



SAINT MARY SCHOOL ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

Tuesday, November 17, 2020

Meeting remotely via ZOOM

In attendance: Jeannie MacDonough, Cheryl Dolan, Tom Kennedy, Stephanie Muzzy, Cheryl Dolan, Brigid Carlson, Gabriel Beltran, Beth Berg, Kristin Scheffel, Colleen Clifford and Courtney Mayo

Call to Order:

Opening Prayer

September 22, 2020 Minutes Accepted (motion made by Mrs. Scheffel, second by Mrs. Clifford. Motion passes unanimously).

Principal's Report:

Jeannie thanked everyone for their prayers and appreciated the School's encouragement and support for her and her brother. She thanked Mrs. Dolan for all of the work that she did in Jeannie's absence. Mrs. Dolan orchestrated all the work including the weekly delivery of cards to Jeannie in Jeannie's absence.

We are in our 11th week of in person instruction. The administration is very pleased. The School keeps moving the goal posts – trying to see if we can make it past certain dates. With each day, we are relieved to make it through another day. The family community, faculty and staff are all on board with the rules and everyone wants to be there which shows in their willingness to comply with these rules. Everyone has been cooperative which makes it a lot easier for the administration.

Lisa Powers has been an outstanding point person in making sure the School is consistently following the State and Department of Public Health guidelines.

Nine students continue to work from home. The School is trying to keep them involved as much as we can. They participate in activities (example of fourth grade with guests coming in to speak to them outside in the tent where our at home learners were able to attend as well). With the holidays approaching we are working hard to make sure our families adhere to the state guidelines in light of potential celebrations for holidays. Our language has gotten stronger each week with Monday being the last warning to make sure everyone celebrates safely.

CARES Act money was allocated over the summer. Saint Mary School received a little over \$3,000 – based upon per pupil expenditure. Unfortunately, Court cases over the summer changed the allocation and the allocation is now based on Title I expenditure. Saint Mary School does not have any Title I students. We had spent about \$2,500 of the \$3,400 with some items on backorder. The Shrewsbury Public Schools reached out to advise us that our allocations had changed. Thankfully they agreed that we did not need to reimburse them from what we had already spent, but we had to cancel what was on back-order. We lost about \$1,000. (These backorder items consisted largely of additional sanitizing mist machines). Shrewsbury Public Schools had ordered our items and paid for them so we did not need to worry about reimbursing them for these expenditures as other schools now have to worry about.

The Technology position is still open. Jeannie has interviewed a couple of people and even made a few offers but none have been accepted. Our high school religious education director is helping out teaching technology to

the middle school and Mr. McLaughlin and Mr. Beltran help out with IT issues. We are pushing the job advertisement again on Facebook. We've advertised part-time, full-time and even just the teaching position separately. We're not sure if the lack of interest is related to the pandemic or whether the position is just harder to fill. We're skating by because of the way this year has been going given the pandemic but it will need to become a priority in the second half of the year as we move into the new school year.

MAP testing was in September. We knew given the closure in the spring that the scores would not be what we normally would expect. The kids did a great job and the addition of the new chrome books allowed us to get more testing done in a shorter amount of time. The kids will take the test again in January and that date will be more of our benchmark from the fall testing. We hope to note the growth on those January results.

Mrs. Dolan updated us on STEM week— This is our third year doing Mass STEM week. We had to determine what the kids could do individually versus working in a group. The kids were given baggies of supplies to figure out what to do. Little tweaks were needed but the children loved what we did and were very excited. Stephanie assembled a video and it is on the website and on our YouTube channel. She will share it with the group.

The magazine drive was one fundraiser that SMPA was able to keep. We weren't able to have a kickoff assembly but Mark was able to come in and speak to each class. Cheryl would collect the orders and leave them out front. The parents would take them back to a house, individually bag up the prizes and it was a total success. In fact, the fundraiser was comparable to last year.

Halloween was also different this year. We decided not to have the children wear costumes because we could not hold the parade or have the singing by the younger students, so we did not want parents to feel that they had to spend money on costumes especially if children were not going out trick or treating this year. Instead, we had a black and orange out of uniform day. There was candy at lunch and room parents put treats together for the classrooms.

In October we started going to mass again. The students go by cohorts. We do not go to parish mass. We have afternoon masses with just the school community. Fr. Mike did all of the masses in October. There were three masses in October and four masses starting at the end of this week for November. We will also pin our new student council members at the November masses.

We were not able to do the All Saint's Day mass but the students still did the project. They picked a saint, researched the saint, did their posters, and they had a choice whether to dress up when they presented their saint. Some students did dress up.

We also revamped our parent teacher conferences on Zoom. Teachers feel like the meetings worked well. There were more conferences where the teachers were able to meet with both parents because the parents were home. There were not too many technical glitches. The meetings stayed more on schedule and the teachers did not fall behind as they do when the meetings are in person.

Teachers have been trying to find ways to keep the buddy program alive. Good weather has been important to keep this going. They can also use the cafeteria because of the barriers in the cafeteria. It's just a small amount of time that the cafeteria is open for use considering snack time and lunch time. Mrs. Muzzy has been able to get some great pictures of the buddies outside.

We have heard from the basketball leagues that there is no basketball this winter. It may be postponed until the spring. It's not just a safety issue but schools are not allowing outsiders to come into their buildings. A lot of schools rely upon the use of gyms at other schools. Many gyms are set up as cafeterias. It will be revisited in the spring.

SMPA has been hard at work coming up with new ideas. The next event is the Jingle Jog. It runs from the 21st of November through December 6th. You can do a 1K, a 5K or a half marathon. We cannot do the Holly Fair but Danielson's is offering a fundraiser at their store with proceeds to the parent's association. Lynch Creek

farms is also doing an online fundraiser to benefit the SMPA. It was sent to the Church to put into the bulletin and/or flock notes.

Faculty is brainstorming to keep the Christmas spirit alive. We will still do the Advent Angels but we cannot do the Christmas Play. They are putting their minds together to make sure they have the Christmas Spirit permeate the halls.

Jeannie attended the two year NEASC evaluation and met with Beth Hamilton from NEASC. She presented our summary on standards, our strategic plan and our financial records. The feedback was very good. Mrs. Hamilton sent a draft report to Jeannie and she will present it to the Commission which will happen this month. When they meet in November, they will vote on our two year evaluation. We should know in December. She had good suggestions on action items and time lines. She was thrilled to see the curriculum progress.

Art and Music – we are able to have art and music but it takes more planning because supplies cannot be shared. Mrs. K makes pre-bagged supplies. Paint brushes must be sanitized. Both classes are running. In music they cannot sing so that are learning music history, rhythm instruments, and viewing some videos.

The annual coat drive will be announced soon.

Christmas Break is coming fast.

Finance Committee by Colleen Clifford:

Finance Committee met last week and looked at the numbers. Right now we are projecting a loss for this year. We ended last year with a loss but that was assisted by the payroll protection loan. The committee is looking at the budget and trying to get our arms around what is COVID related and what is not. We are trying to determine what is trending is the declining enrollment numbers. We want to do some projections around enrollment numbers. The Committee will work with the Enrollment Committee to determine what the future will look like for us. They started to talk about tuition changes for next year. We knew about the loss going into this year and we had money in savings so we will be okay, but we need to keep an eye on tuition revenue. Hot lunch revenue is down (keep an eye on that to compare those expenses). After school program is significantly down. We are thinking of how to attract kids to after school for a special program, etc. These are places where we may be able to control an increase in revenue. (We're still carrying a loan on the books until it is offset which will show on next year's financials. It is officially forgiven when the Small Business Administration completes the processing of our paperwork. Our paperwork was already submitted). Stephanie added that Lillyput was assessing a \$22/per student per month fee for COVID related expenses.

We were lucky because the SMPA pitched in to offset the costs of the tent. Some money was raised so that the tent did not come out of the School's budget. It came out of the SMPA budget or donations from families.

It was suggested that we add in our tuition letter to families that no COVID fees are passed along to students.

Curriculum and Technology by Jeannie MacDonough:

The Committee has not yet met. We had the delivery of the science curriculum and it is approximately forty boxes of books, crates and supplies. The boxes are strategically placed by grade level in the library because the library is not being used except for grade meetings for google meets / remote learners at this time. All is separated out by unit with refill kits but the bins are enormous and the School is trying to determine where to put the materials. Middle School is already using their books. The younger grades have dug into the kits but teachers were given a grace period until the start of the new year to get into it. The next subject will be math with the intention to purchase that new curriculum in the following school year.

Advancement by Stephanie Muzzy:

Our committee met last week and the fund for St. Mary School at \$19,935 or 44% of goal. Donors include past donors and grandparents. The appeal for Catholic Schools –Mrs. Muzzy promoted online through social media and constant contacts. A portion of the money that came into the annual fund came through that initiative. Letters have been sent to our longstanding donors with photos of students showing that we have safely returned to school. Today an email went out to current and alumni families with similar language, photos and an online donation link. Two weeks from today is Giving Tuesday, December 1st. That has been growing for us for the last five (5) years as people become familiar with it. We will participate again through social media with the opportunity to donate online. We also are going to try “I Give Catholic” which participates with Giving Tuesdays. This platform can reach folks who may have been students/donors long ago and have potentially moved away but want to find their church or school. There is no cost for us to participate. Our school is registered with our own page. People from all over can go online and find our school. Mrs. Muzzy will also send out an end of year giving opportunity. Reaching out to grandparents this year will look different. We want to come up with a way to reach out to them with a “Share the Love” theme but the full idea has not yet come to fruition. The Committee is considering a tuition raffle raffling off a \$10,000 prize where only 350 tickets can be sold at \$100 each. Winnings must be used for catholic or private school tuition or you can use it to pay back student loans. The School sends the tuition money directly to the School – proceeds do not go to the winner. The Committee is considering an April time frame for this event. It would take the place of Stephanie’s matching gift campaign. Mrs. Berg suggested to advise grandparents and our parish community of the benefits of Amazon Smile and other ways to give back to the School. Box tops are tough and the give back is not worth it for people but maybe Amazon Smile will get more attention in light of Christmas Shopping. The SMPA also added more dinning for dollars events because it’s an easy, no cost, no overhead way to raise money. Mrs. Muzzy will check to make sure parishioners are also aware of the dinning for dollars opportunities. (Mrs. Apicerno reports \$150 from Amazon Smile). Mrs. Carlson reports that we received \$450 from Anzio’s dinning for dollars.

Enrollment by Stephanie Muzzy:

The Committee met and discussed the current initiatives including showing that our students are back for in person instruction five days per week. Pictures of students under the tents and other photos that showcase the students with their buddies outside have been used. We want to continue to showcase how our school is happily back together. Mrs. Dolan worked on a piece of the bulletin called “We are thankful for” – and let the parish know we are back to school for in person instruction and how we are grateful for teachers, families, and our parishioner’s prayers. Mr. Haugli spoke about the creation of a video clip. He is interest in creating a video clip. Morning drop off would be a good piece to show on the video - seeing the students being ready for the day, looking them in the eye, calling them by name and knowing our families. We could also show mask breaks, recess, gym class, how we engage our remote learners, how they are with us in the morning and how our students engage with them through the computer to chat, show lunch, end of day prayer, after school program, support of faculty (interview faculty on how that has gone), asking Lisa Powers for her experiences. We cannot have visitors in the building so the challenge is getting the right footage. The target is to come up with something to be utilized in lieu of Open House in January and tours. Schools are doing virtual sessions and the School is considering some for January with a presentation by Mrs. Dolan and Mrs. Muzzy with clips or videos and open it up for questions (like monitoring a chat room). They would like to potentially have students, parents and faculty members to show the enthusiasm we have for our community. We want to target everyone but especially preschool, pre-K and kindergarten.

We are considering how to potentially remove furniture and how to maybe add seats for the next school year so that we don’t have the same type of loss that we are having this year. Mrs. Berg suggested a study on how much space we have to determine capacity and how many students we might be able to add in each classroom. We are reviewing what we can remove (built-ins, bookshelves) and whether we should we switch to three feet spacing. We are not married to classrooms either and smaller class sizes may change classrooms. We will not

change the space now because we made a commitment to our families and faculty this year and we do not want to go against that, however we can review that for the start of the next school year.

Item for consideration: how do we assure prospective preschool families that our space is safe, welcoming and appropriate for their child? Word of mouth will be most successful – especially in light of the lack of cases we've had. We can use pictures and maybe even little videos created by the children. We need to highlight what we are doing right: potentially look to news articles and the Governor's statements about how private schools are faring. We are one of only three schools in the diocese who still has not had a case.

Next year we may fall into a situation where schools may have over enrollment if they don't have a place to put children. Next year the new Beal school opens up for full day Kindergarten so Shrewsbury may not be able to place all of the children. Some families asked if they could hold off and reach out to Mrs. Dolan and Mrs. MacDonough in the New Year to check in.

New topics: None

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:27pm.