

School Advisory Council (SAC) Minutes

November 10, 2009

Present: Sr. Joanita, Mrs. K., Rick B., Jeryl B., Jim D., Chuck F., Susan McK, Susan M., Lynn R., Gary R., Colleen R., Jeff S., Marilyn S., Ginny S., Amy V.

Absent: Jada D., Stephanie L., Nicole S., Fr. Dorsey

Items highlighted in orange represent action items.

1. Athletic Association – Gym Time

- It has been hard to schedule gym time for our basketball teams this year. We are stretched across many facilities for practices and games. Susan McK. Has been working on the gym time scheduling.

2. Hampton Lake Project

- Gary R. presented information about the lake project planned for our athletic field. Hampton officials insist that the lake is needed to prevent flooding. The Parish had two surveys done – one paid by the church, one for free – and both came to the conclusion that the lake would hold less water than the current creek configuration. Something just doesn't add up and we feel that the township is not giving us straight answers. The parish committee also feels that building a lake so near the sewage treatment plant is just inviting problems in the future.
- The Auld Lumber property had been taken by eminent domain and will eventually be used for a turning lane and a drainage area. As far as we know, the lake phase is not planned and the township has not secured the \$10 million it needs to complete it.
- Next steps: **School and parish families need to write to Jane Orié and Jason Altmire to express our displeasure with the plan. Gary R. will work on talking points** that can be sent out to families so that we can craft our own letters. Eventually the media will be involved but they are holding off for now.

3. St. Ursula Parish Finances

- Gary R. and Chuck F. talked about the state of the finances at the parish. Fr. Dorsey was called to an emergency and was unable to attend this SAC meeting.
- The weekly contributions have gone down over the years to about \$13k weekly. The parish needs about \$14k to pay the bills and about \$16k to start to build a savings account to cover unexpected expenses. The diocese let the parish borrow money from the capital campaign fund which is currently at \$1.2 million. The diocese requires that the loan is paid within a year, but it is unclear what will happen if the parish is unable to do so.
- Once a month a finance person talks at Mass to stress that St. Ursula is a community and that we are all in it together – parish, school, church groups, etc. We were assured that there has been no talk about the school being the cause for the financial problems. It was determined that the parish pays about \$250k in subsidy for the school, but \$134k would still be a cost just to keep the school building operational for CCD, bingo, church group meetings, etc.
- The parish has suspended the capital campaign.

4. St. Ursula School 100th Anniversary - 2011

- The SAC discussed at a high level what an anniversary celebration should be in 2011. We determined that the anniversary year will run from Jan – Dec 2011. A committee will be created as the date nears to do the necessary planning. **We will seek out a SAC “project manager” who will be focused exclusively on the planning.**

- Ideas for celebrating included: Lining up kids in a “100” configuration and taking an aerial photo; one large impact event such as an alumni reunion; special 100 years logo sportswear; special raffle; logo design contest for students; calendar design contest for students. Some of these ideas could generate money to pay for the Middle States Accreditation. Ideas are welcome.

5. Enrollment Management

- Our November open house attracted three families.
- The billboard design which will be on Route 8 in December was revealed. Look for it on the north bound side just north of Harts Run Road.
- **Susan Mck will send out “The Ultimate Question” to school families.** “Would you recommend St. Ursula School to a friend? Why or why not?” The purpose is to pinpoint issues that can be fixed within the school year to improve our retention rate. All committees and staff must be committed to fixing items that come out of the survey. Good comments can be used in marketing materials.

6. Student Life Committee

- 66 kids attended Kids Bingo on November 7, which was an increase from the prior year. \$236 was earned for the food bank. Look for Cookies with Santa, Santa’s Workshop, and the staff Christmas party in December.

7. Ready-K Update

- Janine McT is putting the finishing touches on the Amish-built shelves for the Ready-K room. The shelves will be used to split the room into educational areas.
- A donation from St. Ursula Girl Scout Troop will be used to add items to the Ready-K room. A plaque/picture will be placed in the classroom to commemorate this donation.
- The YMCA cannot teach Ready-K 4-year-olds gym because of teacher certifications and liabilities. Sr. Joanita will speak with Mrs. P. to see if she could teach gym weekly to the kids. All members agreed, with her background most parents would be very comfortable with Mrs. P. acting as “gym teacher” also.
- **Ginny S. will add a new area rug to the Ready-K classroom wish list.** It should be at least 8’x10’ and should be bound on the sides. It would help for the comfort of the children as well as dress up the room.
- The SAC discussed the possibility of opening up another Ready-K classroom next year. Sr. Joanita mentioned the need to cover the salary/benefits of an additional teacher. The group thought that making the Ready-K 20-22 kids with an aide would not be as attractive to families as two separate rooms with a teacher in each.

8. Fundraising Committee

- The SAC discussed the disparity between the fundraising credit on ads at the golf outing vs the credit at the Pot O’ Gold Auction. It was agreed to change the credit to 50% (from 10%) to match the Pot O’ Gold credit. The golf outing earned \$7,000 this year.
- Mrs. K. was asked if teachers would be willing to donate some of their time for auction at the Pot O’ Gold. We thought outings such as the Carnegie Science Center, baking at the teacher’s home, babysitting, etc. could be popular at the auction. Mrs. K. thought it was a good idea and will take it back to the teachers for approval.
- **Colleen R. will make a tree with shamrocks/pots of gold “wish list”** for display at school events such as the band concert in December. We will stress that donations will give families money towards their fundraising assessments.

9. Teacher Web Pages

- Susan Mck. Asked Mrs. P. and Sr. Joanita if the teachers could update their pages with current information.

- Mrs. K. asked if the teachers would be able to update the pages themselves. Sr. Joanita was concerned that the pages would look too different from one another. It was suggested that Jeanette P. could come up with a template that the teachers could just fill in. **Sr. Joanita will follow up with Jeanette about this possibility.**

10. Miscellaneous

- The 8th grade has started broadcasting once weekly over the school network. All students view the broadcasts either in their classrooms (2nd floor) or in the cafeteria. Sr. Joanita will consider having the kids make an open house special newscast that could be played at our next open house dates.
- The 6th grade is busy writing articles for a two-page spread in the Pine Creek Journal.
- Not enough families know about the feature in gradebook in which families can get gradebook messages sent directly to their home email accounts. **Susan M. to put together a flyer** to urge families to sign up their email in gradebook. Sr. Joanita frequently sends all-school messages through Gradebook and some families are not receiving them. There would still be an issue with Ready-K families not being on Gradebook. They may be missing important announcements.

Next SAC Meeting: December 15, 2009