

**SMOTH School Commission**  
**12/7/10**  
**5:00-6:08 PM**  
**Parish Hall**

**Attendees:** Rhee Fincher (chair), Steve Hagler, Joe McBride, Lisa Murray, Fr. Jerry Ragan, Tony Ramage, Catherine Tribby, Ruth Ann Vericella, Lisa Murray, Carol Fuller

The meeting opened with prayer, led by Ruth Ann Vericella, at 5:04 PM. The minutes of the 11/2/10 meeting were approved.

**Principal's Update**

- Teacher evaluation continues as an ongoing formative process
- Grandparents' Day Mass was held on 11/23/10, and was a very successful and upbeat event; more than 200 grandparents participated
- SACS diocesan accreditation site visit occurred today. The accreditation visit was at the diocesan, rather than school, level. It focused primarily on the relationship between the diocese and the school, and how the diocese can help the school's success. The two site visitors, Sr. Jane Herb (superintendent, Albany, NY) and Kathy Wood (principal, Sister of Angels, Atlanta diocese) met with stakeholders, including teachers, parents, students, Joe McBride, and Fr. Jerry. The entire visit lasted about 3 hours; Sr. Joe commented that overall visit went very well and there were many positive comments. Joe will be in Savannah tomorrow for the exit meeting.
- Fall quarter finishes next week, has gone well
- Evening "thank you" for teachers will be held 12/14/10, 6:30 PM
  - The 3 new teachers are all doing well and have been well received by students and parents. The music teacher is directing a play next week, "Christmas Hang-ups"; the PE teacher has rejuvenated the PE program and the students are active and happy; and the resource teacher is "doing great work"
- Personnel concerns for FY 2012 – Might have to rearrange the grades teachers teach because of varying numbers of students/grade

**Committee reports**

**Marketing – Tony Ramage**

- Website restructure and development is moving forward with clearly defined roles; Joe has assumed a larger oversight role for website development because much of content of website needed to be rewritten. The committee meets 12/11 to finalize website before it goes "live"
- Updating brochure – moving forward

- Survey of parents (200 families) with K-8 children who are not utilizing school is planned with the purpose of understanding why they do not send their children to SMS and if changes can be made to increase participation. In an effort to increase participation, the survey will be administered online and by paper/pencil.
  - Present to SC 2/2011; send to Rhee in 1/2010
- Channel 12 present for Golden Harvest Food Bank collection

**Stewardship/Finance – Catherine Tribby**

- Meet again in January 2011

**Facilities/Infrastructure Technology**

**Academic Excellence/Educational Technology**

- Committee members finalized (see table below); Ruth Ann will contact them

**Committee membership:** The finalized list of committee members follows. The committee chairs have confirmed or will confirm the members of their committee

**Featured discussion topic: Football at SMS**

- Several families would like to start football in grades 6-8; the team would play local private schools (e.g., Aug Prep, EDS, Augusta Christian).
- Synopsis of support perspectives
  - Some from Aquinas feel starting football is very important and would have multiple positive impacts, including “feeding” attendance at Aquinas and participation on the football team.
  - Some people who are not members of SMOTH (Question: Is this right? Is it people who are not members of SMOTH or whose children do not attend SMS?) have expressed interest in contributing to a football program
  - Football team might be a “recruiting tool” for SMS and Aquinas
  - Fr. Jerry expressed support for the concept, but prefers (strongly) that the \$200K deficit be resolved first.
- Synopsis of concerns
  - Early conversations reveal general support for the concept, but the perception caused by the timing is a concern because SMS is currently \$200K in deficit for FY 2011.

- Starting a new sports program when we are not fully meeting educational needs could be interpreted as misplaced priorities
- A question was raised about whether starting a football team would have a negative impact on Scouts. Several members felt it would not because those students who want to play football are currently playing, just not on their school team
- Starting a football program and the expenses to parents associated with it might diminish offertory giving to SMOTH. At least one member commented that families are already paying for sports activities in other venues and did not think there would be a negative impact on stewardship.
- The group will continue to contemplate the proposal and discuss it at the January meeting, when recommendations will be synthesized and presented to Fr. Jerry and Joe McBride.

The meeting adjourned at 6:08 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Rhee Fincher  
Chair

Please note on your calendars the meeting schedule for the remainder of AY 2011:

- January 11, February 1, March 1, April 19, and May 3. All meetings will be in the Parish Hall.