

Education Commission Minutes – October 3, 2006

Present: Sean Donovan, John Eardley, Nathan McCormick, Cindy Samson, Brian McCoy, Lou Shalda, Dave Charron

Opening Prayer: John Eardley

Minutes and Agenda approved by motion, with the modification that Cindy Samson will work on the marketing position rather than Dave Charron

There were no comments by non-members, and there were no communications received from non-members since the last meeting

Reports: Principal: Sean Donovan reported that the teaching/administrative staff has been good. Our enrollment has remained steady. Gala occurs on October 14, 2006. Gala is a key source of fund-raising for tuition assistance (a currently budgeted item). The net financial benefit of Gala will likely have a bearing on our desire to provide pay increases or another financial (e.g. Christmas bonus) for teachers and staff. The Commission and Principal expressed a desire to fulfill the promise to remove the wage freeze if possible.

The Commission expressed concerns about not truly understanding where the Gala funds have been utilized, and a desire for better communication with the Financial Commission and the front office personnel.

The Committee is encouraged by Fr. Rock's increased presence in the school, including teaching the students following the Wednesday Mass. The exposure between Fr. Rock, the teachers and the Staff is expected to benefit all, for they will appreciate the differences and similarities in each other. On a later date, JFE mentioned to Fr. Rock that his presence in the school may increase vocations as well, as his role modeling may be just what some young boy or girl needs to better hear God's call.

Increased community funding was discussed as an alternative means to make the school more self sufficient and less dependent upon Parish contributions. The Marketing and Development committee members, all membership, all school/parish families are encouraged to work in their respective business communities to develop contacts and develop possible economic contributions to our school.

Mrs. Laponsie has offered to work on grant writing, and other parents have also committed to help actively market the school and parish. Comment was made that marketing both school and parish, rather than merely school, recognizes that we are working together toward the same goal. Cindy Samson recently looked into local grants, as well, and learned that grants may be readily available in Lowell.

Middle School teachers have expressed concern about the possible restructuring and consolidation of middle school classes in the Diocese. Mr. Donovan believes St. Pat's will not be affected by this change, if it comes to pass, due to our school location.

“Business Manager” report: We no longer have a person with this title. Debbie Kohn is now the “Steward of Treasure.” She was not able to attend the meeting.

Boosters/PTO: Cindy Samson informed the Commission that membership is strong, as are finances. Educational assemblies, repair and/or replacement of the popcorn machine, purchase of or reimbursement for supplies, 8th grade graduation, and library expenses are only some of the many benefits the Boosters and PTO provide. The recent Boosters golf outing was a success. Special thanks to all golfers and advertisers.

Old Business: The EC recommended entering into a contract with Douglas Kelly to perform ongoing maintenance and design services. John Eardley provided a sample form to Sean Donovan.

Technology: Cindy Sampson reported, as is referenced above, that she has been looking into grant money from several sources.

New Business: Significant discussion was held on the issue of communication between the EC and the Finance Council. The EC desires much more information, and suggests that the principal be more actively involved in FC, budgetary, and similar matters. Nathan McCormick will talk with John Brooks to coordinate the best methods for expediting the sharing information. Monthly updates, projections, parish support for the school and at large will help the EC and the principal better plan for the future, and market the school, among other reasons for more disclosure.

The EC also discussed the need to have better communication and understanding about the use of “Gala” money. Sharing information will likely help both councils fulfill their respective, and joint, obligations to the parish.

Closing comments included:

1. Thanks and praise for the website project success for the many involved, particularly Marge Slupe;
2. Discussion of safety at St. Pat’s being ahead of the curve on drills and security;
3. A desire to move the school away from a large parish support and toward a more independent, self-supporting financial base, including use of grants, endowments, charitable contributions;
4. A desire to increase pay for our teachers and staff, sooner rather than later particularly if Gala is successful;

We concluded the meeting with prayer.

The next Education Commission meeting will be held on **November 14, 2006** at 7 p.m., in a location to be announced.