



## ST. LAWRENCE ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES from March 9, 2015

The St. Lawrence School Advisory Council met on March 9th, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. Members in attendance were Laurie Batchelor, Kate Capp, Brian Gresens, Nancy Kruger, Jason Street, Angie Weber, and Melissa Wheeler. Also attending were Fr. Gary DeRouchey, Darby Helms, Dena VanLith, Candee Cloos, Paula Rausch, Brenda Anderson, and Mark Leusink. Sr. Beth Ann Dillon was absent as she was in Rome.

Fr. Gary opened the meeting with a prayer and Laurie called the meeting to order. The October meeting minutes were read. Jason made a motion to approve the minutes and Nancy seconded the motion. The motion passed and the minutes were approved as read.

Principal's Agenda - see attached. Mrs. Anderson filled in for Sr. Beth Ann and presented information for her in her absence.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

The 2014 Christmas greenery sales were over \$15,000 with a net profit of \$7066.71. This was an increase over 2013. The profit from 2013 was \$4,720.15. The shipping costs on the order were higher this year and the school will look into picking the order up ourselves next year. The school will need to look for a volunteer driver(s) and will hopefully be able to reimburse the volunteer for fuel costs. A question was also raised about the shipping as the invoice listed two trucks & trailers that delivered when only one truck & trailer brought the order.

There has only been one reoccurrence of head lice reported this winter.

Grandparents Day was well attended. The teachers provided the cookies for the reception. Grandparents Day might be held earlier next year.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Three students at St. Lawrence made it to the regional spelling bee, and the school is excited to see the bee continue next year.

The students were given a hearing screening test. During the screening, one student's test result indicated possible hearing issues and a referral was given to the family.

The Christmas program date was moved one week later than in past years. This was done to allow for a more consistent schedule for the R.E. program – to eliminate the off, on, off, on scheduling around the holidays. Fr. Gary stated that the change in date maybe wasn't published well enough because he has received some comments about the change.

The school had a great Catholic Schools Week. The teachers helped plan the week and the bingo

night and soup day were well attended. There were a lot of positive comments received about the all schools Catholic Mass held at the Sanford Center in Sioux Falls.

The school has its fire safety inspection during Catholic schools week. The inspector was upset with the decorations hanging from the ceilings. The inspector is trying to inspect the school using the 2014 codes, but the school only needs to comply with the 1998 codes. The inspector was also unhappy with the K – 2nd grades being on the second floor without a sprinkler system on that level. In fire drills conducted by the Milbank Fire Department, the entire student body is able to evacuate the building in under a minute. The kindergarten and first grade classes have practiced fire drills while being on the second level of the school. Sr. Beth Ann has requested an exemption from the state and she has contacted the state fire marshal. One thing that needs to be corrected is the replacement of the outside door in the gym because it sticks. It will be replaced during the summer.

Office secretary, Amy Gresens, submitted a resignation to Fr. Gary and Julie Landmark has been hired ½ morning secretary and ½ afternoon janitor. Kim Folk and Darby are filling the secretary position in the afternoons.

Mrs. Rausch reported on the Smarter Balance testing. She and Sr. Beth Ann attended a training day. All testing is done online. The only paper & pencil tests available are for the schools with no internet access. The testing has no time limit but Mrs. Rausch reported that the testing last year went faster than expected. The secure browsers are ready and the students have their own log-in. The third grade class will be doing some practice tests as this is new to them. One advantage to the online testing is that results should be available before the end of the school year and teachers can print off copies for the parents. One council member asked how the test results can help teachers in the classroom and what are done with the results. The results are put into the students' permanent record, but no clear answer was given on how the teachers will benefit from knowing the results. It was also asked if the school needed to score a certain percentage for accreditation. The answer is no since St. Lawrence does not receive any federal or state funding. The testing runs from March 10th to the middle of May.

The Catholic United raffle has raised \$16,725.00 for 2015 which is up from 2014 of \$14,472.00. Candee Cloos presented the advantages of the school/parish having a council (now called a parish volunteer team). The school being chosen to participate in the Catholic United raffle is not guaranteed, but if St. Lawrence had a volunteer team it is more likely that school would be able to count on being a raffle participant. Candee spoke of the different grant money available for parishes with a volunteer team. This year the school received a \$1,000 grant from Catholic United for the Mardi Gras fundraiser. Five Catholic United members are needed to start a volunteer team. Fr. Gary stated that if the school/Life didn't start a team, the R.E. program is going to be the one receiving the current grant money. Positions needed are administration coordinator, director, volunteer leader, event leader, and publicity leader.

St. Lawrence tuition is increasing \$50 for the 2015/2016 school year. Fr. Gary stated the cost of student is \$4,600. Tuition is set at K-\$1,200, 1st Grade-\$1,300, 2nd-6th Grades-\$1,400. The parish and fundraising are contributing \$3,200 per student. The Presentation scholarships were offered again this year. Families not receiving a Presentation scholarship can apply for a Knights of Columbus tuition scholarship. The forms are very similar. The Kremer scholarships will also be available but we need enough families to apply to receive the full amount. Fr. Gary stated that there are so many financial opportunities available that families can afford to send their children to

St. Lawrence. Fr. Gary provided an updated budget report but time did not allow for review or discussion.

A council member asked Fr. Gary if he would allow the reintroduction of the health talk formerly given to fourth grade students. Council members were in favor of having the children receive accurate information from knowledgeable healthcare professionals. By allowing students to receive information, it helps to open the door for at-home discussions. Ideas submitted were to have the talk cover physical changes of the body and hygiene but not a sex ed discussion, it could be optional for any parents who did not want their child to receive the information. Several council members felt it was important for the students to receive information at the same grade level to prevent inaccurate or incomplete information from their peers or other social contacts. Any questioned asked other than physical changes would be for the parents to answer and not the healthcare professional. Fr. Gary said he would review the policy with Sr. Beth Ann.

Mrs. Anderson reported that on Friday, March 6th a student in the 5th grade left the St. Lawrence School. The parents stated that the reason was due to a bullying issue. Three students are involved in the situation. The family said the issue started in January, but they did not report it to school officials until Friday, March 6th. Fr. Gary stated that the bullying issue and families are being addressed. Mrs. Rausch stated that the definition of bullying is a purposefully and continual targeting of someone. Discussion was also held on the difficulty in identifying bullying as it is sometimes based on each individual's perspective, and it can happen without anyone in authority witnessing the actions and behaviors of those involved. It was asked if new teachers were in need of extra support or extra training. Mrs. Schultz is reaching out to the other staff for advice and Fr. Gary has been in the classroom. The situation is being monitored.

Kate made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Melissa seconded the motion. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Kate Capp, Secretary*

\*All school council meeting dates are published in the bulletin and listed on the parish website.