

School Commission (SC) Meeting
Thursday, March 1, 2018
6:00 PM

Present: Charise Addicks, Dino Annest, Jackie Bryan, Mike Curran, Mary Ann Fessler, Pat Galvin, Ben Gauyan, Anna Horton, Sarah Katsandres, Kamila Kennedy, Jennifer Kokkonis, Ted Krembs, Brendan Kolding, Julie Leonardo, Beth Martin, Tara Martin, Father Oakland, Amanda Roberts, Molly Ward

Absent: Mary Moan, Karin Hansen, Kevin McMahan, Bill Skibitzke

Opening Prayer

Father Oakland led the School Commission in the opening prayer.

Approval of Minutes

The February minutes were deemed approved.

Pastor's Report

Father Oakland reminded us that Holy Week will be here soon. One of the purposes of a Catholic School is to form disciples and this Easter we have 15 students receiving baptism, first communion, and/or confirmation. He asked us to please come celebrate with them at the Easter Vigil mass.

Lent continues and at mass this weekend Father addressed almsgiving. He emphasized matching giving for the parish and school. For homework, Father asked the group to do a Lent "check in" with their families and to continue emphasizing goodness, virtue and love during this time.

Father provided an update on the Capital Campaign. The team continues to meet and narrow down our parish's projects and costs. Father reported that the tuck pointing estimate for the brick across the entire campus is lower than expected at \$715k. They are also looking at estimates repairs and updates to the church's stain glass windows and the school playground.

Principal's Report

Principal Horton reported there was a lot happening at the school over the past week. Lenten service opportunities are taking place in all of the classrooms, including donations to St. Martin de Porres. As at Christmas time, all of the donations will be blessed at an upcoming school mass.

The school's 8th graders all received their high school acceptances and had to make final decisions by this week. The Baccalaureate mass and dinner, and graduation plans are currently in process.

The Crab Feed dinner was held last weekend at the school. Jennifer Kokkonis and the committee worked hard on this new event. All of the crab was donated by a school family and we netted \$4,200

for the school. There were 160 people who attended and this was an excellent turn out for the first year.

Principal Horton is gearing up for our 2018-2019 budget planning. She will be holding financial aid meetings this week. She anticipates that by the week of March 12th she'll have a solid tuition revenue number based on actual enrollment, sibling discounts and aid. She reported that she also heard back from all the staff about their plans for next academic year.

Principal Horton attended a deanery planning meeting last week where staff salaries and tuition rate increases were discussed. As a reminder, our tuition has increased 6% for the upcoming year. For the other schools: OLG increased 5%, Holy Family 10%, St. Francis 10%, and St. Bernadette 10%.

The Archdiocese is examining tier salary options to enhance our competitiveness with public school teacher salaries. All the Catholic School principals in our deanery compared salary schedules and we are fortunate in that we provide staff salaries that are close to 100% of the Seattle School District's teacher salary base. On March 8th the state legislature finalized its budget and the teacher union bargaining for the public schools will soon begin (it usually runs through the summer). Catholic schools are going to be facing increasing public school teacher salaries and supplements provided to teachers on top of their base salaries. Jackie Bryan reported that for the Seattle and Highline Districts there will likely be an 18% supplement automatically given, above the salary base, for next year.

Principal Horton also let SC know that in this week's EFC she shared a message from the Catholic Church's lobbying group. There is a bill in house right now that would require all first responders to notify both public and private schools of emergencies (currently they are not obligate to notify private schools). We are lobbying for notifications to go to all schools within a local community, regardless of their public/private status.

Development Report

Beth Martin provided an update on school development efforts.

1. Annual Fund – \$127k has been pledged and \$85K has been collected thus far for the 2017-2018 Annual Fund. This represents 63% family participation. For 2018-2019 we have 41% participation in Annual Fund pledges.
2. Auction – There are still donations trickling in for the auction. All families have given or been charged via FACTS. Ticket sales started today and invitations were sent home with the children. The auction committee is asking for people to send in their prom pictures this month which will be used for decorations. As of today, 34 tickets have already been sold. The capacity at South Seattle is 260-300 attendees. Volunteer sign ups started last week and there are quite a few positions still available. Our long term auction chairs for procurement/sales, logistics, and decorations are looking to step down after this year. We are looking for people to step in so they can shadow this year.

Enrollment/Marketing Report

Jennifer Kokkonis reported that school enrollment is still going very well. She estimates that we will have 500 students enrolled in Pre-k through 8th grade for the 2018-2019 school year. The following classrooms are full and have waitlists: Preschool, K, 1, 3, 5, 6. The 2018-2019 tuition schedules have been distributed and registration fee billing was processed in FACTS.

Financial Report

Tara Martin reported on the 2017-2018 budget actuals through January 2018:

- The budget forecast for last 5 months is stable
- March will be the month where we finalize next year's budget (tuition, salaries and benefits projections)
- Our tuition income is \$30k over initial forecast due to new enrollments
- The Annual Fund budget was reduced slightly to \$150k given results to date (63% participation)
- We are up \$36k from our original net budget projection (\$244k net projected) and this will help us build our savings and implement important projects on the campus moving forward

Parents' Club Report

Dino Annest reported that the next Parent's Club meeting will be held on March 15th. The guest speaker will be Chris Harnish from Mercer Island Youth and Family Services. Chris works with middle school and high school children with substance abuse and behavioral issues. He will talk about how to keep your kids from being at risk. There was a discussion about having a future speaker (possibly September) come talk about how to help parents manage their children's smart phone use.

Strategic Plan

Principal Horton asked each SC member to select a pillar work group to join moving forward; 1) Strengthening Catholic Identity, 2) An Accessible and Welcoming Community, or 3) Wise Planning Through Stewardship, Planning, Governance, Funding, and Marketing.

Within these work groups, SC discussed how to best collect feedback from our community about the Strategic Plan. It was decided that a survey would be generated and distributed by each pillar group to families through an email outreach. In addition to completing the surveys, families will be offered a time to meet in person at the May Parent's Club Meeting to give verbal feedback, ask questions, discuss further, etc. The May SC meeting will be a working meeting to discuss the feedback provided. The next steps:

1. Each pillar group needs to identify 5-7 questions they want to ask in the survey
2. Finalize dates for survey dissemination and email outreach

Open Discussion

1. School Safety – There was a lengthy discussion about current safety measures and plans to ensure the ongoing safety of our children and staff. Principal Horton noted that since this is a very relevant topic in the U.S. right now, they have been talking about it in staff meetings. Some teachers have asked for pepper spray or other protective items for the classroom. There have also been a number of parent inquiries over the past few weeks about how the school is addressing safety.

Principal Horton drafted a letter to send to families that provides an update on school safety and asked SC to review it. She reminded us that the state of WA requires us to conduct a minimum of 2 emergency drills per year required. We do 5 per year. Principal Horton emphasized the need for balance between doing whatever we can do to prepare our children for emergencies and not scaring children, particularly the young ones. She noted some challenges, particularly in the context of active shooter drills (e.g., doors open outward so we need to invest in tools for barricading classrooms in the event of an emergency).

In light of increased gun violence across the country, and increased parent concerns, members of the SC suggested a future face-to-face information session with families to talk about the contents of the Principal's written update and to provide information about topics such as safety drills with the children, current and new safety measures being implemented, how office staff are trained, how we track who is in the building, how the radios are used, how drill help us learn and plan for multiple scenarios, etc. Importantly, SC members felt it was important to give parents an opportunity to ask questions.

There were also several suggestions made by SC members about ways to improve safety and support for the children including:

- Secure lower windows and doors in normal and lock-down conditions
- 3M bullet proofing for windows
- Video cameras at all doors
- Purchase special barricades for classroom doors
- Invest in a school counselor
- Code lock for the playground gate
- Bystander training and/or updated scenarios with children as part of Religion curriculum

2. SCRIPS Update – Mike Curran gave an update on the SCRIPS program which is now live. There are currently 750 merchants participating nationally. The only local grocery stores that participate are Met Market & Thriftway (we receive 5% back from all purchases). We will ask families to use Presto Pay and order online to take HRS out of the middle of the financial transactions. A presentation will be given on the SCRIPS program at the March Parent's Club Meeting. The SC agreed that it was important to identify ways to incentivize people to register and try out SCRIPS so it gains some momentum (e.g., dress passes, volunteer hours, etc.). Mike reminded us that we are using St. Francis as our model as they currently bring in ~\$80k per year through this program. The SCRIPS committee is still figuring out how to distribute \$50 and \$100 cards they will pre-order for Met Market and Thriftway.

3. Open SC Positions – Mike Curran asked for a volunteer to collect and review applications for the SC open positions. Sarah Katsandres offered to be the contact for this year’s application process. Mike reminded everyone that we have only two meetings left to recruit folks. It was suggested that perhaps we should find a parishioner to apply for SC to help improve the communication and efforts between the school and parish.
4. SC Term Length – Mike Curran revisited the discussion from the February SC meeting about whether to shorten the SC term length from 4 to 3 years. Father Oakland suggested that if someone wanted to be VP in their third year on the SC, then we could give them the option of staying on for a 4th year as the President. The SC discussed the pros and cons of a 4 year term, a 3 year term, and a 3 year term with the option for a 4th year. No consensus was reached, so it was decided to keep the term length at 4 years for now.
5. Volunteer Hour Waiver for Committee Chairs – Mike Curran asked the group to consider automatically granting all committee chairs 50 volunteer hours. This would reflect the work they do and would also help entice people to take on key leadership positions. There was a discussion about which chair positions would be given this perq, given how much the chair positions can vary in responsibility. Since no resolution was reached, Father Oakland asked the SC to vote on granting this perq to the Auction chairs, given Auction chair recruitment is the most pressing at the moment. The SC voted unanimously to approve compensated hours for the three open, Auction chair positions. Further discussion and analysis will occur to identify other eligible chair positions.
6. Reduction in Volunteer Hour requirement for new K-8 families – After a discussion about the difficulties new families often have in integrating and adjusting to the various school requirements and activities, the SC voted to reduce the required volunteer hours from 50 to 35 for new families only.

Closing Prayer

Amanda Roberts led the School Commission in the closing prayer.

The meeting was adjourned.