St. Mary’s School

School Advisory Committee

Meeting Notes

March 11, 2019

In attendance: Ann Marie Deutsch, Jenny Tessendorf, Sara Miller, Bob Cownie, Marlese Thompson, Suzanne Pohorence and Marisa Enzinna.

Meeting called to order at 6:28 pm by Sara Miller.

1. Opening Prayer led by Sara.
2. **Pastor’s Report** – AMD reported that Father Michael is excited about the restoration.   
   At Saturday’s stewardship meeting he alluded that the mission is to increase the school’s enrollment. We currently have 10 more students enrolled than at this point last year.  
   AMD said she asked Father what we can do, if there were any new ideas for how to increase enrollment, and there aren’t.  
   Father wants to reach out to local churches to see if they would spread the word about the school. We need to find out whom to contact at each school. Discussed that some of the churches have their own preschools (Crosswinds/Wings, Good Shepherd/Little Lambs, Lifespring/Great Start) so we might want to alter the message to be “what to do after preschool” so it doesn’t seem like we’re trying to steal their students. Also could ask them to recommend SMS preschool/PreK, if they have a wait-list at their school.  
   Father is concerned about enrollment. He wants us to create and mail out postcards. AMD has a template we could use. (See Marketing for more information.)
3. **Principal’s Report** – AMD reported that there’s a lot going on.  
   It was the first day of the new dismissal procedures. They were changed to help better track people in the building from 2:30-3 p.m. There is a lot of traffic in the building, and sometimes parents go right to the classroom. Teachers have been told to ring the buzzer if that happens.  
   Preschool/PreK students are dismissed at the ramp; the teachers know the parents, so there isn’t a security risk.  
   There is a person staffed in the front hall with a walkie-talkie; parents sign out their children there instead of going to the office. Parents will wait in the hallway for their child.  
   Fiscally, there can’t be someone in the front hallway all day, but there are cameras in the parking lot, at the front door, and inside the school.  
   Lynn Nicoletti has left her position as the PreK aide; Katie Pisapia started today in that position. She has a child in the class. Abbi Gallagher has started in the morning Activity Center, while Sue Guittar is out.
4. **Committee Reports**
5. **Catholic Identity**- AMD and Suzy discussed the recent Hunger Banquet. The event is held every three years for middle school students. Students read case studies about socio-economic status and were divided into three groups for meals (a variety of foods and served by a waitress; family-style pasta, bread and applesauce; or soup and bread while sitting on the floor); it helps them focus on what’s important and helping others.  
   Marisa added that two SMS students are working on their Silver Award project, which will help the children of Family Promise. They want to talk to AMD and Suzy about incorporating elements of their project into House projects next year. AMD added that her granddaughter made Blessing Bags for her Gold Award project.  
   AMD also said the students recently attended the Bishop’s Mass at the Cathedral; it had been scheduled for Catholic Schools Week but was rescheduled due to weather. There were still four schools that didn’t make it because of weather.   
   The school is participating in Lent Madness. Each day, students want a video about two North American saints, talk about it and then vote. The previous day’s winner is announced each morning. At the end, someone will be crowned “Heavenly Saint.” There is a bracket on the bulletin board in the front hallway.  
   Masses in the gym are going well. More than 200 people attended the Ash Wednesday Mass. There will be pictures of the Stations of the Cross in the gym, and there will be Reconciliation for students before Easter.
6. **Finance**- No report.
7. **PTO-** AMD reported that Casino Night is coming up. Marisa boosted the event on Facebook to adults 18+ living within 25 miles of St. Mary’s. AMD isn’t sure how ticket sales are going. There will be auctions and raffles. They’d like Mike Menikotz to speak; Jenny will talk to him.
8. **Academic Excellence –** Suzy reported that March 14 is Pi Day. She started the event three years ago; there are pie-making and digits of Pi memorization contests. There will be round prizes.   
   The Science Fair is next week. Not sure of the time yet or if middle school projects will be displayed in the gym. Also asked about the bake sale moving to the gym. They will discuss at the Department meeting tomorrow.  
   Marisa asked if all SMS teachers are certified to teach in New York. AMD said yes. All teachers must have their master’s degree or be working on it, and hold either initial or professional certification. According to Diocesan rules, all subs also must be certified.
9. **Building and Grounds** – AMD reported that the people doing the restoration work are great. The gold leaf paint had to come on an armored truck.
10. **Marketing Committee**-   
    i. Logo – AMD hasn’t heard anything more about the new logo.  
    ii. Enrollment – Suzy mentioned the Ministry Fair will be June 8-9 and SMS will have a booth. We could give a two-minute speech and create a single-sheet takeaway.   
    Ann Dean, from St. Gregory’s church and school in Amherst, is the new hospitality director for the Parish. She may have some insight on how to market the school.  
    Discussed creating and boosting a Facebook post to encourage people to tour the school and making posters for churches. These would be general – tours available at your convenience, etc.  
    If we host an open house, we should pair it with something else (ice cream social, penny carnival, etc.). Possibly plan something from 4:30-6:30 p.m. at the end of April; invite people who have already toured the school and open it to others.   
    AMD will contact other churches to see if we can put up posters.
11. **Old Business**   
    **a. 170th/ 175th Anniversary Planning  
    i. Red Wings game (June 2**) – Sara asked how big of an event we want to mark the 170th. The Red Wings have two areas available for the date – one can fit up to 50 people, the other can fit up to 100. Each has a separate reservation fee, with tickets included, but food/drink is extra. How much would the school contribute toward the event?   
    Discussed possibly opening it up to current families, too; give them the option of the alumni package or the standard Catholic Schools game tickets. Or do we want it to be alumni only?  
    AMD asked for pricing and she’ll talk to Tony.  
    **ii. Screens for hallways –** Asked about the status of the screens for the hallways (we raised ROC the Day funds to pay for robotics kits and two screens). AMD will talk to Tony; she isn’t sure of the status of the ROC the Day money.
12. **New Business**
    1. **Coffee Fundraiser –** We’ve gotten some feedback with requests for whole bean or K-cups, but it’s hard to please everyone. AMD isn’t sure how much was raised.

7:50 p.m. Meeting Adjourned

Next meeting: April 8