**St. Joseph Education Commission**

**November 16, 2017**

*St. Joseph School, following the Mission pf Christ where we*

*Learn our Faith, Live our Faith and Prepare for the Future*

*~St. Joseph School Mission Statement*

The St. Joseph Education Commission met in the Teacher’s Lounge of the school.

The meeting began at 5:30pm.

**OPENING PRAYER:** Father Andrejek

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS:** Father Andrejek introduced Anna McMahan as the new member. He explained that Anna was the DRE Officer.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Fr. Andrejek, Tammy Abts, Daniel Brian, Bill Craig, Anna McMahan, Shannon Rogers, Larry Spialek, Lisa Stolz, Colette Willoughby.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Kristen Copeland, Pat Fort, Jay Wendelin.

**MISSION/PURPOSE FOR COMMISSION:** *“Here to prepare the students for their future, not our past.”*

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Larry Spialek asked for a motion to approve the September minutes. Lisa Stolz moved to accept the September minutes. Daniel Brian seconded the motion.

**PRINCIPAL’S REPORT:** See attached Principal’s Report. Shannon updated that there is currently $4,019.82 in the Angel Fund, which is up from last year at this time when it was $3,773.33. Daniel asked what the source of the Angel Fund was? Shannon explained that the Angel Fund came from Parishioners, Alumni, and others that donate money. Shannon explained that a notice about the Angel Fund was put in the bulletin a few times a year. Shannon further confirmed that the Angel Fund was for scholarships for students. Colette inquired about putting an announcement about the Angel fund out there around Christmas time. Anna said that they had talked about that, but decided that there was already too much out at Christmas already.

Shannon noted that Ann Hart had sent her an update of where the school was financially. See Funded by the Church Spreadsheet. Shannon explained that the numbers looked high because it was the beginning of the school year and tuition had come in.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING PROGRESS REPORTS – “Faith in Future”:**

**Catholic Identity :**

Shannon explained that the ACRE test is scheduled for the first part of January. Shannon also updated everyone that the Iowa Basic Test results are in and that we will be looking at the Math scores.

Shannon updated the committee that the students were still working on their prayers. It had been noticed that the students were lacking in the Old Testament. Shannon reported that the 5th and 6th graders were listening to audio tapes of the Old Testament stories while they worked on their loom knitting or other projects in class.

It was clarified that the Catholic Identity members are Tammy Abts, Shannon Rogers, and the teachers. Anna McMahan volunteered to sign up for the Catholic Identity committee.

Daniel asked who was on the Academics sub-committee. Shannon answered that it was Tammy Abts, Shannon Rogers, and the teachers.

**Enrollment Management & Marketing :**

Lisa Stolz explained that she and Colette Willoughby are the members of this sub-committee.

Colette reminded everyone of the upcoming Breakfast with St. Nicholas and Vendor Fair Event. Colette said she might hand out flyers around town for Small Business Saturday. Colette continued by emphasizing the pictures with St. Nicholas might be a draw to some families. Colette also mentioned that Megan Olt’s sister-in-law is taking the pictures. Lisa tied the Breakfast with St. Nicholas and Santa photos back to Enrollment Management because it involved the preschool families as well.

Colette mentioned the upcoming Winter Wonderland Parade and that the entire school is invited to walk on Sunday, November 26. Shannon added that the Knights of Columbus were invited to walk as well.

Colette explained that the Taste of Pekin is scheduled for January 27th and she has already begun working on involving Pekin restaurants. Colette added that we had a large crowd for the event last year.

Colette updated the committee about the Night Out Against Crime event in which we participated in October. Colette added that we are the only school that participates. Colette also mentioned that a few people who came to our booth inquired about the school and asked for school flyers. Daniel asked if the school had nice promo materials. Colette explained that in addition to our flyers, we have a nice banner and table cloth. Shannon also added that next year we are dressing up for the Night Out Against Crime.

Colette explained that the Preschool Information Night is scheduled for January, 23, 2018. Lisa asked if we have ever gone back to see who came to the Information night and then enrolled? Colette said that we have not had anyone come to the Information Night and say, “I’m enrolling because...” Colette made note that the Taste of Pekin is after the Information Night so we can invite the prospective new families.

Colette mentioned the Twitter aspect of Marketing. Possibly linking accounts with our school Facebook page so one post would post on all social medias.

Colette and Lisa explained some of the things we were missing in marketing:

* People leave our school to go to public schools for sports, so we need to better promote our sports programs.
* We also need more pictures and info from the games for Lisa Pallardy to post to Facebook.

Lisa brought up a survey that had been done previously for the school. The survey looked at the school and what the students identified as strengths and weaknesses. Lisa made copies of this survey to hand out to the other committee members, then explained the SWOT handout of strengths, weaknesses, etc. \*See attached SWOT Analysis of Survey Data.\* Lisa continues that this is good for marketing because it forces us to see what we do well, and what may be cause for people leaving the school. Lisa explained that this kind of survey helps us consider trends in why people leave. Daniel asked if this was a survey to parents? Lisa answered that this was from Advanced Education. Daniel explained that a survey was good because it provides measurable data to find trends. He suggested possibly sending out a survey every year. Lisa continued by saying that a consistent survey would possibly show that people don’t know we are strong in a certain area. Lisa explained that we need to sell ourselves when we get great test results and promote what we are doing and doing well. Lisa also stated that the survey would have to be able to give positive feedback – not just be a chance for people to rant and rave. Lisa explained that we have learned the lesson that if we tell people to come see what we do great, they don’t come. Rather, events draw more people because of the activities for people to be involved in. Daniel to help with a survey. It was mentioned that any kind of survey needs to be thought out in both the questions and in the times in which it is sent out. Lisa mentioned that the Diocese surveys have always caused hodge podges of results because they are always changing. Shannon suggested we need a survey from the Parish too, to see what they know about the school. Bill asked about looking at the past surveys from the Diocese to see what the questions were then weed out the good and the bad ones.

Colette asked Anna if any CCD parents say why they don’t choose to enroll their kids in the school. Anna suggested we need to tailor something for CCD to get them in here for school: we need to figure out what their excuses are for not enrolling in the school. Anna mentioned that CCD can start promoting events. Anna will start emailing the CCD parents flyers for our events. Lisa gave the example of the Blessing of the Back Pack Night. Anna explained her hours, so if announcements are sent out on a Friday, she doesn’t see them until Tuesday.

Daniel suggested a comparator to other schools so we can see what other schools with similar demographics struggle with. Daniel also mentioned that it would help both them and us and it would give us numbers to work with.

Daniel explained that his fear is that communities near us are so different from Pekin. Possible cities were suggested. Decatur was presented by Bill. Daniel suggested that a connection point was all we needed to get in. Bill said that there were three Catholic schools in Decatur.

**Facilities:**

The Facilities sub-committee consists of Daniel Brian and Jay Wendelin. Daniel explained that they are currently in the information phase. Daniel explained that Jay has done a lot of behind-the-scenes work in looking at the boilers, roof, etc. Daniel explained that he and Jay added Bob Small to the Facilities sub-committee. Daniel explained that they have a time scheduled for next week to meet with a roofer to figure out what our immediate needs are. Father explained that as soon as we involve roofers who will have high bills, then it becomes something that needs to be approved by the Parish Commission board as well. Father gave an example of when he first came to the church he once saw a price for new windows but never was given an actual proposal or bid from the company. Daniel explained that they want to figure out where the major problems are and focus on those first, before tackling everything. Father explained that the Parish committee needs to also focus on the school and the potential financial needs in the future. Father explained that most committees focus just on what they are doing, but maybe not other areas and their future. Lisa explained that the windows are definitely something we can see that needs updated, but accessibility is an issue too. Lisa explained that her daughter’s great-grandma couldn’t attend a recent event because the school is not handicap accessible. Daniel asked about possible students with handicaps. Shannon explained that we once had a handicap student and the classrooms would rotate until the teachers were unable to keep up with it and the student left to attend a public school. Daniel explained that we don’t want to be liable for something like that. Shannon explained that we are grand-fathered in right now, but as soon as we start remodeling we have to be coded for everything. Bill explained that Admissions Policy needs to explain that what we have is what we work with. Father explained that we may need to explain to the parish about some things the school may need in the future. Larry explained that it seemed like we were in a difficult position – we are in an old building that will need many updates, so why save money to remodel when we could look at possible new buildings. Bill explained that they will bring this up more at the meeting on Monday. Bill explained that they have already looked at 3-4 other facilities. Bill explained that we have to work with what we’ve got. Bill continues that we have growing needs with declining resources.

**Development:**

Larry asked if we had anyone with the sub-committee Development? Bill said he didn’t see anyone listed under Development in the September minutes. It was mentioned that Heather White and Dan used to be on Development. Father Andrejek asked if Pat Fort was on Development since it was about raising money. Father Andrejek also explained the difference in Development is raising money, while Marketing is getting word out about the events that will raise money. Shannon agreed that she thinks Pat was on Development. Lisa asked how many people can be on the Commission Board. Shannon answered 9-11 people. Father Andrejek said it could be more. Lisa suggested that we recruit more people for the Education Commission. Father Andrejek suggested we inquire of Pat if he will be on Development sub-committee if he isn’t already.

**Finance:**

Larry explained that he and Shannon met and reviewed what was done last year and are working on adding action steps. Larry explained that they added some new programs, in terms of getting families to enroll at the school. These programs include the Family Referral Program, the Preschool Incentive, and the Reduced Tuition for Non-Catholic families. Larry explained that we need to look at the effect those are having on the school budget, and whether they are effective or not. Larry explained that they have started the process of looking at tuition increases and a possible increase in salary. Father clarified that the Reduced Tuition for non-Catholic families is not lower than the tuition for Catholic families. Larry elaborated that the tuition for Non-Catholic families was still more than that for Catholic families. Shannon explained that the school currently has 3 Non-Catholic families enrolled. Colette explained that the one non-Catholic family that she deals the most with is really happy at the school. It was clarified that there is only a $500 difference in tuition for Catholic and non-Catholic families.

Shannon started to explain the new Tax Credit Scholarship that was discussed at a different meeting the night before. \*See attached Tax Credit Report.\* Bill explained that Ann Hart, Shannon, Donna, and himself went to a meeting at Notre Dame to learn about a new Tax Credit Scholarship. Bill explained that this scholarship will run for 5 years, and every year there is 100 million dollars put into the program for the entire state – but only for Private and Rural schools. Bill stressed that this was just for the state; it is not a federal program. Bill explained that 6 Diocese in Illinois have hired a firm in Florida (Empower Illinois) who is a scholarship granting organization whose only purpose is to collect and distribute money according to the way the law is written. Bill explained that the state hasn’t clarified the specifics yet. Bill continued that both individuals and corporations can give up to 1 million a year for 5 years. An individual can sign up to receive information to get involved in this program. They will then send you an ID by snail mail and somehow sign in an say you want to donate money to this program. The money is then collected by the Empower Illinois Firm in Florida, then distributed by region. When you put in your donation, you can have it earmarked for a particular school – not a student. The school then has to identify the students eligible for this scholarships program. Bill explained that the money would be given to the school and then distributed to the eligible student(s), but the donor would not know who the scholarship was given to. Bill explained that 75% of money donated is tax credit which means it comes off the bottom instead of coming off the top like a deduction. Bill explained that even though it is a donation, you cannot write it off on your federal taxes, it is for state only. Bill explained that you must sign a form online when signing up to donate money stating that you will not write this donation off on your federal taxes. Bill explained that this would be a great way for us to put students through school. Bill mentioned that the hardest part will be educating people on this new program, especially since there are so many parts to it. Bill continued that it is a great deal for our school and for the individuals donating. Bill explained that we would be able to go to our CCD and offer to help them out with their tuition and have them enrolled at SJS. Shannon explained that this would also help save our Angel Fund for other students that need tuition help as well. Father explained that parishioners would need to know the difference between this new avenue and the Angel Fund. Father explained that you don’t want to accidentally kill the Angel Fund by focusing on a new donation program. Bill explained that this is only applicable to k-12 classes. Shannon explained that preschool students who will be attending kindergarten in the fall of 2018 are eligible to apply. Shannon explained that a major hiccup with this program is that we need to get donors on board with this new program now, because the program opens on January 2nd for families to start applying for this scholarship money. Shannon explained that this scholarship is on a first come, first served basis; so even if the application dates say one thing, they could always close the enrollment if it fills up quickly and they reach their max. Larry explained that it will be very important for people who are going to apply for this, to apply early. Bill explained that we need to form a group of a small committee to gather information and email it out to people, or to put something in the bulletin. Colette suggested that this information be put in as an insert to the bulletin so it would be separate from everything else. Bill explained that the committee people would then be important as people can call and talk to someone who knows a little bit more about the process and can lead people through it and answer their questions. Father shared that his initial thoughts are that this is like the Spalding scholarship and people’s first reaction is to shy away from it. Father explained that this will be hard to “sell” to people since there is currently no money involved in this program. Father emphasized that we need to explain to people how they can pay $500 to the state for taxes, or they can donate to a scholarship that will help bring more students to the school. Bill explained that people need to start raising money now, but the families can only apply for the scholarship starting January 2nd. Larry asked if corporations and large businesses can designate a specific school for their donation to benefit. Bill explained that only individuals can designate, corporations cannot. So the money donated by corporations goes into a general fund which is then distributed amongst the 6 regions based on Family income. Bill explained that the cap is 100 million is the state cap each year, but the cap for each individual is 1 million. Colette clarified that we need to target people to designate our school in their donations. Bill explained that we need to target our families to start applying January 2nd. Larry asked if there was a fee to apply for this scholarship? Shannon answered that there was no fee to apply. It was mentioned that we need to be able to educate donors on this program. Bill explained that if there are families who we know need the scholarships, we need to present this to them and make sure they apply. Daniel clarified that there will definitely be money in the program? Shannon answered that the scholarships are based on income, etc., and there are certain criteria to be met. Shannon explained that the region that the school is in, is the region that the money is taken from, not the region that you live in. Shannon explained that our school will be eligible for about 17 million total in scholarships. Bill explained that there are still a lot of questions to be answered with this program. Shannon explained the 2016 tax returns will be used for people who are applying for the program. Shannon explained that it is only for state recognized schools. Shannon gave the example that Faith Baptist in Pekin will not qualify as they do not file state papers. Bill suggested we need a group to understand this program who will then hold the hands of people applying and donating and help them through the multiple online processes. Bill continued what he had to submit when he was testing out the program this morning. Colette suggested we identify people who would be willing to give, teach them the computer sign-up, then have them help others. Daniel suggested the number 1 priority is to utilize whatever pool of money we get. Bill explained the question he asked at the meeting was does a person who gets money have access to the money or does it stay there for following years. The committee has to identify and approach people with money who would donate. The second group needs to identify and approach families who would qualify for the scholarships. Colette asked who was making the determination about how much money applying families would get? Shannon explained that the schools would not know who has earned a scholarship until July 1st. Bill explained that Empower Illinois will handle the funds and allocate the money. Shannon explained that the Spalding scholarship was pushed back to April 15th because a family cannot receive both this scholarship and the Spalding scholarship. Father asked if we need to have current families apply for the Tax Credit scholarship as well as new families. Colette thinks we needs to offer this Tax Credit scholarship to our current school families since there is a potential to receive more money than that from the Spalding scholarship. Lisa said we ought to encourage everyone to apply since we have no control over any of it any way. Daniel explained that from a Marketing stand point, this is good to say that we qualify for Tax Credit Scholarship. Daniel explained that an information night would be a good night to explain this new program and to draw people in. Bill suggested that we need to have these new committees organized by the week after Thanksgiving. Bill explained that once a person is in, they are in for the whole 5 years. Colette asked if we need an information night just for our current school families, so we can explain this new scholarship to them. Lisa suggested that an information night be for all people – not just our current families. Lisa suggests we offer a “we’ll help you do your taxes if you let us help you sign up for this new program.” Shannon specified that as soon as this opens up, the public school unions will go after it and attack it, so we have to make sure the public is aware of this scholarship and will back it up.

**OLD AND NEW BUSINESS:**

Larry asked if there was any other new business. Daniel had questions/ideas that he will table for now and bring up at the next meeting. Larry asked if there was any old business? There was no old business.

**PASTOR’S REPORT:**

Father thanked everyone for the work they have done and will do over the next couple of months.

**NEXT MEETING DATE:**

The next meeting will be Thursday, January 18, 2018 at 5:30pm.

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

Father Andrejek closed the meeting in prayer at 7:20pm.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Korinna Tice

School Secretary