



ADVISORY SCHOOL BOARD MEETING AGENDA

Monday, April 8, 2024

7:00pm

Saint Mary School Library

TOPIC:
SCHOOL BOARD MTG.

Attendees: School Board Members
Facilitator: Courtney Chianello
Note and Time Keeper: Marianne Sutcliffe

MEETING OBJECTIVES:

- **Objective 1: Committees**
- **Objective 2: Pastor's Report**
- **Objective 3: Principal's report**
- **Objective 4: Chairperson's report**

Schedule 90 minutes

Members in Attendance: Fr. Dan Whiteside, Principal John Fuja, Courtney Chianello, Marianne Sutcliffe, Ana Maria Bustos, Martyna Kolarev, Melanie Dolak, Brian Costin, Lisa Carlson, Vincent Vasquez, Mike Murphy

Members Absent: Guy Karm, Marek Wisniowski, Paola Nacci, Jen Ree

Others in Attendance:

ACTIVITY

Welcome, prayer, review objectives, introductions
Prayer – Martyna Kolarev

OBJECTIVE 1 – Committees

- **FSO Update:** Lots of activities coming up including Mother-Daughter and Father-Son Talks, Scholastic Book Fair/Bingo Night, Tasty Tuesdays, etc. There will be further updates provided in May.
- **Finance Update:** Marek not in attendance. SAB members with questions should send to Courtney for consolidation. 12-month P&L looks positive but due to cash basis of accounting, expenses still remain despite final tuition payment received.
- **Committee Updates:**
 - **Community Engagement:** Lenten weekly donation bag initiative from school families was very successful. 97 bags were donated of various sizes and provided to two charities – Our Lady of the Angels in Chicago and Saint Vicent DePaul in Libertyville. Next year will look for a way to involve the parish with the school or have a different initiative for the parish.
 - **Fundraising:** Meeting will be taking place with St. Viator fundraising to learn from them re: fundraising and engaging donors. Committee to draft a 2024/2025 fundraising plan and calendar and convene a meeting to review with the various stakeholders; goal is to maximize fundraising without having competing initiatives to the same donors.
 - **Marketing Committee:** Completed a number of initiatives including Open House and SMS awareness videos, Faith, Community and Academic video series to use on web, social and other platforms including Niche school search tool for which SMS has an elevated subscription level. Next Steps: Annual marketing plan (at a tactical level) to be defined as current goal is somewhat general; roles and responsibilities to be outlined and assigned (between SMS admin and Marketing Committee). Hold Advocate get together before year-end to celebrate accomplishments and discuss learnings.

OBJECTIVE 2 – Pastor’s Report

- Suggest that all committees have an end of the year review of status against goals and celebration of wins.
- Great crowds for Easter – including Holy Saturday despite the length – Sunday masses saw largest crowds since pre-pandemic
- Sacrament of Confirmation held this past Sunday; moving to 1st Communion celebrations each week for the next month (~8 kids per mass).
- Father Dan requested and was approved to extend his tenure at Saint Mary Parish for one more year. Can only request one year at a time.

OBJECTIVE 3 – Principal’s Report

- 24/25 Registration Updates: 199 registered as of today; last year we 189 at May 22nd. There are 19 graduating 8th graders, 24 new students, 21 students not returning (2 Kindergarten, 13 Pre-School and 6 in all other grades), with only one noting dissatisfaction as the reason for not returning. Given last years late registrations throughout the summer, there is still an expectation that we will obtain similar registration to 2023/2024 enrollment. There are still a number of tours ongoing (including with families that have multiple students). There is a Spring Open House on May 5th (11:30 – 1pm); last year we obtained more enrollments from the Spring Open House than from the Catholic Schools Week Open House. This Open House will be more low-key than January; asking some staff to attend to showcase the school (such as robotics offering); clubs will be in the library and SAB members are asked to attend to give tours if available.
- Recruitment Efforts with Non-School Parishes: We currently advertise our Open Houses in the St. Joseph the Worker, St. Edna and St. Mary of Vernon bulletins and put yards signs at the 2 former schools. Question was raised as to whether we can talk to the families of St. Joseph the Worker during their weekend and evening Polish and Spanish-speaking classes. Noted that if a family is a member of an Arch Parish that does not have a school, they are treated as a member of Saint Mary Parish for tuition purposes.
- Staffing Updates:
 - Marketing Director position being eliminated for next year to prioritize teaching positions including special ed. Also, most new enrollments come from word of mouth and web searches thus not of the belief that a marketing director is needed. There are currently a number of related overlapping responsibilities that will be clearly defined moving forward. Committees should also be utilized.
 - Posted position for part-time Math Interventionist for 3rd to 6th grade. Individual will push-in and pull-out of classroom based on needs. Also posted a part-time Math Teacher position for 7th and 8th grade (assuming Mr. Georgen not returning). Other option is to hire 1 full-time individual to fill both roles depending on who applies and the interest in full-time.
 - Ms. Smeja, current 5th grade teacher, will not be returning next year following her wedding and move to FL. Should remain confidential until State of the School so Ms. Smeja can announce to her class first.
- School/Parish Summer Offerings (all in June): 1 week of Vacation Bible School, preschool music camp, rising 1st grade summer review program. Some teachers may also offer tutoring throughout the summer; TBD.

OBJECTIVE 4 – Chairperson’s Report

- Process for identifying 2024-2025 SAB Officers (Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary): Anyone interested or who wants to nominate someone for the 3 roles should reach out to Principal Fuja by April 19th. We work to finalize appointments by May and if possible include in the State of the School address. Chair role (formerly Katie’s role) meets with Principal Fuja monthly to set the SAB Meeting Agenda and Chairs the SAB, Vice Chair (currently Courtney’s role) supports the Chair as needed and Secretary (current Jen Ree) takes board minutes. If someone is nominated, SAB member will be notified and assessed for interest.
- 2024/2025 Bison Benefit – Next Steps: A Chair is needed for the event (Janella will help but cannot commit to the lead role). Discussion of whether to continue a live event and whether a change in venue to on-site would have cost benefits and still draw a crowd; pros and cons discussed. Other topics – would a theme draw more interest, how do we get the parish members more involved, should we poll past attendees, would a heavy app/tapas format draw more interest due to the ability to mingle and meet people, timing of the event (early November noted as being favorable though with some negatives). Topic not resolved. To be revisited following St. Viator discussion.
- State of the School:
 - Logistics: Before Family Mass at 4pm on the May 19th in the Church. Will offer child care in the main hall if interested with adults in charge and 7th & 8th Grade students helping (7th and 8th Grade Advocates to reach out for student volunteers). Kids to return to church for mass at 4:50. Post-mass pizza dinner in the cafeteria; fine for religious ed families to attend; FSO to likely pay for the dinner from Principal Fund following a request from Principal Fuja. Consider having SMS families register so we have an idea of numbers. Save the date being prepared for virtual backpack. All AV equipment is available. Courtney to book church, main hall and cafeteria.
 - Content: Similar to last year with some paring down of the CSIP section. Idea of having each grade provide an accomplishment if time permits. Need ways to motivate more people to come. Remind people to continue to recommend SMS since most new enrollment is through word of mouth.
 - Offer Q&A if time permits or provide QR to submit questions. Can also answer questions at the pizza party.

Assess what worked well about this meeting and what we would have liked to change, review next steps from this meeting, closing prayer, motion to adjourn

Closing Prayer: Martyna Kolarev