

# St. Thomas the Apostle School Advisory Board Minutes

July 16, 2015

Prepared by Kathy Rackers

## Call to Order and Opening Prayer

The meeting began with a prayer led by Fr. Secrist. Members present were Fr. Jeremy Secrist, Leroy Heckemeyer (Principal), Rodney Luebbering, Brenda Schell, Tina Stockman, Melissa Verslues, Amanda Wooten, Tracy Suthoff, and Kathy Rackers. Tracy was welcomed as a new member of the board. Melissa was thanked for her time served on the board.

## Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the May 5, 2015 meeting were approved as written.

## Orientation of New Members , Election of Officers, and Committee Assignments

President: Brenda Schell

Vice President: Kathy Rackers

Secretary: Tracy Suthoff

Home & School Representative: Rodney Luebbering

Parish Advisory Board Representative: Amanda Wooten

Self Study Representative (temporary): Tina Stockman

## Reports

### Principal's Report (Leroy Heckemeyer)

- See attached report for details
- Additionally:
  - It was proposed that the SAB consider increasing the fees for non-Catholic students, who attend St. Thomas the Apostle School, from \$1,000 per family per school year, to \$2,500 per family per school year. Brenda made a motion that the proposal be approved, Amanda seconded it, all were in agreement.
  - Chris Hoecker will be replacing Sherri Wieberg as the Art Teacher.
  - There was discussion about spreading out some of the year-end events, such as: Awards & Field Day, All school field trip, 8<sup>th</sup> grade field trip, etc... so that parents would be able to attend more of them. Leroy will bring this up at the next Home & School meeting.

### Bussing Report (Melissa Verslues)

- The balance is typically shared at each SAB meeting, but this account will be closed and expenses will now be rolled-up under "School Expenses" and removed from the SAB agenda.
- A new 5-year bussing contract has been signed with Durham. A discussion was held regarding fees. Fees for the 2015-16 school year will not increase.

### Home and School Report (Tina Stockman)

- No report was provided, as there has not been a Home & School meeting since our last School Board meeting in May.
- The Home & School Association asked that the SAB to discuss the idea of a written agreement of parental financial responsibility for those students taking bows home to practice. This was

tabled at the May meeting. During the July meeting, the SAB decided not to charge a “rental fee”. Leroy will draft an agreement for parents to sign. This will be presented at the September SAB meeting.

#### Parish Council Report (Brenda Schell)

- A written report from the May meeting was not provided.

#### Pastor’s Report (Fr. Secrist)

- A written report was not provided.
- Totus Tuus is scheduled for July 19-24. The parish is hosting a Fish Fry on Saturday, July 18<sup>th</sup>. There are approximately 60+ individuals signed-up.

#### Old Business

- “Mentor Family” for new parishioners (September 2013)
  - Brenda Schell suggested implementing a “Mentor Family” idea for new families joining the school. Until something more formal can be established, Brenda volunteered to have her family be the Mentor Family. (September 2013)
  - No discussion (November 2013)
  - No discussion (January 2014)
  - Brenda will contact Daffiny Tallent (Sunday School Leader) to identify possible families to “mentor”. This conversation could also provide leads for families to contact regarding their plans on where to send their child(ren) for preschool/K-8. (March 2014)
  - No discussion (May 2014)
  - No discussion (July 2014)
  - The discussion will be tabled until the November meeting (keeping in mind that this could apply to the Englemeyer & Buechter families. (September 2014)
  - No discussion due to Brenda’s absence. We plan to discuss it at the January meeting. (November 2014)
  - Brenda shared her plan for mentoring new school families. It includes: inviting them to mass and sitting with them during mass, introducing the families at the first Home & School meeting, being their resource for when they have question about the school and/or community, visiting with them before the school year begins to assist them with any questions/concerns they may have, share information with them about what the school & community have to offer, etc. (January 2015)
  - No discussion (March 2015)
  - There will be new school families for the 2015-2016 school year. Leroy will ask current school families to volunteer to be mentor families. (May 2015)
  - Brenda will not have any children in school for the 2015-16 school year, so she suggested that someone else take the lead on this. Fr. Secrist said that he & Brenda will discuss and propose a plan at the September SAB meeting. (July 2015)
- Enrollment for Preschool and K-8 (March 2014)
  - A lengthy discussion took place regarding decreasing enrollment concerns, ideas for increasing enrollment for both the preschool and K-8. Brenda will contact Daffiny Tallent (Sunday School Leader) to identify possible families to “mentor”. This conversation could also provide leads for families to contact regarding their plans on where to send their child(ren) for preschool/K-8. The discussion was tabled until the May meeting. (March 2014)

- Preschool enrollment: Current enrollment includes 5 full-time students and 9 part-time students (equivalent to approximately 4 full-time students). The break-even point is 7-8 full-time students. Fees were also discussed. Rodney will collect information and draft a fee proposal for this coming session. (May 2014)
- After much discussion the following action plan was decided:
  - Each School Board member: submit to Fr. Secrist their own quote and obtain a quote from a St. Thomas School alumni re: Why I Love My School Campaign.
  - Brenda: review current school brochure and suggest edits, call Blair Oaks High School to see if we can obtain “success” stats for St. Thomas alumni, contact Mr. Heckemeyer and Ms. Morris to obtain quotes from existing 8<sup>th</sup> graders re: Why I Love My School Campaign
  - Mr. Heckemeyer: develop and schedule presentations to surrounding parishes (St. Thomas, Meta, St. Elizabeth, St. Anthony, Osage Bend, etc.)
  - Suzanne: draft a letter that can be sent to potential students (May 2014)
- School enrollment
  - Preschool enrollment: Mr. Heckemeyer and Mrs. Kirkweg will be meeting regarding the Preschool Program. This year’s enrollment will be a determining factor in deciding whether or not we stay open for the 2015-2016 school year. A reminder letter will be sent to parents of current students, reminding them of current rates.
  - Brenda distributed a copy of the school brochure and requested edits from board members, she will call Blair Oaks High School to see if we can obtain “success” stats for St. Thomas alumni, and she will work with Mr. Heckemeyer and Ms. Morris to obtain quotes from existing 8<sup>th</sup> graders re: Why I Love My School Campaign.
  - Mr. Heckemeyer is developing and scheduling presentations to surrounding parishes (St. Thomas, Meta, St. Elizabeth, St. Anthony, Osage Bend, etc.)
  - Suzanne drafted a letter that can be sent to potential students (current PSR students, current and future Preschool students, current and future Sunday School students, etc.), with the revised brochure. Fr. Secrist is reviewing the proposed letter. (July 2014)
- After a lengthy discussion regarding combining classes, reducing the number of teachers, closing preschool, etc... the discussion was tabled until the November meeting. It was agreed that a notice should be placed in the bulletin, before the year’s end, encouraging families to notify the school of their plans to attend PK-8 for the 2015-2016 school year. (September 2014)
- A decision was made to NOT place a notice in the bulletin, but instead... to draft a letter. There was discussion about drafting two letters, one to parishioners of St. Thomas and one to parishioners of other parishes. Discussion continued about what content to include in the letter(s). Kathy will work with Mr. Heckemeyer on drafting this. Additionally, Amanda will look into the idea of having yard signs and window clings designed... as ideas that the board had for ways people can display their support of the school. Melissa will look into an outdoor “announcement board/sign” to display upcoming events / messages from the school to passer-bys. (November 2014)
- A letter to parishioners & school families was shared (see attachment). This letter will be sent out immediately. Returns from the letter will be shared with the SAB at the March meeting. An additional letter will be drafted that will be directed to parishioners of surrounding parishes. In the bulletin, under the “School News” section, Father will ask

Diane to include a different bullet point (from the letter mentioned above) every two weeks, until each bullet point has been rotated through. Amanda gave some pricing information on yard signs, window clings, and an outdoor announcement board/sign (see above for additional information). Amanda will continue to research other pricing options and provide another report at the March meeting. (January 2015)

- Kathy shared a draft of an additional letter directed to parishioners of surrounding parishes (Meta, St. Elizabeth, St. Anthony, Osage Bend, etc.). Father will work with Diane to contact those parishes and hopefully arrange distribution. Amanda shared design & pricing options for yard signs and window stickers/clings. She will present the idea at the April Home & School Meeting to obtain feedback. (March 2015)
- The letter directed to parishioners of surrounding parishes (Meta, St. Elizabeth, St. Anthony, Osage Bend, etc.) has been sent to all parishes. Amanda shared design & pricing options for yard signs and window stickers/clings. She presented the ideas at the April Home & School Meeting. Both orders will be placed and we will sell them for \$5 each. The school brochures are being revised. (May 2015)
- Amanda will coordinate selling the yard signs & window clings at the Fish Fry in July, the Parish Picnic in August, and in conjunction with selling scrip after mass. The school is currently creating a new website. Once the website is completed, the brochures will be created to have similar content & design. (July 2015)

#### New Business

- Questions asked of and by board members (standing item)

#### Next Meeting

- The next meeting is Tuesday, September 22, 2015 at 5:30 p.m. in the Vitae House.

#### Adjournment and Closing Prayer

- The meeting was adjourned and Fr. Secrist led the closing prayer.

## **Principal notes from July 16, 2015:**

The Vocation Day went well on May 6<sup>th</sup>.

Our kids did very well at the Archery Nationals and some went onto World's.

May 12<sup>th</sup> was our 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Graduation and it was very nice and well attended!

May 13<sup>th</sup> was our Field Day and it was a huge success. The Bounce House was a huge hit and all the water games were enjoyed by all participants.

May 14<sup>th</sup> was our big Field Trip to the City Museum in St. Louis. It was a huge hit and we ended the day with Pizza in the cafeteria!

May 15<sup>th</sup> was the last day of school!

We are adding Keyboarding and a Life Skills class for the next school year.

Karen Luebbering, Kristin Morris and myself met in early June and started on a technology plan. This past year we installed a fire wall, and purchased a laptop for the principal for a total amount of about \$3,200.00. Using scrip money we installed 7 brand new computers in our lab from Capital City Computers. We are also going to purchase 2 new laptops for 2 of our teachers. Next year, we are hoping to add 7 more computers in the lab and purchase 2 more laptops for the teachers. In 3 years or less, we hope to have a pretty updated computer lab! The teachers and students are excited about this plan!

Sister Julie Brandt, the Assistant Superintendent of the Diocese will be the one who will work with us on our Self Study. Sister Elizabeth Youngs, our Superintendent and Sister Julie Brandt have both just started their new positions. They will be giving us more information on the Self Study as the school year begins. Sister Julie has just approved our Parent/Student Handbook and she is close to approving the Faculty Handbook.

I will be working on putting together committees for our Self Study, and then bringing them to the Steering committee for approval in the fall. We will use the school board, home and school, teachers and parents to be on the committees.

Sincerely,

Mr. Leroy Heckemeyer  
Principal