each other for more than 15 minutes. We have already been doing more than this to date and this guidance will not change anything for us.

March 19th is an inhouse professional development day for our teachers. As discussed, the teachers will review the MAP testing data and science teachers have a training on the new program broken up by grade level. Our mission statement and Catholic statement and identity standards will be reviewed as well.

Enrollment update: capacity limits have been reviewed to continue with at least three (3) feet distancing in the fall. Every grade is already close to being at capacity or is at capacity with

many grades already having a waiting list. Only three (3) families have yet not completed their re-enrollment. These families are not counted in our current predictions. By the end of the spring, we may be able to take kids off the waiting list if we know we can proceed with less spacing. We know we will need to make adjustments to certain spaces but we have the ability to do that. We do not expect to be totally full in the upper grades.

Only two Kindergarteners are not returning. Some children from the public school who came are now staying and some are actually bringing their siblings too.

Finance Committee: Colleen Clifford

Mrs. Clifford stated that the committee met on March 3rd. We had projected to end the year at a loss but the loss amount is lessening. The family festival raffle, hot lunch revenue, salary changes are helping. We have lower than expected interest income in light of the economy and our numbers includes the \$23,000 expense of the Kindergarten wall. Our discussion for next year is positive because of the expected numbers of enrollment this year that will set us up for a good year. Nobody seemed upset about the increase in tuition or the elimination of the differentiation in tuition rates for in-parish out of parish families.

Curriculum/Technology Committee: Gabriel Beltran

Mr. Beltran stated that the committee met on March 4 and discussed the technology position. If Mr. Beltran and Mr. McLoughlin continue to do some of the work on the back end, they may be able to have a part-time position rather than have a need for a full-time position. The phone system is a good example of eliminating some of our maintenance issues. We have two servers and are considering moving away from those servers. In order to remove them we need to invest in teacher laptops (google chrome books) to save money on the servers. Our current laptops are at least five years old and are due for an update anyway. Chrome Books don't use the server. We are Google heavy but there is still the ability to use Microsoft Office apps. The Chrome Books were found to be less expensive at Best Buy and Mrs. MacDonough was able to get five of them through a parish grant. The committee is considering having students in fourth grade purchase their Chrome Book as part of their fees. They take the Chrome Book with them for the rest of their time at the School and keep the Chrome Book when they graduate. Mr. McLoughlin also replaced the switches in order to have some extra room for additional technology (this creates more WIFI ports). This change allows us to use the phone system with the new network. Last year we replaced the projectors and added two TVs on the second floor to give the teachers more options with their Chrome Books (to project, etc.). The goal is to provide the same options for the teachers who are downstairs. If they are going to have Chrome Books, we will continue to upgrade those projectors/TVs in order to be able to use the two. We do not need to purchase any printers. Two copiers on lease continue to be very cost effective. Mr. Beaton and Mr. Beltran have built an augmented reality sand table. The table has a camera on top with a projector. The system reads the elevation of the sand. The projector sends a contour of the surface of the sand – it creates a real-life topographic map.

You can make it rain and it will follow the gravity. The plan is to link this to the current science curriculum.

Advancement Committee: Courtney Silvani

Mrs. Silvani stated that the committee met on March 2nd. The Annual Fund for Saint Mary School is at \$54,312.00 or 121% to goal. We have had 113 donors to the Fund. Mrs. Muzzy credited this to donors being more generous. We have had brand new donors and more grandparents donating this year. We had a mini-campaign during Catholic School's Week which we put out on social media. This mini-campaign brought in \$1,000 online. We have also had a mini "Share the Love" campaign where we sent out 95 emails to families and 85 to alumni parents. We sent these through Constant Contacts with photographs and a YouTube clip with instructions on how to "share the love" with Saint Mary School. We also posted on Facebook and YouTube. We plan to follow up with a true event and we are considering sending out a prayer card to our families with our "God made us a Family" prayer with a return envelope for donations. We are currently considering whether to use PayPal moving forward or whether Renweb and Facebook giving options are better for the School. PayPal fees take away from our donations. We would like to send Easter cards to approximately 90 of our donors. We plan to ask students to create the cards. We are planning a Tuition Raffle for April. We would like to start the event at the beginning of April with kick off on Monday, April 5, 2021 and start selling after Mass on the weekends beginning on April 10/11. We will have the drawing on April 30. We want to cap ticket sales at 300 tickets and plan to sell a minimum of 150 tickets in order to hold the event. Tickets can be purchased by cash, check or Venmo. The prize will be \$10,000 to be used towards any tuition, student loan or education-based need for any accredited school in the United States. The prize is not redeemable for cash but the winner will direct the School where to send the winnings. We have just received the permit from the Town Clerk.

Marketing and Enrollment Committee: Jeannie MacDonough

Mrs. MacDonough states that the committee was not able to meet before tonight's meeting. Our website currently has a banner about enrollment that is front and center when you visit our page. The banner is also up outside in front of the Church visible on Main Street. Mrs. Muzzy is great about posting on Facebook and especially during Catholic School's week. Mrs. Muzzy shares out posts (our pre-k has their own Facebook). She has been working with a former parent, Mark Lonergan to take video clips primarily focusing on the lower grade levels which we believe is where we needed a boost. This will give parents a visual on what the classroom looks like, etc.

Mrs. Berg states that she looked on LinkedIn primarily to see whether she could find parents to participate on the Finance Committee. When she did, she found there were LinkedIn groups for elementary schools, which she believes may be a good idea for marketing.

New Topics:

Principal MacDonough announced her decision to step down from her position here with the School. The Board thanks Mrs. MacDonough for her incredible work and dedication for the School. Mr. Kennedy will assist with the search committee for the next Principal of Saint Mary School.

Motion to Adjourn: (Motion made by Mr. Kennedy. Second by Mrs. Scheffel). Motion passes unanimously.

Meeting adjourned.