

St. Mary's Institute
Minutes of School Board Meeting
February 11, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.; Fr. Jeff led the opening prayer.

The minutes from the previous meeting (January) were approved.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Principal's Report (Nicole Luft):

- Nicole distributed a copy of the draft 19-20 school budget.
- Nicole gave a recap of Catholic Schools Week which included some new activities suggested by the upper wing students.
- Nicole thanked the Board members who attended the State of the School presentation, and announced that the school's YouTube channel will have available the State of the School presentation as a slide show developed by Lauren with the Principal's talk as a "voice over."
- Nicole recently met with a new school parent who has a particular interest in technology and is willing to help with the coding curriculum and will create a curriculum map. His interest and support may enable SMI to offer an summer camp enrichment experience for coding. The school will use a "state-of-the-art" model for coding developed by the Shenendehowa School District.

Pastor's Report (Fr. Jeff L'Arche)

- Fr. Jeff recognized the revised parish web site and the inclusion of SMI school life that enhances the connection between church and school. Laurie Stachnik is working to maintain the parish site and a FaceBook page for the church.
- Fr. Jeff stated he believed that at times it is good to revisit the responsibility of Board members regarding confidentiality, discussion of issues, communication, etc. He reiterated the need for communication regarding concerns to be directed in the proper direction rather than among and between members. He cited the School Board Manual regarding these responsibilities and protocols to be followed by board members. Nicole also expressed concern about emails from members; the messages are not sent to the proper individuals and create a culture of uncertainty. She reminded all present that her door is always open for discussions.

The Board Chair continued the discussion and stated that there should not be Board meetings by email—if there is a question or an issue of concern, it should be made an agenda item.

Retention and Recruitment Committee (Gina Johnson)

- A Parent Survey is in development and should be finalized by the end of the week.

Advancement Committee (Gina)

- An Advancement Plan is in final stages of completion and will be presented to the Board at the March meeting.

(Kelly)

- Willie Gizara has a global marketing business and has agreed to assist SMI with marketing the school using social media.
- The blue envelope collections are at approximately 50% of their goal.
- Corporate Partnership letters are being sent out this week.
- The Auxiliary will assist with a Valentine's Day themed social media push—"Share the Love" to call and thank donors/supporters of SMI.
- There will be an Annual Campaign Energizer event on March 24 at 6:30 p.m. Board members are asked to attend the event and also to contribute to the annual campaign by that date. Approximately 100 donors will be invited to attend the Energizer—it will be a mix of top donors who have already contributed and those that have not yet given to the campaign but could possible contribute \$250.

Catholic Identity (Matthew Lynch)

- The Committee is continuing to develop assessment tools for the religious ed curriculum.
- Matt stated that the Committee is looking finalize a grant to expand a Catholic section of the library.
- Some discussion ensued regarding the mandatory participation at Mass for each class and the realization that there are students in the school that have not been baptized but parents have expressed an interest in having that happen. It may be possible to include the Sacrament of Baptism during one of the liturgies at the school.

Finance Committee (Jim)

- Jim reported that a schedule of tuition and fees has been finalized for the 20-21 school year and copies were distributed to the members present.

- The Committee recognizes that the school cannot continue to provide the current level of health insurance coverage for part-time employees. There is ongoing communication with the Diocesan School Office regarding implementing a pro-rated schedule to transition part-time employees to a lower level of coverage; the diocese recommends a longer transition time for implementation, but the Committee believes that a shorter time would be more advantageous for the school.
- The Committee recommends that the school move forward to hire a Chief Financial Officer.

OLD BUSINESS (Nicole Luft)

- The after-school program is being assessed with the goal of making changes for the 20-21 school year.
- A very attractive brochure has been developed and is being distributed to businesses, organizations and churches. The purpose of the brochure is to target middle school growth and retention by offering “shadow days” in which students from other schools can experience a day at SMI.
- Nicole reported that we have the funds to join the “Friendship League” which will provide opportunities for SMI students to play sports in a competitive but not highly aggressive manner. Several details need to be worked out so that we don’t pay the membership fee and then find we cannot meet all of the requirements of the league. She will also be looking for a coach for the basketball team.

NEW BUSINESS (Nicole Luft)

- Regarding financial assistance for teachers and aides/support staff, Nicole will research policies of other schools and work with Fr. L’Arche to develop an approach that works for SMI.
- **Gina Johnson** reported on a Teacher-Mentor meeting she recently attended. Based on sharing and conversations at that meeting Gina learned that the problems existing at other schools are not present at SMI, and she is encouraged by how the school is run compared to other schools.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m. The next Board meeting is March 10, 2020.

Dolores Dybas, Recorder

Board Members In attendance: David Blanchard, Lauren DeJong, Dolores Dybas, Fr. Jeff, Gina

Johnson, Kelly Joyce, Nicole Luft, Matthew Lynch, Dan Martuscello, Bill Murphy, Rachel Murphy, and Jim Teresco.