

ASCENSION SCHOOL BOARD MINUTES: 12/10/07

IN ATTENDANCE: Father Larry McNally, Mary Jo Burns ,Terry Thiese, Liz Skalitsky, Jason Allington, Mike Iannaccone, Dan Rodde, Tom Carraher, Craig Shannon, Mark Szaflarski

DATES TO REMEMBER:

12/21/08 Half day of School, followed by Christmas Break
1/7/08 School Resumes
1/27/08 Open House
1/28/08 US Representative from the Dept of Education visits for our Blue Ribbon award
1/28/08 Commissions meeting
2/6/08 Lent Begins

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

MINUTES: Last month's minutes were approved.

PASTOR'S REPORT: Father Larry thanks the Ascension parish community for its generosity in the Christmas Angels Program. Over 150 gift bags were given away. He will begin his second round of visiting 3rd and 8th grade classrooms this week. Weekend volunteers are needed to help with snow shoveling. Ascension will provide all the necessary equipment. Condolences to the family of Tom Johnston, who passed away Dec. 10. Tom was active with our Ascension Boy Scouts. Commissions will meet on January 28, 2008 at 730 in the Pine Room.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT: Mary Jo Burns sought input on three issues.

First, Market Day has seen a decline over the past school year. Last year Market Day raised about \$5,000.00. The all time high was \$9,000. So far this year, Market Day has raised 816.00 and is projected to raise about \$3,000.00. This program takes a great deal of volunteer effort and results in wear on tear on the Gym floor. Liz Skalitsky will contact Joann Kendari to discuss.

Second, attention must be given to updating our School Bullying Policy. The Anti-bullying policy is an anti-violence policy. Both bullies and the recipients of bullying have been known to resort to violence. Punishments should of course require contacted parents, but should not have a goal of expulsion. Our policy should incorporate prayer, Liturgy, and be part of our school curriculum. Boys tend to bully physically; girls bully using social isolation. Both types of bullying cannot be condoned. An issue to be addressed is whether a failure to report bullying should be punished. The board reviewed a draft and suggested edits to the policy that was

presented to us in the meeting. Ms. Burns will fine tune the draft and present it for consideration at a future broad meeting.

Third, the Archdiocese Legislative Action Meeting will be held on January 19, 2008 at 830 AM at 721 No LaSalle in Chicago. Liz Skalitsky will attend again this year. Ascension should investigate a phone and/or email tree for having parishioners contact legislators on State and Federal issues that affect our school.

The Archdiocese has recognized Ascension for its Blue Ribbons Award. A representative of the U.S. Department of Education will visit on January 28, 2008. Additional invitations should be forwarded to our State Senator Kimberly Lightford, and State Representatives LaShawn Ford and Karen Yarbrough.

Preparation for our Open House is continuing, including working on next year's budget. School enrollment will likely be down in 2008-09 based on lower enrollment in our pre-kindergarten programs. We usually have around 56 students in our pre-kindergarten, this year we have only 31. The Board is encouraged to consider new ways of increasing enrollment. Other issues to investigate include assessing the true costs of tuition, our parish investment in the school, Extended Day, salary and health increased, ensuring consistency in our accounting methods, and student discounts. The board reviewed highlights of the current budget, had initial discussions on next year's budget, and made plans continue these discussions as the main topic for the January board meeting.

DEVELOPMENT REPORT: Our Auction raised \$86,791, including \$9,650 in Fund A Need contributions.

Lynn Frederick submitted the following report:

Marketing

We are working on the development of our marketing plan, hoping to implement several enhancements before the "marketing season" which begins in January. We want to reach potential school families in several different constituent groups, particularly Early Childhood and junior high so we'll make available visiting opportunities tailored to those folks.

We've made some improvements to the marketing folder that we designed last year and will meet with the school office staff to coordinate the distribution of registration information for new families. We've registered for the Parenthesis Pre-School Fair for January 10 and will seek some volunteer help to expand our "trade show" materials.

We've solicited opinions from the faculty re proposed events for visiting students and their parents. We hope to have solidified a schedule of those events by the end of the week (12.14) so that we can prepare advertising copy, a flyer for the Dome, etc. The Ambassadors will be given quite a few opportunities to participate in the marketing program; we meet with them on 12.14.

We've signed on to Constant Contact, an email management program, and are eager to get the program up and running. Constant Contact is very reasonably priced and will facilitate a professional email marketing program, one that we design ourselves and that handles bulk email messages without the danger of our being blocked as a spammer. We'll be able to segment our current lists in many different ways, invite people to join our lists via the website, and survey constituents. We'll be able to track responses and trips to the website.

We've initiated a few conversations about incorporating mini school tours on the website. We'd like to have three different tours: those interested in Early Childhood, in junior high and alumni. We have to talk to the artists and the techies and get them in the same room. We're also hoping to develop Bill Komala's slide shows in some way.

Miscellany

Surveys were mailed to high school freshman and their parents last week. We have asked that those who are willing meet with representatives from the school so that we can get more detailed feedback re their transition to high school. We hope to have at least one group meet before Christmas.

We're quite excited about some changes we'll implement for next year's auction – our fifteenth. In brief, rather than a co-chair structure, we'll have project teams. Each team will have a team leader who will report to me. This, in combination with the permanent auction space in the convent, will facilitate the involvement of more people with clear roles and responsibilities and should keep people from being scared off by the scope of the co-chair role. We'll keep you posted.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: None.

LIAISON REPORTS:

Technology: Our network is up and running in the Parish Center.

Math and Science: This Liaison position has completed its work. The Math & Science Parent committee has documented its findings and shared them with the Board. The Board supports this group's work. The findings were forwarded to Ms.

Burns and her administration to further explore and take action on the committee's findings and recommendations.

Athletics: Tom Carraher will update our Athletic Committee roster and schedule a meeting with this group.

Submitted by Mark Szaflarski
Next meeting January 14, 2007