

# Sacred Heart School Advisory Council Meeting

Minutes  
September 10, 2009  
Parish Center

**Persons Attending:** Rick Pearce, Shelley Cargill, Ed Hayden, Amy Ebertin, Ron Schmalz, Kathy Jain, Tom Clerkin, Tom Pulchny, Michelle Perone, Christine Csubak, Terri McClenahan, Janice Thornburg, Father Gary, Lynn Ball  
Guest attending: David Bruce

I. **Call to Order / Opening Prayer** – Meeting began at 7:00 PM with opening prayer led by all.

II. **Agenda Review**  
Overview of agenda

III. **Ratification of Minutes**  
Review of two minor changes to the minutes by Shelley. Ron Schmalz moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Amy Ebertin, approved by all.

IV. **Principal's Report**  
Mr. David Bruce invited to meeting tonight. He will be working with Tom P. to review financial and development practices at SHS. He will give advice on direction and ideas for school. Tom has worked with David in the past and he has been very helpful for example when setting up the preschool at St. Leo. David knows Catholic Education very well.

Back to School night went well, good feedback, teachers were well prepared

First weeks of school have gone smoothly

We are still little low on enrollment but still getting some interest. Currently at 206 students K-8, 18 in Pre-K

No bully program continues – Ms. Mendoza went to solution training today

V. **Pastor's Report**  
Visits to classrooms will start after return from Rome – plans to visit every classroom 4 times a year to allow children to get to know Father in a different role

Will visit playground so kids know him by name, practice politeness greeting children by name, being seen on playground helps make school catholic

Looking forward to good year – please encourage families to worship together

New music teacher will have a roll in Sunday masses – once a month at the class mass she will direct the music. She will be helping children to understand how music plays a core role in the liturgy service. The kids in the MST will be part of the liturgical team.

## **VI. Faculty Report**

Terri presented new Faculty Report –

ITBS testing next week - kids need to be well rested and have good brain food

There is a very positive atmosphere throughout the school, kids and teachers are happy, helping each other, working as team, there is a cohesive environment, the kids are receptive

Everyone is enjoying the school upgrades

The student council is doing a good job

Thursday morning masses are going well

MST kicking off nicely

We have good 8<sup>th</sup> grade role models

Teachers are standing at classroom doors and greeting all kids, the new policy of stressing manners has been nice

## **VII. Special Presentation**

David Bruce –

- Started in diocese 18 years ago, there are 35 schools and churches in SJ diocese that work with his company, Mission Support Services.
- In the past his company has gone in and performed operational audits, comparing schools to other schools
- He has reviewed SHS financials and website
- He is looking at a 30 day timeframe for evaluation
- In addition to talking to different school groups (i.e. SAC) he would like to speak to key parish families that have kids in public and other private schools to determine why not enrolled here
- He would like feedback as to what we think he should be looking at and where should be focusing.
- Rick indicated that we are well positioned to make a comeback but last few years have been difficult. However we do not have the resources to perform the development and PR work we would like to accomplish.
- Amy indicated that SHS has an issue being the only catholic school in Saratoga where there are good public schools and we are more expensive than other surrounding catholic schools in area.
- Kathy pointed out that this year will be first year where there will be big cuts to public schools due to the budget so we are positioned to look better than public schools for next year.
- Tom C. indicated that people will be asking how we compare academically to other schools. This has been difficult to get a tangible answer for in the past.

- Amy pointed out that this year we saw an increase in class size at 6<sup>th</sup> grade as parents see large public middle schools and have a desire to get into catholic high school.
- Ron indicated that there is an ongoing drive to make school and church into a parish as a whole.
- David would appreciate a list of names of who he could talk to regarding possible bad publicity by people in the community (Lynn felt that Father Gary should see that list first), also a list of names of people in the school who can help get the good word out.
- Notes from the Leadership meeting would be appreciated. Shelley will provide notes from that meeting to Tom P.
- Rick wondered what would be some of the best practices for attracting people to SHS. David indicated that a paid development person is the key as well as a strong technology program. Access to student's own laptop that is integrated into curriculum for coursework is important to compete with area schools. If SHS added some "bells and whistles" then school could market this to potential students. David indicated that SHS should deal with development like high schools. High schools take the approach that in addition to tuition you have other commitments where you pay a years worth of tuition over 4 years (that additional amount is tax deductible). There is a systematic approach that you can follow that has been established by other schools.
- Recruitment and retention is the primary effort that must be done at the elementary level.
- Christine indicated that pre-K could offer more variety which would help to gain and retain young students.
- Terri has noticed with people who leave Kindergarten after K year are leaving because they feel the burden of the service hours. Some other schools don't require service hours.
- A comparison of the requirements of other schools for enrollment should be done as well.
- Tom P. indicated that David can identify schools that are like SHS and use them as a model for what can be done here. This will be a positive process that can be put to a positive use.

#### **VIII. Officer's Report**

Janice Thornburg – operations

Improvements to campus accomplished this summer – air conditioning, some painting, thanks to vendors who provided work at cost and by the start of school. Janice had hoped to do more improvements but was limited due to belief that school had a limited electrical capacity. The capacity problem was solved so can continue to do some upgrades when funds are available.

Thanks to Silverio who thoroughly cleaned everything right after workers finished up.

Goal – to make facility available for use a little more, have rented facility to CTC in past and they will use it again next summer, have turned people away due to need for repairs, now can bring in some additional users to make a little money on facility rental

Janice's committee needs? – she has some returnees and some new members, the committees are moving more toward project based, one example is to fix cabinetry in kitchen and do deep clean and painting of the kitchen, the committees will be focusing on completing some visible projects that mean a lot to people. School and church has transitioned to environmentally green products, switched dispensers so can get best pricing on products due to uniformity of product and bulk purchasing.

Lynn indicated that the parent community may not know about all of these great improvements. It would be great to deliver to parents a written facilities report. This would help raise money if parents know how money was spent they would be more likely to give. It also lets parents know who vendors are that helped school so that they can support those vendors. People were talking "on the blacktop" and about wondering what would get done during the past summer. There was obviously a plan so we want to get that information out there to the parent community. Janice indicated that painting and carpeting were a go but air conditioning was unknown so the committee did not want to advertise it.

Tom C. indicated that a periodic update would be helpful. This would allow people know what is being accomplished.

The kids will write thank you notes to the vendors who did the work to thank them for their support and for completing the projects before school started.

Janice is investigating need and possibilities for a new science classroom but the first step is the analysis process.

Rick – logistical issues

Calendar – review 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday dates – ok by all  
Rick proposed changing one date to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday. He would like to move the meeting on 1/14/10 to 1/21/10, no disagreement on this change.

Support group sponsors

Lynn – PR  
Christine – Catholic Identity  
Michelle – Fundraising  
Kathy – Enrichment  
Ed – Strategic Planning

## Janice – Operations

### Committees within Support Groups

#### Kathy – Enrichment

All the committees will remain the same with the possible exception of yard duty. Yard duty may not be a committee due to scaled back parent involvement.

Enrichment role is not currently filled. There is a dance class possibility where profits donated back to school, probably wouldn't start until 2<sup>nd</sup> trimester where recital could be part of talent show.

Learning center added 3<sup>rd</sup> grade this year – curriculum being evaluated by Gayle, Vanessa and Cecelia. Ed wondered if it is still valuable to have learning center even when class size is small. Terri and Tom P. feel that it is a valuable asset even if don't have as many groups of students (group size stays same).

Library – Lori still serving as librarian, library open Monday almost all day

Movement lab – no change

Parent education – no longer a committee

Room parent – Jeanette Budenholzer and Lori Davis

Yard duty – Holly has done scheduling but burden will be much lower for parents this year, there will always be a staff member on yard, will currently still use parents but different options are being evaluated, Tom P. would like to find a group of parents who regularly do this as their volunteer service at school, these parents would know the rules and children and give a consistent service

#### Christine – Christian Living

Christian living – Kathy Lambert

One Heart – Cathleen Harter

#### Janice – Operation

Same 4 committees – could use chair for facilities, could use members for all committees

#### Ed – Strategic Planning

Development – Michelle P and Tom Mailhot

Academic Excellence - Amy

Volunteer – Anita Ratra

Stakeholder Satisfaction – Tom C.

#### Michelle – Fundraising

Fall fundraiser – Anita Ratra and Maria

Little Black dress – Brenda Strilbling

Scrip – Susan Boehnlein

General fundraising – need a chair

Gifts of Heart – need someone to chair this committee, perhaps one of the new 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents would be interested, she has organized the little league auction in the past.

Michelle indicated a need to identify how to present Gifts of the Heart so more families participate. It hasn't been a project based fundraiser in the past but may need to direct it in that way in the future. There is a need to establish communication so that people know that money will sit in an account until there is enough money raised to reach a monetary goal for project completion. The project should be something that a majority of people are interested in. Question of whether this is the right venue for fundraising in the current economic conditions. It was indicated that parents like to see an impact on their tuition as well. Can we hold off on filling chair position until some of these questions have been addressed? The position could be more easily filled if selling points for committee for the committee have been established.

Keep in mind that Gifts of the Heart is the easiest fundraiser that we do, this is straight up cash with the most bang for the buck because takes so little work. A known start and end date would be good but also need regular communication to generate success.

It would be nice to have David Bruce weigh in on this fundraiser.

Lynn – PR

Internal communication – Patty did this last year

Includes parent communication meetings, parish bulletin and school bulletin (The Pulse), annual report

Marketing – open house

Publicity – communication through papers, local and Valley Catholic

Hospitality – Mona Awad and Christine Scherp

Lynn needs people for most committees

Rick will publish a list of these committees/subcommittees

Ron requests that the content of each support group's web pages be similar to Kathy Jain's for Enrichment. This format provides a lot of information for the reader.

Rick - How do we want to proceed from here in terms of internal goals and objectives deliberation?

Last year the leadership meeting info was distilled down into the Goals & Objectives

How to get to an action plan for committees?

Take the information from last year and the information from the leadership meeting and information from a survey to get to the Goals & Objectives?

Give Tom P. a chance to evaluate and prioritize so Goals & Objectives can be set

Do any of the support group leaders feel they need to dramatically change their Goals & Objectives?

Answer was no.

It is felt that there is no need for a survey. It is possible to go with the current information in addition to Tom P's input.

Group Sponsors will go through last years Goals & Objectives, make any changes, forward changes to SAC and Tom P. can evaluate.

#### **IX. Summary, Next Steps & Adjournment**

1. Adjournment – at 9:00 PM with a prayer led by Father Gary.