



St Mary's - St Alphonsus

Regional Catholic School

St. Mary's-St. Alphonsus Regional Catholic School Regular Meeting of the School Board July 22, 2024

Board Members

Present: Father Scott Van Derveer (Pastor); Marielena Hauser (Principal); Kathy McNulty (President); Kate Fowler (Secretary); Elaine Stocker (Teacher Rep); Francine Buser; Janet Curley; Mark Olechowski; Mary Tully; Mike Feeder.

Absent: Patti Siano (VP).

Guests: Jennifer Casolaro; Jen Leland; Mary Rozell; Jess Jones; Joy Smith; Beverly Kerpka; Gerianne Sanok; Lori Butler; Sumera Imran.

Meeting

- Kathy McNulty called the meeting to order at 5:50 PM.
- Father Scott offered the opening prayer.
- Roll call was called by Kate Fowler.
- Kathy McNulty read the Board's Mission Statement and explained procedure for community members to offer comments or ask questions at end of meeting.
- Approval of tonight's agenda - **Motion:** Mary Tully; **Second:** Mark Olechowski; **Motion carried.**
- May meeting minutes were approved and sent out. There was no meeting in June.

Pastor's Report

- **Strategic Planning Day**
 - Mark Behan acted as facilitator;
 - The day was positive;
 - Began by hearing the stories of the stakeholders and their connection to SMA;
 - Father provided a report developed from previous year's notes and SWOT reports from each committee of the school board;
 - Father introduced the concept of returning to *St. Mary's Academy* as the name of the school. The chapel would be renamed the *St. Alphonsus Chapel*;
 - The change will be announced to the school community and the parish through the website, email and at Masses on 8/24 and 8/25. The Mass on 8/24 will be in honor of the Class of 1954's class reunion (70 years).
- **Enrollment**
 - K-8 currently 108; projected 117 by September; Middle school is at 23 students;
 - We are advertising Noah's Ark in *The Chronicle* and on *Facebook* over the summer;
 - Enrolling with FACTS has improved.

Principal's Report

- Mrs. Hauser introduced herself and shared her background.

Committees/Teams

Catholic Identity (Kathy McNulty)

- Strengths:
 - All grades assist in Mass. Each grade PreK and up has a theme Mass each year;
 - School wide Rosary conducted approximately 3 times a year;
 - 3-4 Service Projects conducted per year;
 - Catholic School Week;
 - Principal, Board, Parish, Parent Reps included in decisions;
 - Monthly prayers included in Kerry Blue;
 - Teachers encouraged to start classes with prayer;
 - School wide celebrations in recognition on the Sacraments;
 - Holy Days celebrated;
 - Committee members collaborate well;
 - Many student Baptisms and 1st Communions celebrated this year.

- Weaknesses:
 - More communication needed to all stakeholders regarding meetings/input;
 - Religion too compartmentalized;
 - Not all teachers incorporate prayer into instruction or begin with prayer;
 - Not enough information on website about religion;
 - Not enough information on website for families on how to incorporate religion in their home life.

- Opportunities:
 - Students in uniforms hosting coffee hours and acting as greeters/lectors/ushers at weekend Masses;
 - Sharing stories with community and parish about vocations during Catholic Schools Week;
 - Provide ongoing faith formation opportunities for staff/students/families;
 - Work with other Catholic schools and organizations;
 - More varied community service partnerships - get students out into the community;
 - Gifts for newly baptized from Catholic ID Committee;
 - More family participation in faith-filled celebrations.

- Threats:
 - Decline in percentage of practicing Catholics in school and community;
 - A culture increasingly hostile toward religion;
 - A view sometimes of religion as a chore or just something to "get through."

Finance (Mark Olechowski)

- Strengths:
 - Donations are up;
 - Staff is controlling spending;
 - Our reputation is strong;
 - Father's support.

- Weaknesses:
 - Communication and collaboration with parish;
 - Parent involvement;
 - Lack of clearcut goals;
 - Low enrollment;

Finance (weaknesses continued):

- Software for donations;
- No Development staff.

- Opportunities:
 - Spring appeal;
 - More collaboration with staff;
 - Improved marketing;
 - Increase donor appreciation;
 - Publicize student alumni.

- Threats:
 - Diocesan bankruptcy;
 - Lack of understanding about school finances;
 - Delineation of church and school finances;
 - No plan to generate income.

Recruitment and Enrollment (Kathy McNulty)

- Strengths:
 - Tremendous improvement in our marketing;
 - Positivity has increased;
 - May 1st enrollment deadline helped determine more accurate numbers;
 - Kerry Dog for a Day: 10 came; 9 enrolled;
 - Kindergarten Open House successful;
 - Safety- most positive influence;
 - On-going weekly service.
- Weaknesses:
 - Communication regarding financial aid;
 - Communication regarding students of all faiths welcome;
 - Compact of UPK;
 - Inability to interface with parents;
 - No PTSA representative /lack of parent involvement;
 - Limited rolling enrollment;
 - Need for new furniture;
 - Technology lacking;
 - Response time needs improvement.
- Opportunities:
 - Available space;
 - "Glens Falls is our Classroom;"
 - Downtown parades;
 - Arts Academy;
 - Security technology;
 - NYSPHAA;
 - Transitional Kindergarten;
 - Nurse for Noah's Ark;

Buildings and Grounds (Mary Tully)

- Sanding and painting of the exterior part of the windows continues;
- Bathroom renovations on the first floor Warren Street side of the building are nearing completion;
- 2 donated air conditioning units will be installed in August in the Great Hall;
- The donated shed was delivered to the school;
- Gary Patton will be letting us know more about further clean-out and organization in certain rooms as soon as a priority list is made available;
- This is all great news and many thanks to St. Marys Parish (especially Gary Patton) for accomplishing so much on our wish list.

Grant Task Force (Janet Curley)

- GTF is identifying grants for stained glass window renovation. Much documentation is needed;
- Smaller grants have been identified;
- Waiting for literacy grant from Dollar General;
- Other possible grants: Math, Science and Technology as well as Music and Art;
- Teacher salary reimbursement is due 8/24 for the 2023-2024 school year;
- Lori Mc Inerney is our Title specialist.

New Business (Kathy Mc Nulty)

- Seeking 1-3 new board members; we need someone with a strong background in finance and a PTSA rep.

Old Business (Kathy Mc Nulty)

- Strategic Plan is still needed.

Guests Opportunity to be Heard

Ideas:

- We need to be more active in "selling the school;"
- Consider adding a "Summer Blue" Kerry Blue to improve communication over the summer;
- Let parents know the full cost of educating an SMA student as compared to what we charge and to the cost per student in local public schools;

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM.

The next meeting will be August 26, 2024

Respectfully submitted,
Kate Fowler, Secretary