

**SMS School Commission (SC)**  
**10/15/2013**  
**5:00 PM (Parish Hall)**  
**Minutes – DRAFT #1 - Rev**

**Attendees:** Rhee Fincher, Steve Hagler, Sarah O’Neill, Fr. Jerry Ragan, John Strelec, Ruth Ann Vericella, Charles Whatley

**Excused:** Bequi Coar, Mary Davis, Mary Beth Mitchell, Mike O’Neill, Tony Ramage

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM and began with prayer led by Fr. Jerry.

The minutes of the 8/20/2013 meeting were approved.

Fr. Jerry and Rhee reminded the group of the 100 years of Catholic Education on the Hill celebration this weekend, including Vigil Mass (10/19) with Bishop Boland as the celebrant and presentation of the inaugural St. Joseph medal to Sr. Laura Ann Grady, followed by a reception in the SMS gym.

**Budget discussion led by Joe McBride**

- General FY 2014 budget discussion
  - Joe McBride presented the YTD budget projections and actuals. The SMS annual budget is \$2,715,500; 9/2013 data show a deficit of \$28,000 which is the unbudgeted cost of the bus. Tuition income is above budget (~\$500,000 compared with budget of \$205,000) due to tuition-paying children on bus (Expected YTD \$205,000; actual ~\$500,000)
  - Tracking monthly cost of bus; once determined, Aquinas and IC will reimburse a portion of the cost
  - Grace receipts - ~\$50,000 for AY 2015; \$86,000 for AY2014 (students covered for 3 years each since most start receiving Grace in grade 6; SMOTH keeps funds if student leave school. Ask PTO members to participate in Grace scholarship tax program (next meeting is Nov. 19). Steve will work with Mary Davis on this; Sarah, PTO co-president, endorses.
- SMS tuition and fees recommendation for AY 2015
  - Joe recommends raising fees from \$300 (not been increased for about a decade) to help cover cost of increasing educational technology. Fees pay for all computers, smart boards, etc. for which SMS currently relies on endowment (which decreased by 100K in 2008)
  - ACTION ITEM: After discussion, the members unanimously voted to increase registration fees to \$350/student which will yield \$22,000 (Registration fee at Aquinas is \$800). The proposal will be presented at the November Finance Commission meeting. Joe will prepare and circulate talking points for comment prior to announcement (if approved by Finance Commission).
  - Importantly, revenue from stewardship is not increasing.

**School carnival report - Sarah**

- Overall conclusion is that the event was very successful – More people attended this year than last. The goal of increasing revenue each year will be met. So far, the event earned a gross of \$60,000 (expect final gross of about \$70K and net of \$60K); last year the net was \$54,000
- Strengths

- Preview party - Silent auction (first time), dancing
- Many young people attended who do not yet have children in school
- Dynamic atmosphere
- Jennifer Shuford and Mariah Sellers served as co-chairs, but do not want to continue next year; Greg Boulus has offered to help.

### **Fostering Continuum of Catholic education**

#### **Nursery project report – Ruth Ann**

- This effort was stimulated by the desire to foster a continuum of Catholic education, beginning with the nursery and Mother’s Day Out, and continuing through SMS and Aquinas. Ruth Ann visited the nursery where she spent an hour during a 10:30 Mass and interviewed many parents. The following are her observations: positives, negatives, and recommendations (she will turn the recommendations into objectives with anticipated outcomes).
- Positives
  - Appearance grossly improved
  - Michelle – a real positive (except punctuality), interacted well with children
  - Biblical story and hands-on activities
  - Parental help
  - Use extensively at 10:30 Mass; much less busy at 12:15
- Negatives/Concerns
  - Adult in charge needs to be punctual
  - All children need nametags
  - Filter guard needs to be fixed
  - Toys dirty – need cleaning
  - Not clean enough – wipe down walls, surfaces, etc.
- Recommendations
  - Better cleanliness
    - Get dishwasher for nursery and MDO (Ruth Ann volunteered to donate; Fr. Jerry will follow up)
    - Clean toys with Lysol (follow directions; not currently being followed)
    - Wipe down – high schoolers earning service hours
    - Need changing table in big room
  - Need new dolls (naked and dirty dolls)
  - Better supervision
    - Need another adult for 10:30 Mass (few at 12:15) – Michelle currently only one (paid)
    - Start ministry of women without young children who would be willing to help at nursery
  - Use of space
    - Open separate room for younger children
  - Documentation of families using the nursery: Correct dates; directory of people who participate (kept by director of MDO)
    - Suggestion: Would Ashley Poteet be good to organize nursery? (Recommended by Sarah; Fr. Jerry will follow-up)

#### **MDO – Gina Craw** Gina Craw runs MDO and is involved with nursery

- Invite Gina to next SC meeting – fostering continuum, how can School Commission help?

The remainder of the meeting involved discussion of the **purpose of the SC, review of committees included in bylaws and discussion of potential changes to better focus the commission.**

**Purpose of School Commission - Open-ended discussion** yielded the following recommendations for purpose:

- SC does not make policy, but rather functions in an advisory capacity to support principal and pastor, policy, marketing, and an understanding of stewardship
- “It’s all about marketing and stewardship.”
  - Marketing: “If don’t do well, make-up and whole character of the school will change.”
    - Enrollment likely would decline (Many Catholic schools nationally have closed due to shrinking numbers of students)
    - Bus has been a success to date; once cost data have been collected, St. Teresa’s will be expected to contribute
  - Stewardship
    - Stewardship formation should be an important role of the SC (not discussing stewardship issues with individual families).
    - In the past, regularly scheduled meetings (perhaps twice/year) were held to educate parents about stewardship formation and how critical stewardship is to support our school. Consider restarting annually – or some defined frequency
- Help carry out long-range plans
- Foster continuum of Catholic education
- Review budget and advise principal on it, including ways to save money and not hurt quality

**Purpose of the SMS Commission, according to bylaws,** was reviewed:

1. Develop, review, revise, and assess the effectiveness of policies as appropriate, in conjunction with the pastor and the principal
2. Promote the understanding and support of SMS within the local community
3. Assist and advise the pastor and principal in the development of the annual budget, tuition rates and fees, and other financial matters, including the identification of grants and other funding opportunities
4. Assist in the identification and promulgation of short-term and long-term plans for SMS, including, but not limited to, the physical plant and technology needs
5. Annually, the commission will review goals and accomplishments of its committees; update goals for the next year based on previous year’s outcomes and the commission’s strategic goals.

**ACTION ITME:** The group determined that each of the 5 purpose statements is germane and endorsed them.

Based on the purpose of the SC, the group recommended the following **changes in committees:**

Committees per Bylaws	Recommendations
Marketing/Public Relations/Development	Marketing (outside school) & Public Relations (within school)
Stewardship/Finance	Stewardship & Development (i.e., stewardship formation for school families – education); Finance becomes a group function to review SMS budget and provide input (including tuition/fees, ways to decrease expenses while retaining/ improving quality, scheduled review at meetings)
Facilities/Infrastructure Technology	Dissolve-Not needed with Jimmy Carrick’s & Joe McBride’s roles

Academic Excellence/Educational Technology	Dissolve – covered by SACS and SMS Curriculum Committee
Mission/Catholic Identity	Becomes part of Marketing & Stewardship; dissolve as separate
Nominating	Becomes group function; February meeting annually
Policy	Becomes group function; review, assess, revise, and contribute to develop new policies as needed under guidance of principal

After the SC members review the minutes and there is agreement on the committees,

- The committees will be constituted. The chair should be a member of the Commission, but membership should include both SC members and non-members who have particular expertise in the area.
- Each committee will develop 2 lists of goals and objectives – (1) 12-18-month range and (3) 3-4-year range. The proposals will be reviewed at the subsequent SC meeting and endorsed after discussion and modification if needed.

Not addressed (Deferred to next meeting)

- Membership of School Commission
- Terms and rotation

The group acknowledged and appreciated Tony Ramage’s stimulus for the discussion. The meeting adjourned 6:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Rhee Fincher  
Chair

Scheduled dates for SC meetings

December 17, 2013

February 18, 2014

April 15, 2014

**REQUEST:** I suggest a November meeting if a suitable date can be identified to capitalize on the progress of this meeting. 11/25 work? Please let me know by 10/31 if possible.

Thanks.  
Rhee