

St. Matthew School
Education Commission Meeting
September 23, 2009

Present: Amy Blomberg, Keith Freuhling Ryan Hendrickson, Mary Horn, Monsignor Merdian, Mark Pollard, John Schmitt, Manjoy Shenoy, Angie Washburn

Absent: Stephanie Goodley, Mary Hazen, Kellie Kaefring, Father Miller, Kathy Scherer

1. *Call to Order and Opening Prayer* offered by Monsignor Merdian at 7:05
2. *Roll Call/Introductions*: The group paired off and did a getting to know you exercise.
3. *Approval of Minutes*: Mark Pollard moved the minutes be approved with amendments (name corrections), Mary Horn seconded the motion. Motion passed. Minutes will be forwarded to Judy Sebens to be included on the Ed Comm portion of the website.
 - Thoughts from John Schmitt, Ed Comm President, on the role of the Education Commission: John noted that Ed Comm did not fare well in the SLRP report, and he hopes to change that. He stated that all other “blue ribbon” schools had active Education Commissions. The role of our Education Commission is to provide advice to Mrs. Scherer and Monsignor Merdian and to try and think strategically about future issues within St. Matthews School – we have no executive power. Goals of our Education Commission are to improve the profile of Ed Comm. within the school and act as ambassadors, keep an ear to the ground and bring any concerns to the group for consideration, establish a closer tie with the Parents’ Club by having a representative at each PC meeting, provide Mrs. Scherer the tools she needs to do her job – our relationship with her is most important.
4. *Religious Education Report* – Mary Hazen was absent from the meeting, but submitted her report to the group via email. Mary’s report included information about sacrament preparation – confirmation (39 St. Matt’s School students, 25 St. Matt’s CCD students). The Rite of Commitment for Confirmation candidates is planned for September 25, at the 11:30 Mass. There are currently 185 students signed up for CCD, and a list of catechists is given.
5. *School Finance*: The report submitted is through August 2009 – two months into the new fiscal year. Monsignor Merdian reported that the tuition that has been collected is higher than was budgeted so far, but they are also anticipating having to cover tuition assistance. There is a new line item in the report for uncollected tuition. At the end of the last year, this amount was \$30,000. We won’t have a final number for this line item until the end of the year, but hope to keep it under \$20,000.

6. *Parents' Club Report* – Ryan Hendrickson, PC President provided a report on Parents' Club. It was noted that while PC has been carefully reviewing its budget, very little profit is expected from the year, similar to last year. Participation in current fundraising activities, like SCRIP, box tops, wreath and apparel sales is being encouraged. Parents' Club is sponsoring an Adoration Hour, Tuesday, September 29 at 8:00 am, and all are invited and encouraged to attend. The PC will have a booth at the Stewardship Fair. It was also reported that the new email distribution list has been completed and is being implemented. Three subcommittees have been formed in which the students may participate. PC provided and spread new mulch over the playground. And, finally, PC is continuing to sponsor the Peaceable Schools program, in year two of its three year plan. The expectation is that Peaceable Schools will become embedded with the curriculum once the formal program has been completed. Questions were raised as to if and how we are judging the success and/or impact of PS. While there is currently no means to measure its success, it has been well received by the teachers and students. Parental involvement is crucial to its success.
7. *Athletic Commission Report* – The Athletic Commission has not yet formally met, but Keith Freuhling noted that there were no pressing issues. John wanted to make sure that all of the current athletic teams have had parents meetings so we can “green light” it on the SLRP tasks.
8. *Committee Reports* –
 - a. *Strategic Planning Implementation* – The Diocese and parents want to see the official report of the SLRP committee. John passed out a draft of the report tracking the most current overall SLRP progress.
 - b. *H1N1 Virus Action Plan* – Manoj Shenoy presented a draft of an action plan and asked for input. Information and guidelines were gathered from the CDC, Public Health, and Unit 4. Right now, the plan concentrates on two things: prevention and communication. Also being considered is an alternate spot for sick students to wait to be picked up – the office is not a suitable location for this. Questions of where and who would supervise this were raised. Signs encouraging hand washing are being obtained. Having the H1N1 vaccine available at the school (administered by Provena) in early November was discussed. Students would still need to get the regular flu shot on their own. Once the draft has been approved it will go online for parents.
9. *Unfinished Business – Scheduling* – misprint
10. *New Business* –
 - a. *Principal Evaluation* – Every three years the school principal is evaluated. The Education Commission members need to fill out a survey online by October 8th. We are encouraged to put careful thought into our answers.

The Diocese will then collect the information, and will interview Mrs. Scherer, Ed Comm members, as well as to others on October 20. John handed out an informational sheet on the process.

- b. *Legislative Action Liaison* – St. Matts is part of the Catholic Conference of Illinois, who employs a lobbyist. We are supposed to have a representative of St. Matthews with whom the lobbyist can share important information. This representative will be responsible for keeping up to date on legislative happenings via the lobbyist's report and passing along pertinent information to the group. Mary Horn was nominated and voted in to fill the role of liaison.
 - c. *Diocesan Workshops*
 - i. Education Commission Orientation - is being held at St. Matthews on October 6 from 6:30 – 8:30. All new members are required to attend, and it is encouraged for all members to attend.
 - j. Enrollment Management Inservice – Each school in the diocese is required to send a team of people to this inservice – Pastor, principal, teacher, Ed Comm member, and Parents' Club member. The inservice is on October 21 from 9:00 – 3:00 in Peoria. One of the issues our SLRP dealt with was how to handle a downturn in enrollment – hopefully this conference will add further insight.
11. Pastor's Comments – The Stewardship Renewal festival is the weekend of October 17, and the Stewardship Commitment will take place the following Sunday, October 24. On October 17th, Monsignor Merdian will be hosting the first "Men's Night," in an effort to encourage the men of our parish to become more spiritual both personally and within the parish. The event will feature Tim Johnson, with FCA as guest speaker. Beer and brats will be available, as well as great fellowship. This Sunday, September 27, St. Matthews will host the first of an Ecumenical Dialogue with Father Michael Condos from the Three Hierarchs Greek Orthodox Church. Father Michael and Monsignor Merdian will each tell of the teaching of the role of the Virgin Mary in their respective religion. On October 2, St. Matthews will welcome and host the National Pilgrim Virgin Statue of Fatima to our area. There will be a Benediction and talk with the students during the day and another during the afternoon for adults.
12. Executive Session – none taken
13. Next Meeting – October 28, 7:00pm
14. Closing Prayer and Adjournment – Monsignor led us in a closing prayer. Mary Horn motioned for adjournment, Manoj Shenoy seconded.