



SAINT MARY SCHOOL ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES **Tuesday- May 12, 2020 @ 7-9pm**

Mission Statement: Saint Mary School is anchored in Catholic faith, values and proven academic excellence. We inspire students to be lifelong learners and servant leaders of our local and global community.

In attendance via Zoom: Msgr. Michael Rose, Jeannie MacDonough, Stephanie Muzzy, Roseanne Mungovan, Tom Kennedy, Suzette Braun, Philip Varghese, Courtney Mayo Silvani, Colleen Clifford, Matthew Beaton, Kristin Scheffel, Beth Berg, and Erin McLoughlin

Call to order:

Roseanne Mungovan

- Opening Prayer
- March Minutes Accepted
- School Advisory Board Meeting Dates for 2020/2021 school year will be finalized soon. The meetings will continue to be held on the second Tuesday of September, November, January, March and May.

Discussion about Nominations

Mr. Philip Varghese and Mrs. Suzette Braun have both served on the Saint Mary School Advisory Board for three years. Their seats on the board are available to new members through the nomination and voting process. Philip may run again if he chooses as he still has children attending Saint Mary School. Nominations for a seat on the Board were supposed to go out on March 23, 2020. Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the nomination forms were not sent home on that date. Mrs. Jeannie MacDonough, Mrs. Roseanne Mungovan and Monsignor Mike felt as though sending the forms out at the beginning of the stay at home recommendation while families were trying to begin Distance Learning and working from home may have been a bit overwhelming. Now that there has been a grace period due and a new normal is underway, nominations will be sent to school families. Nomination letters will go out via email the week of May 18, 2020. Voting will take place through Google forms. An announcement of the new Board Members will occur in early June. Thank you to Mrs. Suzette Braun and Mr. Philip Varghese for their time on the board.

Committee Updates

- Principal's Report

Nature's Classroom for sixth grade and the annual trip to Washington D.C for the eighth graders were cancelled due to the pandemic. In the spring of 2021, both the sixth and seventh graders will attend Nature's Classroom.

The Walk-a-thon was also cancelled. This year, the Saint Mary Leadership Team had hired the Boosterthon to guide and run the school Walk-a-thon. The Booster-thon Company has allowed the school to carry the deposit over to next year.

The Art Fair will take place through a slide show this year. Ms. Kristine Krakowski, Art Teacher, has been photographing all art samples and will be creating this slide show to send out to families. The children's work sample will be distributed in the beginning of June.

The Father Daughter Dance will take place via Zoom. This is such a fun event and the committee wanted to allow this special event to still take place. The dance will take place on Saturday, May 16, 2020 at 6:30 pm.

The faculty has been brainstorming ideas for the end of the year fun days and/or activities. For the last week of school, the faculty is trying to come up with fun things to do each day that week. One suggestion was having a Virtual Field Day. School families will be notified as soon as events/activities are planned.

Graduation events are on hold. The graduation ceremony will be postponed. Rescheduling of this event is dependent upon where the state stands in coming weeks with small group gatherings. Parents of current 8th Graders have asked to postpone the special ceremony. There is hopes that later in June a small graduation ceremony may be held. This would be an abbreviated ceremony with just parents, students, Mrs. MacDonough and Monsignor Mike. There will be a couple of little surprises coming up for the graduating 8th Graders. Lawn signs have been purchased and some faculty members will caravan from house to house to drop off the signs to the students. The faculty and staff are trying to find ways to make is special to the 8th Graders.

Distance learning has been occurring since March 17, 2020. Teachers gathered on March 16th to develop some lessons and assignments to give to students. At that point, it was simply a short-term solution. Teachers were then informed that Distance Learning would be extended. After a couple of weeks of this new educational format, a survey was sent out to families. The administration and teachers were interested in how Distance Learning was going for families. Feedback was gathered and administration and teachers modified some of the learning formats and signed up for membership to particular websites such as Seesaw. This allows parents to receive a more streamlined experience. Teachers have been providing enrichment activities, reinforcement activities as well as teaching lessons on Zoom sessions. Families in Grades 2-8 were allowed to come to school to gather materials needed on a set schedule to limit the number of people in the building. Also, any families that requested to borrow a Chromebook were lent one at this time. One adjustment that was made was that all lower grade teachers began participating in the Seesaw App. Kindergarten has been using this all year and have found it to be a great way to communicate with parents. Students are able to upload their work into their particular journal. Another change has been the application of fun Fridays. It was made clear, in the survey, that parents needed time to catch up with work in case their workload was heavy on a particular day. As a way to accommodate this but also provide activities for families that complete work daily, Fun Friday was implemented. The activities on Friday are optional and often enrichment activities relating to a particular theme. The

middle school teachers have extra help or office hours on Friday's in lieu of Fun Friday activities. In the beginning of Distance Learning, the accountability of requiring and receiving student work was challenging. As of now, teachers are tracking work passed in on a weekly basis. A template is filled in by each teacher relating to engagement in zoom meetings and productions of work. Schoolwide, there is only 1 or 2 children completely disengaged. This will be documented in the year-end report card. Many parents have shared that they are pleased with the work assignments and time on task required for activities. The teachers have tried to provide a variety of lessons to students. The Distance Learning component of the school website continues to improve. The site changes all the time as teachers and staff find more information and enrichment activities to add. Once Governor Baker notified the public that schools will remain closed for the rest of the year, administration and teachers evaluated what components of Distance Learning were working and what components need to be revised. One suggestion was made to have teachers in Grades K-4 highlight what is required from students each day. Teachers are now doing this daily. Some teachers have started to have small reading groups meet via Zoom. The Zooms calls are now more direct instruction and/lessons. The only problem that has risen with this is the coordination of times for families. Another survey will be going out to families again soon. Grade level meetings have been occurring more frequently. There have been meetings with the Technology Specialist, Joe Sposato, as to how to keep a secure Zoom call and implement other online learning elements. Also, during Grade Level Meetings, administration and teachers have developed a new reporting tool to be distributed at the end of the year. It will assess a student's participation level, demonstration of skills, and attendance in Zoom calls. The social distancing request is hindering the sense of community of the group, as with many groups. To keep the community aspect of Saint Mary School, morning prayer occurs every morning and families are encouraged to view it and participate via Facebook. Mrs. MacDonough and Mrs. Muzzy have been using Facebook to highlight some things from Zoom meetings or pictures sent in from families. One suggestion from a Board Member, Matthew Beaton, was to hold a town hall for parents. It would be beneficial for parents to hear all that administration, faculty and staff is doing to provide continuous interaction and activities that are relative and appropriate to each grade level. Another suggestion made by Board Member, Beth Berg was to have a Question and Answer session for parents. She shared that Saint John's High School had an open forum about 3 weeks ago. They shared the information about what they as a school were doing during this time of Distance Learning and then there was a Question and Answer session at the end. It was 7-8pm so that the session did not conflict with most work schedules. There was discussion amongst the Board Members as to the difference between the Elementary School Distance Learning and the Middle School Distance Learning. The biggest difference is the independence levels of the students in Grades 5-8. Middle School students have a Zoom call every Monday- Thursday at 9:30 and 1:30. Elementary School students have a minimum of 2 Zoom calls a week. This schedule seems to work for most parents as they continue to coordinate their work schedule with the schedule of his/her child or children.

There will be a schedule sent out to families for students to come and retrieve their belongings from the school building. This will occur the first week of June. At this point, teachers will have come into the classroom and distributed anything that they would like the students to take home.

There have already been some changes being made for next year as it is still uncertain as to the format of schooling in the fall. As mentioned by Board Member, Philip Varghese, every sector is facing uncertainty during this time so there is no surprise that enrollment is down. The school nurse, Mrs. Powers, has already begun ordering extra masks, gloves and infrared thermometers. All students in PreK- Grade 8 will have a google account. This will allow all students to participate in Google Classroom. Teachers will be trained over the summer as to how to effectively use Google Classroom. Teachers were asked to think about the best sites or platforms that they have found and are using with ease. The school may purchase some of the programs for next year. The current plan is that the school will be open in August. As the guidelines from the state come out, the administration will accommodate and adapt to the guidelines.

Many parents are recognizing the quality of our school during this unprecedented time in our world. The teachers had distance learning up and running within a few days. Immaculate Conception School in Millbury is closing. There are some families from that school that have contacted with Mrs. Cheryl Dolan, Admissions Director, about transferring to Saint Mary School. She has also had a few people contact her that are interested in having their child attend Saint Mary School but want a tour before they commit. One possibility to have a student see what Saint Mary School is all about could be to have a student shadow on a Zoom.

Enrollment continues to be a concern. Several families have begun the reregistration but have not fully completed the registration yet. There are 44 fewer students enrolled for the 2020/2021 year. Some parents have shared that they are not comfortable sending their children back to school without a vaccine for the Covid- 19 virus. Their plan is to homeschool their son(s)/daughter(s). Other parents have shared that if Distance Learning continues, they are planning on switching to Public Schools in the fall as opposed to paying for Distance Learning at Saint Mary School. The most up to date enrollment numbers are as follows: Program A- 8 students, Program B- 13 students, Pre-K- 12 students, Kindergarten- 11 students, Grade 1-6 students, Grade 2-17 students, Grade 3- 15 students, Grade 4-16 students, Grade 5- 14 students, Grade 6-14 students, Grade 7-14 students, and Grade 8-11 students. All the Catholic Schools in this area seem to be in the same predicament. As mentioned by Board Member, Philip Varghese, every sector is facing uncertainty during this time so there is no surprise that enrollment is down.

There are several staffing changes for next year. Lauren Favulli, 7th and 8th Grade ELA, Julie Jarry, Librarian, and Erin McLoughlin, Kindergarten, have all decided not to return to Saint Mary School next year. Mrs. Sandy Hudson, First Grade and Mrs. Mary Rohanna, Preschool, will both be retiring at the end of the year. In the fall, Miss Tracy Jaskot, will be the half-day Preschool teacher with Mrs. Katie Faucher.

- Financial Update

Beth Berg

The finance committee met and reviewed the YTD financials as well as forecasting finances for the remainder of the year. Expenses are in line with expectations at this point in the year. Although there have been many recent changes due to the pandemic, the year-end financials should show the school breaking even or only having a small loss. There has been a reduction in revenue recently due to the cancellation of the Spring

Musical, After School Program and SMPA fundraising events. There could be some lower operating expenses due to Distance Learning but overall, the expenses will remain in line with the forecasted expenses. The administration is thankful that all employees of the school will continue to be paid through the end of the school year regardless of whether or not they are contributing remotely.

Reenrollment for next year is lower than expected but there could be an offset the financial gap with the new full day PreK program. A working budget will be finalized in July for the 20/21 school year. The prediction is that there will be a loss for the 20/21 school year; however, the school has a strong savings to support any loss that may occur. After the last recession, there was a dip and then an increase in finances. At that point, enrollment was a lot higher. There were a couple years where there was a loss and Saint Mary School continued to remain functioning without having to compromise the integrity of the education of students.

- Enrollment/Marketing Update

The committee is trying to showcase our Distance Learning model. Stephanie Muzzy is putting information online. She is sharing on our Facebook page how students and families are successfully adapting to Distance Learning. Morning prayer, photos of students on Zoom calls, and read alouds have been shared on the Saint Mary School Facebook page. There were a few very touching videos uploaded to the page, one was faculty and staff saying they missed the students and another was for teachers from students during Teacher Appreciation Week.

A Virtual Open house is being developed. A commitment to faith, families, and learning will be the focus of the slideshow. Included will be samples of STEM activities, in class activities and Distance Learning. All of these things make Saint Mary School a unique place of learning and faith. Stephanie may do a zoom session for early childhood, elementary and middle school potential families. She plans to include current parents in these sessions to share a real example about how Saint Mary School is adapting to the changing times.

The marketing committee is planning ways to recognize the class of 2020. A one-page summary of the class of 2020 is being compiled currently. This will be used to celebrate all the hard work of the graduating class. A slide show is also being created to spotlight the students graduating.

- Curriculum/Technology Update

There is one more meeting scheduled with a science curriculum publisher. A representative from Amplify will be sharing elements of the program with staff on June 10, 2020. Some suggestions, from the science teachers, of other programs were made to members of the committee. Mr. Moakley has reached out to Pearson to obtain materials.

As mentioned at the beginning of the meeting, this is Suzette's last year serving on the board. She has graciously offered to continue to help find the committee throughout the selection of a new science curriculum.

Mr. Matthew Beaton, has acquired a donation to support the STEM and Science curriculum for \$25,000. This could help with purchasing the materials needed and allowing the school to maintain and continue to develop a program that is rigorous and highly engaging.

- Advancement Update

The fund for Saint Mary School is at \$38,489.00. This amount is 86% to goal. There have been 86 donors consisting of past donors, current parents, and grandparents.

Giving Tuesday took place on May 5, 2020. This day is a worldwide day of kindness and giving, similar to November's Day of giving. There were 10 donations received totaling \$1,425.00 on this day. Emails were sent and information put out on social media with a link to the Donate Now button. There was a post on social media and sent through Constant Contact on Friday, May 8th. This gratitude post yielded an additional 3 gifts.

Stephanie Muzzy has been sending notes and cards to current and recent donor during the quarantine wishing good health and sending prayers during this time.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm