

**SMOTH School Commission**  
**10/12/10**  
**5:05-6:00 PM**  
**Minutes – Approved 11/2/1010**

Members Present: Rhee Fincher (interim chair), Steve Hagler, Joe McBride, Fr. Jerry Ragan, John Strelec (2 minutes), Catherine Tribby, Ruth Ann Vericella, Charles Whatley, Mary Davis

The meeting was opening with prayer by Fr. Jerry.

The minutes of the 9/7/2010 meeting were approved.

**Committees:** Members were asked to identify other members of the parish who would be well suited to serving on one of these committees and to send suggestions to Fr. Jerry and Rhee.

**Principal's update – Joe McBride**

- End of first quarter at SMS: The first quarter of AY 2011 has ended. On 10/16/2010, parent-teacher conferences will be held for K-6 and 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers available in their room to meet with parents as desired. The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration last weekend was highly successful and set a very positive tone for the year. Joe is in the midst of his first set of classroom visits and teacher evaluations. The reading teacher has completed testing 76 students for reading level to ensure those who need extra help get help.
- Steps to enhance inter-departmental communication: Joe thinks communication among teachers at each level is quite effective; however, he has begun a process to enhance inter-departmental communication. He is building on last year's accomplishments and areas identified as needing improvement. Joe cited the need for handwriting curriculum to enhance consistency from class to class. Joe is also increasing communication with high school principals to help assess SMS students' readiness for high school and ensure they are aware of the quality of the preparation of the SMS graduates. Fr. Jerry will talk with Sister Rose Mary about defined diocesan expectations for communication between school levels
- Resource teacher concentrating on reading first; will be working with teachers in each grade to devise plans for children who need extra help.

**Principal search update – Rhee Fincher**

- Jim Purcell, chair of the search committee, has received applications and the committee will begin the vetting process after the deadline for applications (10/15/2010). The committee hopes for an expeditious search.

**Discussion: "The Catholic Schools We Need"** by Archbishop Timothy Dolan, published in *America Magazine*. All members had read the article and raised the following take-home points.

- Key points

- Success of Catholic schools must be a group effort – not just the families with children in the school
- Service projects are an important part of Catholic young adult formation
- We must market ourselves better – The article indicated that Catholic schools help children become better Catholics and better people. Catholic education is not just about quality education; it is also about Catholic identity formation. Conclusion: Catholic schools offer excellent education – plus Catholic formation
- Discussion
  - We need to market our quality more effectively and widely. Catholic parents should be familiar with the facts about SMS education and outcomes so they can make informed decisions, understanding there are many schools that offer quality education, but only Catholic schools can offer quality education with Catholic identity formation.
  - SMS offers an environment that is more diverse than many other private schools – a benefit for preparing for “life”; the top tier students at SMS are equal to top tier at other private schools
- Potential actions
  - We must tout SMS without disparaging other schools
  - Consider a newsletter to highlight children’s accomplishments (EDS has one that is felt to be quite effective)
  - Develop an alumni database with class representatives
  - Complete the new Website (under construction)
  - Publicize SMS as the only school with Catholic Identity as part of educational process
  - Engage parents of CCD children even if the children are not SMS students (e.g., during CCS classes)
  - Consider having an SMS child cite what is going on at school at beginning of Mass (or some Masses)
  - Athletics – ensure SMS children and parents are the most enthusiastic fans but also model exemplary demeanor
  - Determine mechanisms to ensure that our entire parish (and deanery) support our school as our single most valuable ministry – the ministry that does more than any other to “grow” our next generation

**Committee reports**

- Stewardship and Finance – Catherine Tribby reported the committee had a dynamic meeting on 9/30/2010. It is identifying information should go to the parents about SMS, including financial status and stewardship principles. Mary Davis is compiling a letter for Father Jerry's review.
- Marketing – Tony Ramage (in written communication 10/14/10): “Marketing Committee continues to make progress on revising the website format and content. Chris Sweeney and Alicia Ramage have been working diligently with the webmaster and double checking with Mr. McBride as they revise content. The format will look much like the Parish website per Fr. Jerry's guidance to the webmaster. We have been compiling new pictures of the facility and students at various activities to round out the site content. As proposed at our last meeting, we intend to pursue a targeted market survey of families in the Parish who do not utilize the School (primarily CCD students and their families). This has been done before with very low response rates so once we have a survey to distribute (possibly answer online) it will need to be pushed from the pulpit if we want to get a significant response. More to follow.”

Rhee asked all committee members to recommend individuals for membership on various committees (below). Joe McBride will recommend teachers for appropriate committees, Fr. Jerry will make recommendations from the parish at large, and all members of the Commission are asked to make suggestions as well. Fr. Jerry reported that Carol Fuller will replace Eric McArdle.

Committee	Commission members	Other members	Chair
Stewardship/Finance	Steve Hagler, Charles Whatley, Joe McBride	Dori Thorstad, Penny Goodman, Steve Givens, Tommy Rose	Catherine Tribby
Marketing/Public Relations/Development	Mary Davis, Lisa Whatley	Chris Sweeney, Alicia Ramage	Tony Ramage
Facilities/ Infrastructure Technology			
Academic Excellence/Educational Technology	Joe McBride		
Mission/Catholic Identity			
Nominating	Fr. Jerry, Charles Whatley		
Policy	Joe McBride		

**Four pillars of stewardship:** All members of the Commission were strongly encouraged to attend the 7:00 PM program tomorrow evening, 10/15/2010.

The next meeting will be 11/2/2010 at 5:00 PM in the Parish Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Rhee Fincher  
Interim chair