

ST. MARY SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES

Thursday, October 16, 2008, Faculty Room

MISSION STATEMENT: The mission of Saint Mary Parish School, in strong partnership with families, is to create community and to provide quality Catholic education.

As they develop their unique gifts, students become responsible, competent, and socially conscious learners.

MEMBERSHIP: Chair Michael Dowd (Men's Club), Alisa Fernald, Lawrence Garibaldi, Scott Higgins, Jeanette Hudson (Parish), Catherine Lowney, Jim Masner, Dave Reynolds (Co-Chair), Kristina Ryan, Fr. Dan Derry (Pastor), Christa Hanson (Principal)

- I. Call To Order 7:04 p.m. (Michael Dowd)
 - II. Introduction of Members: Jim Masner, Catherine Lowney, Alisa Fernald, Lawrence Garibaldi, Jeanette Hudson, Dave Reynolds, Scott Higgins, Kristina Ryan. Guests: Kris Mangano, Marcee Ervin (Administrative Team), Karen Skahill, Mandi Middleton
 - II. Faith Sharing - Christa Hanson
 - III. Action Items
 - a. Approval of September 18th minutes
-Alisa made motion to approve; Jeanette seconded the motion.
 - IV. Reports
 - A. Principal's Report
Thank you to Men's Club and all the volunteers who made the Spaghetti Dinner a success once again.
1. Curriculum/Technology: Math workshops given by national speaker Kim Sutton will take place at various grade levels this coming Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, October 20-22. Six of our teachers are going.

In November we will begin the language arts in-depth study.

The end of the First Quarter is October 24. Parent/Teacher Conferences will take place the week of November 3. The Book Fair will take place the same week.

Cecile Mantecon and I presented a workshop at the Department of Education as part of a new program there called "Wednesday Workshops. This program uses the expertise of our teachers/staff/administrators for other teachers/staff/administrators in our diocese at no cost.

This year I will be chairing a WCEA/WASC accreditation at Sacred Heart School in Salinas. I have already visited the school. There is a mandatory chairperson training in Danville on October 24 (Grandparents' Day). The official pre-visit is in January and the visit in late March. Some of our teachers may be asked to be on visiting teams in our Diocese.

Red Ribbon Week for making good choices about our body's health, especially saying "no" to drugs, is the week of October 27-31. There will be some simple awareness activities that week.

On October 27, 8 Japanese exchange students from our sister city will be here for part of the day. Patrick Foley, Alum, Class of '99, is the advisor for this. The students will show Gr. 5-8 a slide show, have lunch here and then go to 7th and 8th grades, take part in classes, and also teach origami and calligraphy to the students.

Chantal Adams has begun her Reading Recovery Program. The teachers have begun the after-school tutoring program. Intervention by teachers during the day has also begun Cecile Mantecon has requested members for a Technology Advisory Council. Information was found in a recent Wednesday bulletin.

At the end of my report, I will describe some general trends that we gleaned from the last five years of freshmen surveys about high school preparation.

Field Trips and Activities: More pumpkin patch visits, Gr. 2 to History San Jose (same place, new topic), Gr. 4 to Seymour Marine Lab, 8th Grade Play is coming up on October 29, Halloween Happening on the 31st, Awards Assembly on Nov. 7, Gr. 8 to the Tech Museum on the 12th.

2. Catholic Identity: Grandparents' Day and Liturgy - October 24.
Thanksgiving Food Drive beginning November 3 for St. Joseph Family Center.
Gr. 5-8 Liturgy on Veterans' Day
Gr. K-4 Liturgy for Feast of the Presentation on November 20.
Faith Formation Conference at Convention Center in Santa Clara - all local Dioceses. We will hear Thomas Groome speak. [He is the Director of the Institute of Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry at Boston College. His primary area of interest and research is the history, theory and practice of religious education.]
3. Safety: We had the opportunity to practice some safety drills when we dismissed early on October 6 because of the funeral here. Also, there was a power outage on the 8th. We responded well.
 - Vicki Goicovich, Mothers' Guild President, has been in touch with emergency preparedness personnel in Santa Clara County, as she plans to have a speaker at the November Mothers' Guild meeting. Jan Masuda, who is in charge of emergency preparedness in Santa Clara County, and Roy Shackel, fire captain and assistant for emergency preparedness in our local area (and a former SMS parent) met with Vicki G. and me. We shared the Emergency Plan that Jeanette Hudson and I had developed using the template from SB 187 (which is the plan that Santa Clara County developed). They were very impressed with the level of safety and emergency preparedness we have done. Someone will be speaking at the Mothers' Guild meeting regarding family preparedness for safety, especially earthquake safety. We will also touch upon our school plan.
 - At the faculty meeting on October 15, the faculty and staff discussed our roles during a disaster and general guidelines. We will be doing a faculty/staff walkthrough of a disaster in November, and then later a simulation with students.
 - We are continuing to work on fingerprinting.
 - The boiler has been serviced for the winter season.
 - Also, in the area of safety, we continue with our disciplinary logs. There have been teachers/student meetings, administration/student meetings, teacher/parent meetings, verbal warnings, green communication slips, and detentions. The Project Cornerstone ABC program continues. We had author Karen Burnett (Grandma Rose from her book *Simon's Hook*) here to speak with all the grades at three different grade levels. She also did author assemblies in the afternoon.
4. Points of Information: A short recap
(Responses to these were in the September 24 Wednesday bulletin)
 - Feedback on summer work - two felt it was appropriate, one suggested that there be more choice for reading.
 - Fr. Dan coming to Mothers' Guild meetings - he will continue to be invited.
 - Used uniforms available during other times of year -
New update here, as stated in a recent Wednesday Bulletin, an opportunity monthly will be given to "order used uniforms if we have what you need available.
 - Could we ask gentlemen to remove caps during flag salute? We have done so a few times lately.
 - How does Extended Care follow through with safety on Lord's Table days?
Door to Extended Care from foyer closed and locked, students taken to bathroom and drinking fountains by staff, diners wait outside the gym entrance and not in quad or picnic table area, volunteers are asked to wear official name badges, continued discussion with David Cox and Claire.
 - Maybe a team of advisors from the community could give good advice regarding business and economic downturn that has affected enrollment. This will be agendaized at the School Finance Committee Meeting.
 - Should we explore the idea of a cook for our lunch program?

Amy Tripoli answered this in past Wednesday bulletin, expressing the importance of the healthy food offered through the current program.

One "old" Point of Information Follow-Up - Thanks to Amy Tripoli and Suzanne McCarthy, the students now have an option to order milk only on school lunch days.

One "new" Point of Information Form - Should the girls be following St. Mary guidelines for sports practices and games, especially in their attire (very "short" shorts, spandex shorts, spaghetti strap tank tops) and make-up on game day??

Athletic Director, Jon Sanchez, will talk with girls about attire/make-up (if you shouldn't be wearing it at school, you shouldn't be wearing it for practice or games. You are representing St. Mary School.

Last Point-of-Information regarding freshman surveys:

I have made up four folders with the actual survey results from 2004-2008. They are included in their entirety, with all the comments made. Some years we have had many replies, and at other times, less. For 2008, we decided to do an on-line survey. This was very easy to do and a bit different format from the previous ones. However, we only had 12 replies, so it is more difficult to generalize the information.

General Trends:

In 2004, math was rated at a 4 or 5, quite high. Some rated English writing and literature lower. Science was high, history was strong, and religion was good. Strong points: discipline/hard work; stressed, study skills, managing time; small school, a feeling of being "at home" here. Weak points: "social aspects" of fitting into high school; better writing, especially of essays.

In 2005, math was more toward the middle, English writing had some lows, but 12/16 rated it mid to high, Science was excellent, history was good, there were mixed results about religion. Strong points: stable, disciplined environment; stressed working hard; developed confidence; study skills; respect. Weak points: sheltered socially - not the "real" world; writing papers; some math.

In 2006, math was seen as problematic; science was excellent; wanted more reading analysis; religion mid to high; social studies mostly high. Strong points: small school environment; standards for conduct; Science program; confidence developed; mostly well prepared, except for math; workload helped prepare; Catholic values. Weak points: Math, math, math; develop more of a high school environment; more challenging grading.

In 2007, math received low marks, but not as low as '06, writing/grammar mid to high, social studies good, science excellent, study skills. Strong points: developing responsibility; study skills; disciplined environment; helped become leaders; moral values; confidence. Weak points: overprotective and sheltered, math, writing essays and literature analysis.

In 2008, 7/12 felt very prepared for high school, 8 were taking honors classes. Strong points: Homework load; goals; how to get things done; prepared well; helped to stay out of trouble. Weak points: need for even better math, more advanced math program; English analysis skills, encourage socialization for high school.

B. Pastor's Report - no report. Pastor was not present.

C. Mothers' Guild Report

- Dr. Levan was guest speaker at meeting.
- 31 vendors confirmed for Holiday Boutique
- See's Candy order forms going on Nov. 5th
- By-Laws were updated and approved
- Art Cards completed and sent home for orders

D. Men's Club Report

- Held a Board Meeting to discuss Board turnover and become more educated on SCRIP

- E. Auction Committee Report
 - Meeting is scheduled for October 22; all committees full, except for Auction co-chair

- V. Old Business
 - A. Coordinated Plan and Vision - Follow up reports
 - Safety: Fingerprinting--Suggestion to have Emily/faculty/staff remind volunteers as they are on campus and driving on field trips to be printed or they will not be able to help after Jan. 1st.
 - Catholic Identity (see Principal's Report)
 - Curriculum/Technology (see Principal's Report)
 - Finance: meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 20
 - B. Follow-up on Action items
 - SRO Calculations - Mollie was not here. Move to November agenda and request Mollie to be present.

- VI. New Business : No new business

- VII. Comments from the Floor
 - Marcee commented that it's been a pleasure to be here tonight
 - Serra Cottage looks great - flowers, floors cleaned, painted after Mothers' Guild & Christa wrote letters complaining about neglect of building. Still needs lighting in the overflow parking area where many park for meetings in Serra Cottage.
 - Grandma Rose was a hit. "Kudos to Project Cornerstone". Thanks to student council for paying for her to come.

- VIII. Adjournment and Closing Prayer: 7:59 p.m. Christa closed with a prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Kris Mangano

Response to Points of Information Forms:

- Two forms asked about the afternoon pickup policy. One suggested our "Disneyland" style pickup for the norm.

There is a problem with this pickup, since it requires the students to pack up extra early, thus losing at least 10-15 minutes of instructional time. It is labor intensive, but if that were the only problem, we could ask parents to sign up to help. The other very strong drawback is the busyness of the street. There are cars turning left, turning right, coming straight, coming out of the market and out of the alley. It is quite dangerous to stand out there and direct traffic. I know, I do it when we have Disneyland parking. The police department has told us that they cannot stop traffic for us, and we cannot do that either. One person mentioned that dismissal as we do it now is a long process. I am in the parking lot on Tuesdays, and we have most of the traffic emptied in 15 minutes.

So if anyone out there has a plan for us to consider, please send it in. We are open to other methods, but we need a solid plan. We will agendize this at the next School Advisory Council meeting. Thanks!

- One form asked if we could use Scrip as a way to keep costs down for the next year. Perhaps we could ask each family to purchase a certain amount each year.

We are actually looking into these possibilities right now. Thank you, and we hope that everyone will get behind this program. It's easy - it doesn't cost anything extra for the purchaser - and we can make good money with this program. We are developing a parent education program that will make more families aware how much more money the school could bring in from this program.

- One form mentioned parish employees smoking on the patio outside near the library and the effects of secondhand smoke.

I will be asking if they could smoke farther away from this area.

- One form had some concerns about the Extended Care program. They witnessed adults around the computer and not watching the other children. Being new, they had hoped they would be advised who the workers actually are. When their child needed a pencil, he/she was refused.

We have had meetings with staff around the subject of good supervision. We hope that this is now cleared up. We have just written an Extended Care newsletter, in which the staff introduce themselves, as well as talk about the program. We need to do this earlier in the year! As far as having pencils, there should be no problems with using these from the program. If we need more, we will buy more. A survey is being sent out to families using Extended Care asking for their input. Hopefully, the answers we receive will help us deal directly with any concerns families have about the program.

- One new family member expressed that they were very pleased with the information they received from the school staff.

Thank you for taking the time to tell us so.

- This person heard that there is a book you can buy to help prepare your 7th/8th graders for the Catholic High School entrance exams. Where can I find it?

Yes, there are a number of books and classes available. If you go to barnesandnoble.com or amazon.com, and highlight the textbook area and type in Catholic High School exams, you'll find many different ones. Here are a few:

This one is used often, especially in classes to prepare students for the exams:
[Kaplan Catholic High School Entrance Exams, 2009 Edition.](#)

Others:

[Cliff Test Prep Catholic High School Entrance Exams](#)

[Master the Catholic High School Entrance Exams, 2009](#)

[Catholic High School Entrance Exam](#)