



+ St. Andrew School +

Vitam impendere vero

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MINUTES School Board Meeting September 11, 2013 7:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 p.m.

Present were: Mark S., Michael S., Rose N., Jill C. , Father Tolleson (until 8:30 p.m.).
Donna W. Paul S, and Donna S. , Principal, Non-Voting

OPENING PRAYER was led by **Donna S.**

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Rose made a motion to accept the minutes from the May 2013 meeting as presented, and Donna W seconded. With no additions or corrections, the minutes were approved unanimously.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA by consensus.

PRINCIPAL REPORT: SEPTEMBER 2013

Reporting on June-September

Standardized Testing Results:

Last spring St. Andrew students took the MontCAS which is a Criteria Referenced test taken by all public school and some private schools in the state. I have included the results in this report. They are amazing! St. Andrew continues to score above the State averages by a wide margin. Several factors contribute to the success of our school: A strong, classical curriculum focusing on the basics; orderly and calm classrooms; small student to teacher ratios for more individualized attention; high expectations for students and, finally, parental support.

The last point cannot be overly stressed. When parents' expectations for conduct and academics are high, we are able to ask our students to push themselves that much more. Also, children learn from their peers. For this reason a community of well-educated classmates whose parents make education a top priority, contributes to the success of all the students.

Here is what had to be done this summer with regard to testing: Print out reports. Prepare a report comparing state test scores to St. Andrew scores. Share these with teachers at a meeting and discuss any direction/action the school or each teacher must take to make the best use of this information. Print reports and send these to the parents. In addition since this test is only taken in grades 3-8 and 10, the grades K-2 teachers and I are discussing a standardized test that the students in these grades can take.

End of Year Teacher Meeting: The teachers met for three days in June to discuss accreditation, Teacher Portfolios, Science Curriculum, English Curriculum and Yearly Student Progress Portfolios.

School Reach: Phyllis and I worked on setting up the School Reach system for our school. Denise, Phyllis and I attended on-line training. We entered all parents' primary information. The new secretary still needs to be trained in this system before we can use it.

ACE Scholarships:

ACE gave St. Andrew parents 15 scholarships this year.

St. Andrew Scholarships:

Please ask Mark to report on amounts given this year.

Summer Programs:

Tennis Camp was a great success with about 20 students signing up for the week.

Orchestra met over the summer.

Kristin Palmer did a **Cardio Pulmonary Rehab training** at St. Andrew in July. We will also have one for the teachers.

Tutoring: Several students were tutored here at the school throughout the summer.

Enrollment: Enrollment continued throughout the summer months. Many parents from out of state are only able to meet on specific dates so it is important to get them into the school when they are in Helena. I interviewed and enrolled 10 new students this year. About a third of the new students enrolled this summer.

Copier: We have had copier problems since ours is over ten years old and way past the normal copy limit. I am researching new copiers/prices etc. Davis Business Machines has given me quotes ranging from \$7-10K. We can pay all at once or on a contract.

New Technology: After school is out we evaluate all of our computers to make sure that everyone has working computers for the new school year. Mark Smillie took charge of most of these projects. He ordered and set up new computers and saw to the repair of others. A used one was donated for the annex. All of the other annex computers had minor issues that were fixed. The science lab computers need some attention. In addition to computer needs Mark also worked on installing projectors. Three were donated by Carroll College without the wiring necessary. Mark ordered what was needed and installed the projectors with the help of Bill Hall. We now have six classrooms with projectors. Every classroom should have one in the near future so teachers can use this technology to teach. We will continue to look for donations.

Hiring:

Last year two teachers left St. Andrew: Sarah Grotbo let us know in the spring that she would not be returning and Mr. Meckley the middle of July. As you know, hiring involves advertising (in church bulletins, radios, and the paper), reading through resumes, forming a hiring committee, interviewing, meeting with new teachers and writing contracts. We hired Nathan Pawelek and Ameer Yates at the end of July and beginning of August. Training involved familiarizing them with the curriculum and the procedures at the school. Mr. Pawelek's room was basically ready, there were a lot of documents to use on his computer and most of his books were ordered. Ms. Yates started

with a bare room and clean computer so getting her ready has a bit of a challenge. Both teachers however are smart and super hard workers which have made this job a lot easier. I am confident from working with them and reviewing their lesson plans etc. that they are going to do well.

Substitute Teachers/Adjuncts

Full time faculty members are not able to meet all of our needs for special classes. It is important to follow up on any lead one has on people who might be best able to fill the gaps. Also, over the summer it is necessary also to call all leads on substitute teachers so that we have a good list for the start of the school year.

Both substitute teachers and adjuncts must submit all their paperwork to the principal before August 15th and be trained on school procedures. Teachers wrote syllabi and I am working with teachers on these. VIRTUS training will be in October this year.

Michelle Norum and Barbara Sheridan will continue to help in the primary grades. Since Mrs. Miller has 20 children and Kindergarten has 18, they will help with these grades.

New Office Secretary:

In June I hired Sherrill Hall to be the office secretary. She was able to have a few days with Phyllis before she left though most had to be done over the summer. Since each month brings a new set of duties, she will continue to be trained throughout the year. Please be patient with her. She is doing very well.

Maintenance:

This year was a super year for school maintenance over the summer. The lawns were kept mowed and watered by Randy Heinrich with the occasional help of the Smillie boys. We had a lot of problems with the sprinkling system but managed to get it working.

Fixing what was broken: Cloniger Electric fixed the electric box for the sprinkler system, a broken window in the library was replaced, the fan in the science lab was fixed, and various pieces of furniture and desks were fixed or replaced.

All in all I thought that the school was in pretty good shape and that given our budget everything that could have been done was done this summer.

New Play Shed

The students are very excited about all the new games, balls, jump ropes, tether balls, etc. that are available for playground use this year. We even have a system in place to guarantee that they don't get lost (!) We got a bid on a 6 foot fence to put around the playground. Michelle Field and Molly LaChere are working on this.

August: Countdown to School:

Open School Office: Set up summer reading tables, take payments from parents, uniform sale

Make **class lists** up and insure that there are enough books for every grade.

Meet with individual parents with concerns about next year and students about schedules.

Transcript Requests for Colleges, pay bills, do payroll

Meet with teachers: Space these throughout the month. Check over their lesson plans and syllabi.

New Parents: Every year parents sign their children up in late August. We still have to go through the procedure of meeting with them, requesting records, getting all the paper work, dealing with financial aid requests, etc. Transfer students: make sure records are sent to new school.

Schedule: My best efforts to get schedules done early have not panned out. Schedules cannot be done until teachers return after the 15th of August, when Carroll classes are determined and when I finally have all the adjuncts assigned to classes. Space was a huge consideration this year just because of all the different things we are offering now (computer, library, two levels of orchestra, music, art, and high school choir). Without the extra space, if one class moves into a different time or place, the rest of the school is moving too. I spent hours every day for weeks, as I do every year, on this. If there is a program out there that can help with this job I would like to know it. This is the area that takes the most give and take from the staff. Thankfully they are wonderful people and they understand how difficult this can be so they have been fairly accommodating.

Teacher Development/ August Meetings

I am working with the *Institute for Excellence in Writing* to purchase what is needed to train teachers in their program. Having a speaker from California is going to be too expensive so I am looking at DVD training for October.

Teachers Meetings were held August 20-22. Mr. Greaney gave a talk highlighting our Incidence Management Manual for the teachers, Mr. Nelson gave a talk explaining the demerit program and highlighting issues to watch for. We talked about uniform, testing and curriculum.

On August 22 we had a teachers' retreat at St. Cyril and Methodius. Father Bart lent us a room and said a mass. Teresa Zepeda, who has been a director of religious education in Idaho for years, gave a retreat. The theme was *unum necessarium* from the Gospel in which Jesus told Mary that only one thing was necessary. This year our teachers will focus on this theme remembering that what is important in all that we do at St. Andrew is Jesus.

School Clean Up Day:

A large clean-up crew gathered a couple weeks before school on a Saturday to make the school sparkle and shine. New paint, clean shelves and desks and bright bulletin boards can really do a lot. The parking lots were swept grass was neat and trimmed. Many people told me how great the school looked at the start of the year. Lots of extra effort was made by teachers and parents alike to make sure that the students had a wonderful environment for their first days. I appreciate how much the parents care about making this happen each year!

Sharing our Curriculum: A number of requests came this summer for advice on curriculum. New schools in Montana, Wyoming and Idaho are interested in our curriculum.

New Parent Meeting and Picnic

This year I sent a letter inviting new parents to an orientation. We used every chair and more. I had no idea so many would attend. Nevertheless, it was a great idea (Jill) because parents were able to ask their questions and hear answers to other's questions. Some of the things I addressed were: told them where to get the handbook (online), explained uniforms, how to handle problems with teachers, how to get PIP points, the auction-everyone helps and donates.

The picnic gave parents and students a chance to meet or reconnect after the summer. I am wondering after such a great meeting with new parents if we should not plan a separate picnic for 8-12 and have a sort of high school orientation meeting for parents and one for students next year. It might be a way to get students excited about being here.

The booths at the picnic were Frederick's ATA martial arts for after school care, After School Sports Opportunities, and Mrs. Foran. Fredericks Martial Arts will pick students up, give them a snack and help them with homework until their parents can get there. They start with 5 year olds and go through high school.

School Starts:

Opening Mass: Msgr O'Neill said a Mass of the Holy Spirit for us on September 5. He spoke to the students and parents about the start of a new school year and the virtues a student should have. He gave a blessing for students and teachers. Thanks also to Dale Fleck who played the piano in Carol Andersen's absence and a generous St. Andrew family for donating two new ciboriums. Our other ones were too small.

Preparing for Salt and Light: Booked the *Reach* team for the October retreat, Donna Weiner booked Camp Bighorn. I am working with Donna Weiner on a schedule.

Soccer, Basketball and Volleyball

Once again many St. Andrew students are playing soccer with the Vigilante League. We are thankful to parents who have been faithful in helping to keep these going by coaching. Molly Lachere is working to get basketball and volleyball teams started with the Helena Homeschool Association. Since many of our students are participating, HAHHSA are requesting gym use. I have referred them to the school's facility use policy and to last year's letter sent by the board.

Mark reported that \$38K in scholarships was awarded this year.

BUDGET

The final financial reports for academic year 2012-2013 were reviewed. The year finished with a \$3,000 deficit that was taken from savings.

Scrip will be online only this year. Parents will be told they can participate online, but the school has determined the effort involved for the business office is not worth the net proceeds.

Donna will review the field trip entry in the designated funds report. The Board discussed charging for field trips at the beginning of the year.

OLD BUSINESS

Accreditation

Rick wants to meet with board. Because of the difficulty in scheduling meetings with the full Board. Donna S. will advise Rick to meet with each of the Committees.

Transcript Policy

The revised Transcript Policy was presented and accepted as presented.

Online Courses

A new policy for Online Courses was discussed. Father Tolleson made a motion to adopt the following language. Michael seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Online courses may be considered by St. Andrew School in order to fulfill graduation requirements that the school is not otherwise able to provide. The courses will not replace classes that are already offered by the school.

All online classes for which high school credit will be given must be pre-arranged by the St. Andrew School Administration before the course begins. Any course not pre-arranged and pre-approved by St. Andrew School will not be considered for credit or placed on a St. Andrew transcript.

St. Andrew School reserves the right to judge the quality of the course and choose the institution from which the course will be delivered.

NEW BUSINESS

Open gym for non-St. Andrew students

The Board discussed allowing children other than St. Andrew students to an Open Gym program. Concerns regarding behavior and supervision of non-St. Andrew students. Donna will notify the person making the request that adequate student supervision is required. The approval is for September 17th and 19th only. Donna S. will reconsider any additional use.

Fee for gym use

The Home School Association has asked to use the gym again for \$30 per instance. Donna S. reminded them that the letter they received from the Board last year warned them that the fee would not be reduced for the academic year 2013-2014. The current fee remains \$50.

Development Director/Vice Principal position

Donna S. and Donna W. developed a list of tasks and duties that could be assigned to a Development Director and/or a Vice Principal. The Board discussed current financial needs. The School could use a Vice Principal, a Development Director, a Plant Manager, and perhaps an Office Manager. Some options include reorganizing the current staff and hiring a temporary services clerical individual who could work into a permanent office position.

Board Composition

This item will be moved to the October meeting.

Auction Date

The current auction date conflicts with the Helena Symphony again. The decision was made not to move the date of the auction because the following week is Spring break which means that both that weekend and the following weekend might limit attendance as well. The date will remain February 22, 2014.

OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mark will invite Phil Howeth to the October meeting

ADJOURNMENT at 10:08 p.m.

Next Meeting is October 9, 2013, 7:00 p.m.