

October 6, 2014 St. Giles Board of Specified Jurisdiction Meeting

Present: Ann Clements, Beth Fegan, Julia Harmon-Bell, Mike MacKinnon, Liz Moroney, Rachel Rettberg, Barb Schulz, Chris Verni, Sue Poetzel, Father Carl Morello

Guest: Director of Development Beth Linnen

Absent: Doug Aller, Janet Coffey, Scott Thies

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM. The opening prayer was offered by Father Carl.

Science Lab Renovation Project

Beth Linnen reported that a former St. Giles family has made a donation of \$30,000, with an additional \$20,000 incentive for matching donations (which could bring the total amount to \$70,000), in honor of the junior high teachers. In consultation with the staff, it has been decided to use this money to renovate the science lab. Mrs. Linnen outlined the condition of the current science lab and how the money would be used to bring the lab up to date: cabinetry, plumbing, electricity, storage, video equipment, and other improvements. If funds allow, air conditioning may be an added feature of the new lab. A committee has looked at state-of-the-art science labs at other schools to determine what will work best for St. Giles, and plans have been prepared. A new lab will enhance other areas of the curriculum in addition to science: Project Lead the Way, robotics, and STEM activities will all benefit from the improvements. Parents will be able to see renderings of the new lab during parent/teacher conferences, and the campaign for matching funds will begin during Catholic Schools Week. Construction is planned for next summer, and the lab should be ready in the fall of 2015. An open house celebration will be planned for the unveiling of the new lab. Mike MacKinnon will review the project with the Parish Finance Committee.

Strategic Planning

Father Carl reported to the BSJ regarding his views on strategic planning. In that he believes that the school and parish should work together on this, a committee has been formed to look at the various areas of parish life: religious education, young adults, seniors, youth, and the many other ministries that comprise the parish. He would like to see people from all branches of the parish talking to each other regarding a three to five year plan. Information gathering from the school stakeholders will be conducted during October and November, with an open forum planned for the end of October or early November.

As part of the information gathering process, teachers will be surveyed. Julia Harmon-Bell reported that a SWOT analysis of the preschool will also be available. She reported that initial review of the analysis revealed that some preschool families feel a disconnect with the larger school community. Bringing preschoolers to Mass or a prayer service, or bringing them to the kindergarten for an activity, were discussed as ways to bridge the disconnect. She also noted that recruitment for kindergarten at the pre-4 level is important.

Nut-Free Policy

Ann Clements and Liz Moroney addressed the status of the implementation of St. Giles' nut-free policy. Families will sign-off stating that they understand and will follow the policy. All food students bring for their own consumption should be nut-free, and anything brought to share must come from a nut-free facility. While the policy is well-understood in the school setting, confusion exists regarding food containing nuts in McDonough Hall. In that McDonough is frequently used both by the school and the larger parish community, questions arise as to whether food containing nuts can be served there. If there are no children present, nuts may be served at McDonough. If there are children present, the same policy that the school follows should be observed. Mrs. Moroney and Mrs. Clements will circulate proposed revisions to the policy in advance of the next meeting for a vote at the next Board meeting.

Principal's Report

Sue Poetzel reviewed the Principal's Report, which had been emailed prior to the meeting. The Olweus program continues with homeroom activities between buddy grades and weekly class meetings. An Olweus parent meeting is scheduled for the evening of October 20. Religion ebooks were purchased for 7th and 8th graders' iPads. Second graders are preparing for the sacrament of Reconciliation December 5th and 6th. Confirmation groups have begun to meet.

This year all 8th graders will take the Aspire test (multiple choice, short answers, and an essay) instead of the Explore test (all multiple choice). Testing will take place early in November, and students are already preparing. On September 26 teachers participated in a number of activities organized by the Office of Catholic Schools to enhance professional growth. On November 19 a specialist will work with staff to enhance the teaching of constructed response writing, an area of focus in the Continuous Improvement Plan. Speech services are on hold until District 97 hires a new speech teacher. Mr. Silvis is moderating the Vex Robotics Club. Five team members are building two robots for this year's competition.

Lion's Leap was held September 25, with donations due October 22. The award ceremony will be held October 31. Enrollment stands at 488 students. Mrs. Poetzel reported that St. Giles' 5 year Blue Ribbon School designation is coming to an end, but we will reapply for it.

Finance

Mike MacKinnon reviewed financial statements that had been emailed prior to the meeting. Actual figures for the 2013-14 school year were discussed and compared to the budgeted amounts for the current school year. There was a \$97,000 loss last year, while \$58,000 had been projected. Financial data is being analyzed to identify the discrepancy. Mr. MacKinnon expects a \$37,000 loss this year. Mr. MacKinnon also reviewed figures from another Catholic school for comparison. Mr. MacKinnon reported that John Milder will be joining the Finance Committee.

Development

Julia Harmon-Bell reviewed the Development Report, which had been emailed prior to the meeting. Mrs. Harmon-Bell reported regarding this year's Lions Leap, including additions (t-shirts, bananas, flavored water), plans for next year, and the celebration assembly to be held during Catholic Schools Week. Beth Fegan suggested a Lion's Leap fund-raising obligation letter to school families, as opposed to a letter encouraging participation.

Mrs. Harmon-Bell also reported that plans for the Black and Gold Gala are being made, under the direction of Jeanne Gallo. Auction details are being discussed, including the possibility of mobile bidding. Mr. MacKinnon had suggestions for sports-related auction items that would generate interest.

An October 19 event at Doc Ryan's to promote alumni relations is being planned. The Development Committee is working on identifying a representative from each class to work with the Committee. A Golden Lions brunch is being planned for June.

Sue Poetzel and Beth Linnen will work with the PTO to determine the best way to use the funds that have been donated to honor the memory of Tom Bell.

Technology

Chris Verni reviewed the Technology Committee Report, which had been emailed prior to the meeting. Projected tech fees amount to \$100,300. To date, \$43,478 has been spent on 35 Apple computers, and \$8,500 for various computer services. Mrs. Verni also reviewed the situation regarding tech service providers; we currently have three providers. An overall goal is to consolidate all services to no more than two providers, and plan for an on-site IT person next year.

Mrs. Verni also reported that there were some problems with the junior high iPad roll-out this year. All issues have been resolved. St. Giles has moved to a Mac server, so updates will be

more efficient in the future. Plans for two surveys this year were noted. Mrs. Poetzel has asked the Technology Committee to help research how other middle schools have implemented “bring your own device” programs. Such a program would help with expanding the program, as it would somewhat alleviate budget constraints. Plans for the school website were reviewed. Teachers’ ideas for the planned new Media Center will be collected in a Google Docs folder. Plans and ideas are being invited so that fundraising can start in 2015-16. A question was raised as to whether the paddle raise at the Black and Gold Gala would be a good opportunity to begin the fundraising.

PTO

Liz Moroney reviewed the PTO Committee Report, which had been emailed prior to the meeting. PTO plans on using eNews and the room parents to convey information to parents. Improvements to the playground were noted. Questions regarding the nut-free policy were discussed. The meet and greet event initiated by a preschool mom was held before the parish picnic and deemed a success. The next PTO meeting is scheduled for 7:00 PM in the Parish Center. Traffic concerns were noted, and the last Virtus training with Donna Peel is scheduled for October 22.

Marketing

Ann Clements reviewed the Marketing and Communications Committee Report, which had been emailed prior to the meeting. The Annual School Report Card will be ready for distribution at the November parent/teacher conferences. The Committee is considering an additional Open House for preschool recruitment, possibly in November or December. The Committee is also planning community building activities aimed at the retention of preschool families. Using the rectory for a potluck and/or appetizer social event for preschool parents was discussed. School brand protocol has been introduced to new faculty, and the Committee is looking into the purchase of two new school banners. Regarding communication, the Committee is working to streamline eNews, and re-energize the St. Giles Facebook page. A group of parents is interested in changing the color of the boys’ uniform shirts.

Athletic Committee

Athletic Committee chairman Janet Coffey was not able to attend the meeting; however, the Athletic Committee Report was emailed prior to the meeting. All is well with the soccer teams, the 7th and 8th graders having recently participated in the St. Joe’s tournament. For the most part, coaches are in place for the girls’ basketball teams. Questions remain about which leagues the girls’ basketball teams will be joining. Sal Petramala has arranged a Bears Watch party on Sunday, October 19 at Doc Ryan’s. All proceeds will benefit Interscholastic Athletics.

Beth Fegan asked BSJ members to review the to-do list included on tonight's agenda.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Capone