

St. Paul the Apostle School Board Meeting Minutes

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

Present: Julie Palmer, Dan Springer, Dale Manske, Lisa Gutting, Jim Rabaut, Laurie Daum
Jen Brom, Jeff Potter, Bridget Mull, Todd Mellema

Visitors: Kris Russo, Mark Meijer, Amy Quillan, Courtney Minnema, Denise Pavey, Joanne Hoolsema

I. Meeting opened with prayer.

II. Agenda reviewed and approved.

III. Principal's Report

A. Enrollment: Our total enrollment is currently at 220 students in grades Preschool-8, with the possibility of a new 7th grade student.

B. Accreditation: On March 18th and 19th the 9-member site visiting team, headed by Cindy Thomas (principal of St. Stephen School) will be at St. Paul as part of the re-Accreditation process. The other members of the accreditation team include Julie Nixon (Dutton Elementary), Tim Steenstra (Grandville Christian), Kevin Varner (Our Lady of Consolation), Lori Salva (Ss. Peter & Paul), and teachers from Sacred Heart, SS. Peter & Paul, Holy Spirit and St. Anthony.

C. Intent to Register Forms: So far, 85 of the total 118 forms have been returned. Seventy-five families intend to register, 7 are undecided, and 3 (preschool) families will not be returning. For those families who are undecided, financial issues, social issues (wanting a larger social pool for children), and "other" reasons were cited. Julie will follow up with the families, and let them know about possible tuition assistance if financial reasons are holding them back. Mark Meijer suggested a letter be sent out in the upcoming weeks (before the registration packets are sent) informing families about possible tuition assistance and letting others know that if they have the financial means to consider donating funds to help those in need during these challenging economic times. We want families to feel they can get help if needed and not just leave the school.

D. Kindergarten and Preschool Enrollment for 2009-2010: We have 24 students on the Kindergarten pre-registration list. Kindergarten Screening has been completed, and possibly two of these students may attend another year of preschool or a Young 5's program elsewhere. We have 10 students pre-registered for the 3-year old preschool and 6 students pre-registered for the 4-year old preschool.

An information packet containing a cover letter, school brochure, pre-K and Kindergarten registration information was sent out to all parishioners with children of the appropriate ages for these programs. The letters also invited parents to attend the Pre-K and kindergarten "Meet and Greet" held on March 14-15. The "Meet and Greet" was spear-headed by Kris Russo and the St. Paul Pre-K and Kindergarten teachers and was quite successful with several families touring the school.

E. Meitler Study: The Meitler Study concluded that it would not be feasible to open a new Catholic school in the Ada/Forest Hills area due to lack of interest. For more details, the full report can be found the Diocesan website.

F. Diocesan Calendar: The Diocese has decided to have the elementary schools begin the 2009-10 school year on September 1st since Labor Day falls later than normal this year.

G. Letter from Pastor of Ss. Peter and Paul: Fr. Morrow sent a letter to all catholic elementary schools in the area indicating that since their school would be closing at the end of this school year, Ss. Peter and Paul parish would subsidize a significant part of the tuition for those Ss. Peter and Paul students wishing to enroll at another catholic school.

H. Confessions: Last week, Fr. Ernie held optional individual confessions during the school day for students wishing to attend. The response was very good with the majority of the students attending.

IV. Committee Reports

A. Finance - Dale Manske

Dale presented the Board with two Budget Scenarios based on enrollment numbers for the 2009-10 school year of 198 students (decline of 10%) and 193 students (decline of 13%). These enrollment numbers are based on the Intent to Register Forms, along with information Julie gathered on the students graduating (leaving) and those we anticipate adding in the Pre-K and Kindergarten programs. Current economic issues such as job losses and pay freezes were also taken into account.

Both Budget Scenarios include the following: no salary increases for the staff; a 3% tuition increase; utilization of the estimated \$39,000 SPAuction 2009 proceeds (\$10,000 of the proceeds were utilized during the current year); adding on a part-time school counselor, retaining the librarian, and bringing a Spanish teacher on staff (not utilizing shared time in these areas). Scenario number 1 (enrollment at 198) results in a budget deficit of approximately \$10,000. Scenario number 2 (enrollment at 193) results in a budget deficit of approximately \$25,000. Both Budgets are preliminary at this point with updated information available at our next meeting. The Board discussed at length the preliminary budgets and possible ways to make up the deficits, with the understanding that increased enrollment would solve our budget concerns. It was noted that IHM and St. Stephen's were raising their tuition also, and would be very close to St. Paul tuition for next year. Dale indicated the budget will continue to be refined in the upcoming weeks as more concrete numbers are available, but tuition amounts must be determined now in order for registration packets to be sent out. Ultimately, the budget will need to be monitored until school begins in September 2009, and any change in our enrollment may require further action by the Finance Committee, the School Board, the Principal and Fr. Ernie.

A motion was made to accept the **3 percent tuition increase** for the 2009-10 school year and was seconded (ACTION ITEM). The tuition amount for 2009-2010 school year will be as follows:

1 st Student -	\$3,296
2 nd Student -	\$2,807
3 rd Student -	\$1,663
4 th Student -	\$844
5 th Student -	0

B. Fundraising and Grants - Jim Rabaut

The Fundraising Committee met last week and established a new fundraiser to be held in the Fall of this year: St. Paul Irish Festival. Ms. Gunning will be coordinating the Irish Festival and plans to have both a family element during the day and a more adult oriented event in the evening. A planning committee and dates still need to be determined for this new event. Jim also reported that the Family Spaghetti Dinner held last weekend was well attended with proceeds going to the 8th grade class trip. In addition, Jim was pleased to announce that Al and Katie Puglessi and John and Tiffny Harmon have graciously volunteered to co-chair SPAuction for the next two years.

C. Marketing - Todd Mellema

Todd handed out an impressive packet of information containing updates on the many marketing events that took place at St. Paul in the last month and planned for in the upcoming weeks.

Highlights include:

- Presentation to Fr. Ernie and approval of new marketing plan.
- New temporary signage in front of church (thanks to Mark Meijer for coordinating). Also checking into a new permanent sign.
- Approval to add new painted biblical verses in various locations around the interior of school (Jeanie Kortz to paint).
- Website – fine tuning and additions, updating content. Training sessions with staff.
- PR/Communications – Molly Klimas and Bob Young are working together on creating a new comprehensive PR marketing plan, with Molly utilizing her contacts at the press and pitching a story about St. Paul “bucking the trend” and “embracing the future” of catholic schools. The press will be at St. Paul interviewing a number of people this Thursday. Molly and Bob have many other communications ideas also in the works.
- Postcards highlighting St. Paul School to be sent to new families moving into specific zip codes in our area in the next year. Molly Klimas wrote the copy, Hillary Embrey is doing the layout. Funded by Karen O’Rourke.
- School Tours for prospective families, headed by Lisa Leonard
- St. Paul brochures placed in a number of day care centers and preschools in the area. Sandy Bishop volunteered to deliver the brochures, Steve Cole provided brochure holders.
- New information Folder to be created for prospective families.

D. School Improvement Committee (SIC) – Laurie Daum

The SIC is researching the possibility of providing a Special Needs Program at St. Paul. Laurie and committee will be meeting next week to discuss the feasibility of this idea. Laurie was also approached by the Home and School Board regarding the use of proceeds (totaling approximately \$10,000) from various H & S fundraising. Originally, these funds were slated for new preschool playground equipment. The H & S President asked for input from the School Board as to where the funds could best be spent, or if they should survey school families to get feedback. The School Board suggested the H & S Board members make the decision where best to use the funds.

VI. Principal Search – Dan Springer

The Principal Search Committee has been assigned and will meet on March 24th to begin the process of selecting a new principal. The job opening has been posted on the Diocesan Website, and Superintendent Bernie Stanko has also posted the position at local colleges. So far, 5 applications have been sent in with an additional 5-6 expected. A survey was sent to all St. Paul school parents and teachers for input. Interviews with individual candidates will take place in the next few weeks and will be conducted in a group format. After the interviews, the Committee will narrow the selection down and decide who to perform reference checks on. Once this process is complete, the committee will decide which candidate to recommend to Fr. Ernie. The entire selection process will be confidential and will take place in the upcoming weeks.

VII. Open Discussion

Agenda Items - April Meeting:

2009-10 School Budget

Potential Special Needs Program

Update on Principal Search

Referring Family Incentive Policy

Meeting Adjourned.

Next Regular Meeting: April 21, 2009

Respectfully submitted:

Lisa Gutting, Secretary