

St. Paul the Apostle School Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting held: November 17, 2009 www.stpaul-school.org

Present: Lori Salva, Jeff Potter, Dale Manske, Lisa Gutting, Greg Lauria, Sam Ramos
Todd Mellema, Celine Terranova

Guests: Kathy Lowing, Beth Fausone, Mark Meijer, Kris Russo, Denise Pavey, Sandy Bishop

I. Meeting opened with prayer.

II. Agenda reviewed and approved.

III. Opening Remarks - Jeff Potter

- A.** Jeff and Todd Mellema attended a Diocesan Board of Catholic Education Marketing Workshop on Nov. 4. The Diocese is looking to develop a general marketing plan to help all parish schools. Declining enrollment in our Catholic schools is the challenge, especially during these tough economic times. Sample Marketing plans were discussed and follow-up meetings are planned.
- B.** Policy Update – Jeff and Lori Salva briefly reviewed the Diocesan Administrative and Personnel Policies and compared them to the St. Paul Policies currently in place. The Policy Committee will begin working towards completing the St. Paul policy updates for the Board to review and approve by the end of the school year.
- C.** SPAuction – School Board members agreed to sell 50/50 raffle tickets for SPAuction 2010. Jeff passed around a sign-up sheet for members to volunteer for individual time slots.

IV. Principal's Report – Lori Salva

- A. ITBS Testing:** Iowa Testing was completed the week of November 2nd and the tests have been turned in for scoring. Results for students in grades 2-8 are usually returned to us in late December or early January and will be mailed home at that time. Lori is planning to meet with individual teachers to discuss the test scores and class results, and also review the scores of the students they taught the previous year. We want to provide the best education possible and will look for areas in which we can improve our methods and strategies. The Board suggested we consider posting our overall test scores in comparison to other Diocesan schools in the church bulletin.
- B. Surveys:** Parent Surveys were handed out at conferences earlier this month. We had close to 100% return rate. Many parents commented on how positive the survey was and they were happy to see the change. Lori provided a summary of what people like about St Paul the Apostle School and the suggested improvements from the survey to each Board Member. Lori and the faculty are reviewing each suggestion and they plan to prioritize them and begin working on the appropriate improvements. The results of the survey are available to our school families in the school office for review. The survey results were already made available to families that wished to see them by stopping by the office, as noted in the last copy of the Halls of St. Paul.
- C. Advent:** The Advent season begins the Sunday after Thanksgiving. As a school we will meet on Monday mornings after announcements to light the Advent wreath and share a short prayer together. Teachers will also do individual Advent activities in their classrooms. Please feel free to join us in the gym for our Monday morning prayer.
- D. Bishop's Visit:** Bishop Hurley will celebrate Mass with our students on Thursday, December 3rd. Parents are welcome and encouraged to attend. We are all looking forward to his visit.

- E. Workshops:** St. Paul Pre-K through 3rd grade teachers will be attending workshops on RTI in December at KISD. The workshop will focus on: successful interventions and what makes them effective, determining which students need intervention, how to determine intervention groupings and differentiate learning, who should provide the intervention and where, how to monitor student progress and effectively linking home and school.
- F. SPAuction:** Plans for the event are well under way and students will also be helping to make this a success. Each classroom will be creating a flag in keeping with our theme of “We are Many Parts.”
- G. Christmas Program:** The St. Paul Christmas program will be held on Thursday, December 17th at 6:30 pm in the church.

V. Teacher Update – Kathy Lowing

Mrs. Lowing reported on the many activities happening at St. Paul school during the past month. It was suggested the entire detailed list be posted on the school Website. A few highlights include:

- Second Grade spent the day at Blandford Nature Center. The first and third graders went to a nursing home on Halloween. The 6th grade trip to the VA home was cancelled due to the flu going around at school and will be rescheduled later this year.
- Second Grade will begin working on Brain Gym with Mrs. Laidlaw, an Occupational Therapist at Mary Free Bed and Mrs. Fausone, a Speech Therapist trained in Brain Gym. Brain Gym exercises are specific movements that recall the movements done naturally in the first years of life. Research has shown dramatic improvements in concentration, memory, academics, physical coordination, relationship skills, and organizational skills. Students tend to learn faster, more easily and with less stress after these exercises.
- Junior High play has been cast and practices are underway. Mrs. Lowing and Mrs. Salva have met to discuss fundraising activities and the idea of possibly selling tickets this year.
- The VA stars have been circulated to all the grades. Parents and teachers are collecting money and shopping for gifts the vets would like. The student council officers and Mr. O’Rourke will deliver the gifts on December 8th. The vets really appreciate our St. Paul students and staff.
- Student Council collected a “mountain” of clothes for Haiti from the generous St. Paul students and families. Rays of Hope for Haiti will ship the large load after the student council members fold the items and put in boxes. Currently it is piled in the back of the 8th grade classroom.

VI. Committee Reports

A. Finance - Dale Manske

- 1) Expenses and revenue are on track with the current budget for 2009-10 school year.
- 2) Fall Garage Sale brought in \$3,675. Profits from the magazine sale, Sally Foster, and the Wreath Sale are still being tallied.
- 3) Dale noted that enrollment is at 215 students, but will drop down to 211 after the first of the year.
- 4) Budget Committee plans to start working on the preliminary budget for the 2010-11 school year.

B. Marketing – Todd Mellema

Todd reported on the following marketing items:

- 1) A copy of St. Paul Website trends was distributed to all Board Members to review/discuss.
- 2) Installation of the new LED sign in front of church has been delayed until after the city zoning meeting in January. Mark Meijer is diligently working with the city to expedite. However, the new school entrance sign will be installed in the upcoming weeks and will be located in the front of the school on the entrance canopy.
- 3) Diocesan Marketing Meeting – Todd was happy to report that St. Paul was seen as very pro-active in its marketing efforts and ahead of the curve in many areas.
- 4) Information Folders – professional photographers were at the school last week to take pictures for our new information folders. A plan is in place to have a “media waiver” signed by parents and on file in the school office for all students appearing in the printed material. The folders will be a great marketing tool and will be available soon for new and prospective families. Plans are to print approximately 2,000 folders.
- 5) The Board discussed ways we can better connect with the youth in our parish who are not currently attending our school (ie: new families, newly baptized, Religious Education, Youth Group, etc.). Todd is working on developing a marketing plan and presenting it to Fr. Ernie.

C. School Enhancement Committee – Celine Terranova

Celine and committee met in October and began working on the following:

- 1) Display Case – the display case is now officially located in the Narthex and filled with Thanksgiving themed school items thanks to the efforts of Kris Russo and Barb Kopfensteiner. Dorrie Sullivan and Patty Weiss have agreed to coordinate the items for the display case. The case will be used to highlight St. Paul School activities only, and will not be used as a fundraising tool. A digital picture frame will be added soon, and various pictures of students and school activities will be scrolling in the frame. Barb has set up an email location for parents to send in their digital photos of students for the frame.
- 2) Celine requested the Board consider allocating a modest budget for display case items, such as the digital frame, and other items needed in the future. Dale will further discuss with Celine.

D. Fundraising and Grants – Greg Lauria

- 1) Greg has formed a team including Lori Salva, Kris Russo, Kathleen Gunning and Peggy Marshall to meet regularly regarding fundraising. Their first meeting was held November 5th.
- 2) Greg is reviewing and auditing all fundraising currently in place at St. Paul and has determined four main categories: Athletic, Home & School, School Board, and 8th Grade Fundraising. He is in the process of developing a form to be submitted for all future fundraising activities.
- 3) SPAuction 2010 will be held in February and the committee has a planning meeting scheduled for December 13th. Greg encouraged all who are interested to attend.
- 4) Wreath Sale – Approximately 325-350 wreaths were pre-sold. A total of 400 wreaths were ordered, and any extra will be sold on the weekend after Thanksgiving (after Masses). Pick up for pre-sold wreaths will be held Saturday, November 28th from 2-4:30pm.
- 5) Grants – Sam Ramos is working with Ms Gamsby and Lori Salva to finish the questionnaire and forms needed for the GVSU Grant Writing program, and will be meeting with the parish office to get the tax forms and other information required. His goal is to have this completed by January. Sam explained to the Board the difference between “Programmatic Needs Grants” and “Capacity Building Grants.” After discussing with GVSU our idea of seeking a grant for

Interactive White Boards, GVSU recommended we first establish a general Capacity Building Grant and then establish a Programmatic Needs Grant for the White Boards.

VI. Open Discussion

- Agenda Items for next Meeting: Jeff asked the members to forward any Agenda items to him for the December meeting. The Agenda will now be posted to the website.
- The next Board Meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 16th instead of Tuesday of that week since the Catholic Central Choir's Christmas Concert is being held on Tuesday.

Meeting Adjourned.

Next Regular Meeting: Wednesday, December 16, 2009

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Gutting, Secretary