

SMOTH School Commission Meeting, Tuesday, Nov. 11, 2014

In attendance: Alicia Ramage, Chris Jackson, Chris Sweeney, Fr. Jerry Ragan, Mary Beth Mitchell, Joe McBride, Kyle McArdle, Maureen Lewis

Chris Jackson reported:

Preview Party and Carnival did very well this year. All ran smoothly. Comment was made that the greater community embraced and supported the event. Those with little ones and even grandparents seemed to attend this year.

Chris Sweeney reported:

Fall Open House went very well. Only 1 and ½ hours long, at night. Everyone who attended seemed to be impressed by school itself but even more so by students who led the tours. We appreciate the parent and student support. Having students volunteer was new but very successful. Optimistic about January Open House, which is held from 9a.m. to 1p.m., during the school day.

Joe McBride reported:

Mr. McBride, Ms. Mitchell, and Ms. Parel attended the principals' meeting in Albany last week.

Topics addressed include:

- 1) Marketing of Catholic schools
- 2) Funding of Catholic schools
- 3) Teacher evaluations
 - a. Reviewing procedures to make for more meaningful dialogue
 - b. Looking at new evaluation tools
- 4) Accred. Process – need a collaborative effort to create presentation to FCC at 3 year point in cycle
- 5) Operational Vitality of the school
 - a. Oversight, planning, mktg., finance council, school commission, etc. Also, annual financial audit.
 - b. Business end of the school is one piece of the puzzle in a school
 - c. Teachers need to be informed and aware of this aspect
 - d. Stewardship allows us to have full backing of the parish. Puts us in a better position than many schools. Lengthy survey and rubrics to be completed. Take survey responses from teachers and compile results as part of 3 year review.

Joe mentioned that next year's tuition has been set.

Father Jerry reported:

We use FACTS system for tuition payments. Going pretty well. Helping us address situations when people potentially can get far behind in payments.

As of today, 120 school families have yet to submit commitment cards. The final due date is set for this Sunday, Nov. 16th. The plan is to put families on tuition if they do not submit CC after 1-2 more notices.

Stewardship is a spiritual exercise. Spiritual benefits come to those who do the exercise! Stewardship is also a leap of faith. No matter where you are on the socio-economic spectrum, you can afford a Catholic education through stewardship. Prob 40% of families not really giving themselves over to stewardship.

Staff changes:

As of 11/28/14, Fr. Jerry will be the only full time parish priest. Fr. Tom is leaving for Columbus. Father will need to juggle the daily Mass schedule, etc.

Some families mistakenly believe that stewardship equals free Catholic education. 300 HH in school.

Kyle McArdle explains:

Stewardship is about serving God with time , talent, and treasure.

Chris Sweeney talked about various marketing efforts. Augusta Magazine (15K paid subscribers) latest edition mentions SMOTH School 4 times, although only one was a paid advertisement.

2 More ads coming: 1 in AGS Magazine and 1 in Faith Magazine.

Revisited Open House

2,000 invitations

1,300 in SMOTH church bulletins

700 hand delivered

26 families attended

Also did PSA, Facebook, on-line, etc.

Chris showed two pie charts that detailed 1) where the attending families heard about the open house and 2) what zip codes were represented.

New school brochure looks fantastic.

SMS is a scholarship sponsor for AUSA on Nov. 18th.

Steve commented that Chris Sweeney has done a great job with acting on ideas! All are excited about the future.

Kyle reported that the stewardship commission has met for the first time. Will begin meeting on a monthly basis.

Hope for the year with the committee is to help better improve awareness of stewardship, what it is, and its visibility throughout the school.

Focus on a few key areas:

- Keep stewardship visible in regular communication going out to homes.
- Our way of life
- Not much good response to idea of putting together small groups of parents.
- Fr Jerry suggested making a video about stewardship in our parish.
- Help get msg. out to ppl.
- Kyle proposed implementing a stewardship curriculum for students
- Have students speak at Masses again.
- Include stewardship in homilies more often.