

SMOTH School Commission
9/17/2012
Parish Hall
Draft Minutes

Attendees: Fr. Jerry, Rhee Fincher, Carol FullerTheresa McArdle, Mary Beth Mitchell

Excused: Mary Davis, Steve Hagler, Tony Ramage, Kyle McArdle, John Strelec, Ruth Ann Vericella, Charles Whatley

The meeting opened with prayer at 5:02 PM.

Principal's report – Joe McBride and Mary Beth Mitchell

- New parent database that allows parents easy (but password protected) access to relevant information about their SMS children was released last week. The initial reaction has been very positive, characterized by comments like, “Whoooo”
- Notre Dame curriculum initiative
 - First year of implementation of standardized curriculum, including anticipated outcomes and outcome assessment, is underway. SMS teams have been established for each of the three departments (K-2, 3-5, 6-8) to create outcome assessments that will be standardized across the diocese. Each SMS department has developed 3 outcomes and met with IC to review outcomes based on diocesan standards
 - Focus is on social studies in AY 2012 and math in AY 2013

Communication Updates

- Friday update – Weekly email communication begun by Assistant Principal Mary Beth Mitchell provides salient information to parents and has received good reviews from parents
- Facebook page started one week ago
- Website – Alicia Ramage, Chris Sweeney, Deborah Ryan, Mary Beth, and Joe have worked with website developer (Solutio) to re-do the SMS website for the last year. They reviewed first iteration of the new product, which is scheduled to go public next week
- Twitter account will be functional soon, enabling tweeting during activities like sporting events
- Marianite and SMS features: Lisa McArdle will serve as SMS feature section editor; Joe will contact her about list of topics for the year. First 3 topics will be:
 - Carnival - Nov
 - Grandparents Day – Dec
 - Catholic Schools week – Jan
 - Additional potential topics mentioned at previous meetings include football (second year with team), carnival, 100-year celebration, sacramental preparation, Beta Club, students' community service, success of former SMS students in college and beyond (could include data such as how many former SMS students went to UGA/Tech); college visitation program, students qualifying for Duke TIP program (Talent Identification Program)
- Parish bulletin and SMS
 - Although space is limited, opportunity to call attention to upcoming events and accomplishments of students
- Children's comments before Mass

- Joe has identified students to speak
- Need calendar of dates for AY 2013

CCD-related Issues

- Survey of CCD parents: Joe will follow up soon with Tony and Alicia Ramage about finalizing and distributing the survey to parents of CCD students. The survey will focus on their decision-making process in choosing a school for their children, the results of which hopefully will be useful in developing a “top 5” list of modifiable factors to increase enrollment (Marketing Committee’s Goal #1).
- SMS parent get-together with CCD parents may be even more important than previously recognized in light of the fact that apparently many families with children in CCD do not go to Mass regularly (estimate 50%) and may not appreciate the key reason to go to Catholic school, i.e., to deepen the children’s practice of their own faith and bring them closer to God. If parents come, more frequent get-togethers would increase social mingling and hopefully enhance the communication about the value of SMS

Fr. Jerry’s Update

- School relationships
 - SMS working relationship with IC and Aquinas has improved this year; Aquinas new principal search starts tonight
 - Fr. Jerry approached Fr. Mike Ingram to discuss future of IC, at least initiating a discussion that the key issue is Catholic education, not parishioners. Holy Trinity naturally does not want to risk losing parishioners, especially since it has begun capital campaign for new sanctuary. The ideal relationship could be predicated on the St. Teresa’s model of St. Teresa members who attend SMS. It might be helpful for families from St. Teresa’s who attend SMS to meet with Most Holy Trinity families
- 100th anniversary committee - Catholic education on the Hill and IC – Fr. Jerry will ask John Sherer to chair
- Working to get a banner from Notre Dame denoted SMS as participant in curriculum project
- Southern Cross – New format and bolstered content noted; Fr. Jerry will ask Theresa McArdle to write letter to editor in response to Catholic education article on pages 12-13 of current issue.

Meeting time: As we began a new academic year, the convenience of the meeting time was discussed. At least one member suggested a later time in light of conflicting responsibilities. After discussion, the group decided to continue to meet at 5:00 PM, hoping that the finalized schedule for the 4 remaining meetings in AY 2013 would enable most members to arrange to attend most meetings.

SMS Commission meeting dates for AY 2013 – Please mark your calendar

- December 11, January 22, March 5, April 23

The meeting adjourned with prayer at 5:57 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Rhee Fincher