

Saint Mary Catholic School Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes for February 21, 2024

Meeting was assembled at 2pm in PLC Upstairs Meeting Room

In Attendance: Father Doug Halsema, Joseph McShane, Principal Peter Rodgers, PTO President Christina Gil, SAC Chair Vanessa Kuennen, Stacey Mai, Katie Ryan, Karen Kirk, and Amy Hebson

I. Open Meeting: Prayer led by Father Doug Halsema

II. Mission Statement: Read by Vanessa

Dedicated to Catholic values, Saint Mary Catholic School is a Christ-centered educational community committed to academic excellence, spiritual growth, individual responsibility, and service to others.

III. Agenda and Minutes

Karen made motion to approve minutes from previous meeting. Motion was seconded by Stacey. Minutes were signed.

IV. School Report: Given by Mr. Rodgers

A. Bus Update

\$90K currently in fund for bus replacement. It is still being determined if seatbelts can be added to the bus that we are looking at and, if so, how much it will cost. Karen noted that not all buses have seatbelts due to the compartmentalization of the bus and how it reacts in an accident. Our VPK students, who have to sit in belted-in boosters, require a bus with seatbelts. Further decisions on this topic will be made once we are updated from the bus company about the seatbelts.

B. Enrichment

2/22 5-7pm- The Emerald Coast Science Center is hosting a family night in the old gym.

C. Registration

1. 351 students were registered during in-house registration period (18 higher than last year)
2. 12 additional families from Father Putthoff's program are interested.
3. Open enrollment is currently open to new families.

D. Security

~~\$18K for security updates has been funded by PTO (more information to follow below in sub-committee's report)~~

E. School Play went very well and was well attended

F. Catholic Schools Week was a big success.

G. Chastity Program

1. Program was well received by families and the students. Mr. Rodgers sat in on several meetings and noted that the students were very involved in the conversation and were receptive to the information being given.
2. We are interested in bringing Mary Payne back next year with the goal of opening her program up to students across the parish. We will work with JulieAnne Walker to roll this out.

H. Regional Science Fair was this weeks and had at least four St. Mary students place.

V. Sub Committees Report

A. Bus Report: Karen updated earlier in meeting during school report

B. Security Report: Given by Katie Ryan

1. The \$18K funding for the first phase of updates has been approved and funded by the PTO. This phase will include adding security/privacy film to windows and adding colored signage around the campus to follow the diagram given to local law enforcement.
2. Mr. Rodgers would like Katie to give an update at the next PTO meeting. Katie will inform parents about the next step of the security update including fencing (a noted concern of parents) and updated hurricane safe windows (estimated at \$210K to replace). More information to follow in PTO report.

VI. PTO Report: Given by PTO President, Christina Gil

A. Security Updates

1. Parents are very happy with security updates being implemented. A recent survey showed security as a top concern of parents. Christina noted that Katie's formal presentation to the PTO will be a good way to educate parents on the updates.
2. Parents respond well to fundraising programs when the fundraising has a specific goal (i.e. security updates). This will be the plan for the future fundraising of the windows and fencing.
3. For parents who may have questions regarding the priority given to the security updates (ie. why are we adding the window films before new fencing), we are following the advice of law enforcement to prioritize updates using the *inside out* planning method where updates on the interior are given priority over the exterior.

B. Fundraisers

We will have two dining out fundraisers in March. Panda Express will host a dining out night that will be available at any location. We will receive 28% of ticket amount as donation.

Peppers Mexican restaurant will host a dining out night 3/27.

C. Board Elections

We currently have five nominations (2 Pres., 2VP, 1 Sec.) who will decline or accept their nomination at the next PTO meeting.

D. Field Day

3/15 half day before Spring Break. Chaired by Teresa Amato with assistance from Jessica (Haley) Chambers.

VII. Pastor's Report: Given by Father Doug Halsema

A. Father McShane has been visiting the classrooms to talk to the students about vocations in the priesthood.

B. Welcome to Lent! Stations of the Cross as well as the weekly school mass are being led by the 6th graders this week.

C. We have hired Jorge Mario to work with the school and the parish as an outreach to parents and families who speak little to no English. One of the goals is to add Spanish hymns at Mass.

D. We should be moving back into the church building by Summer.

VIII. Open Discussion: Given by Stacey Mai regarding school uniforms

A. Stacey met with Mrs. Parker and three other parents to discuss uniforms. The biggest concerns are enforcement and better communication to parents with uniform expectations at the beginning of the year.

- B. It was suggested to have students model the uniforms at a parent meeting. It was also suggested to add a color visual (like a catalog picture) to the website and handbook for visual reference. The goal is to set clear expectations for families so there is no question for both regular days as well as jeans days.
- C. For enforcement, we are discussing options that will make it both manageable and achievable for teachers such as having a "beginning of the day check" in all rooms.
- D. The only suggested change to the uniform at this time is to allow a school shoe with white, black, and/or gray combinations as opposed to the current requirement of a solid-colored shoe.

*Ending prayer led by Mr. Rodgers.
Meeting adjourned at 2:40pm.*

Next meeting: March 2/27/2024 2pm. Upstairs Meeting Room in PLC.

Father Doug Halsema

Principal Peter Rodgers

First Motion to Approve

Second Motion
