



**BOARD MEETING MINUTES
STELLA MARIS ACADEMY
April 12, 2018**

Present:

Bob Lisi, Chair; Paul Fitzgerald, Treasurer; Sister Edith Bogue, Secretary; Laura Schauer; Karen Newstrom; Fr. Peter Muhich, Stephen Olson; Fr. Ryan Moravitz, Fr. Richard Kunst, Cynthia Zook, Director of Schools, *ex officio*; Hilaire Hauer, President, *ex officio*; Bishop Paul Sirba, *ex officio*

Staff: Peggy Frederickson, Principal; Mike Mazzio, Business Manager; Linda Lenard.

Excused: Fr. Richard Kunst, Vice Chair; Fr James Bissonnette; Fr Ryan Moravitz

Opening Prayer: At the request of Chair Bob Lisi, Bishop Sirba opened the meeting with prayer.

Welcome: Chair Bob Lisi welcomed the visitors.

Agenda Approval:

Stephen Olson moved to approve the agenda. Seconded. Carried.

Mission Moments

One person described Principal Peggy Frederickson's practice of creating a time for new parents to visit for conversation over coffee and treats. This builds the "community" we name in our mission statement.

Another member reported a conversation with a Stella Maris father in her parish, who spoke about how pleased he is with what has been done this year.

A third member described a President whose dedication to her struggling Catholic college is flows from appreciation of the faith foundation she received in its kindergarten. Our work has long-term impacts.

Approval of the Minutes

Steve Olson moved, seconded, to approve the minutes as presented. Carried.

Public Comment

None.

Board Meeting Summary

The Executive Committee proposes that we send out a brief summary of the Board meeting in the week after it ends. This would not replace the minutes, which are subject to approval at the next meeting. It would describe the topics discussed, any presentations or announcements made, and convey the flow of the Board's discussions. The Summary could be drafted, in part, by the Executive Committee as it prepares the agenda, filling in the actual content. It would be sent to our internal constituencies: families, teachers, and staff. The Board supports this effort, and encourages the Executive Committee to work with our communication staff to determine the best way to disseminate such a summary.

Ongoing Work on the Formation Model and School Strategic Plan (SSP)

President Hauer presented a draft revision of the SSP for Objective I, Strategy 1 and Strategy 2. These both speak to Formation Model and Curriculum. She thanked the Principals for their extensive work in the required revisions on the SSP.

The draft presents a timeline of steps for the further development of the Formation Model. Building on the direction of the Board, these steps focus on exploring methods and models for integrating elements of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition into our curriculum, and for exploring ways that a liberal arts approach might be used. These include reading to learn more about these models, and making visits to schools which have such models in place. A visit to St. Agnes School in St. Paul is scheduled for April 16, 2018 for a group of principals, board members, and some teachers. St. Agnes School has been developing its Catholic liberal education approach for 8 years and is not yet finished.

[*Note:* This visit was cancelled because a snowstorm closed all the schools in St. Paul.]

Board discussion highlighted two aspects of the development of the Formation Model.

1. The development of the formation model and the exploration of the other models does not indicate a deficiency in the education we have been providing. Rather, it stems from an approach of continuous improvement that seeks to increase and strengthen the aspects that differentiate a Catholic school education.
2. The explorations of these other models have the intent to identify and implement practices, methods, materials, and approaches which will contribute to the Formation Model of holistic education, as specified in our Mission statement. It is not a matter of implementing an off-the-shelf model. Rather, the Board anticipates that this will take a number of years. The first elements to be implemented will be those that are consonant with our current practices and which generate enthusiasm in our teachers and parents. A process of gradual growth in this direction will allow us to create a model that is well-suited to the families in our parishes and in our region, and that is effective in preparing the next generation of Catholics.

Solicitation for new Board members

The Board seeks to fill up to three positions, including the unexpired term of one initial member. The Executive Committee, acting as the Nominating Committee, is developing forms through which individuals can indicate an interest in serving on the Board. The Board as a whole will review the names and other information provided to develop a slate of names to present to Bishop Sirba, who will choose and invite new members to the Board.

The Board identified several types of expertise that are needed. These include Development / Fund-raising, Secondary (high school) Education, Finance/Accounting, Catholic Liberal Arts, and Project Management.

The Executive Committee will develop an online form to solicit information about nominees and a description of Board service. People who are not ultimately invited to become Board members by Bishop Sirba may be invited to participate on Board committees.

High School Update

Bishop Sirba has hosted events with several families who have expressed potential interest in becoming "pioneer families" for the high school. His conversations with them reveal that they have significant interest, but need more clarity and detailed information before making a commitment. This would include location, curriculum, staffing, and a sense of what the initial high school experience will be like. Cynthia Zook will also be exploring the possibility of connecting with possible pioneer families in the Diocese of Superior.

At present, we need to work on two parallel tracks. The first, a grassroots approach, builds on the conversations with potential pioneer families to spread the word and build enthusiasm. The second addresses the specific steps required to designate a location and design a curriculum through the work of a High School Task Force.

Bishop Sirba highlighted the importance of conversations of families with teachers and principals. The current 7th and 8th graders have grown up with the expectation of attending a public high school; that is hard to change. Conversations with students and families in lower grades can generate expectation and enthusiasm to experience Catholic education across the full K-12 range.

The timeline for starting a 9th grade in Fall 2019 is currently on target. We should keep this in mind in hiring decisions during the coming year, considering teachers whose licensure and experience might allow them to contribute to the high school program.

Tuition Agreement Policies and Forms

The Board spent considerable time considering and revising a draft Tuition Agreement Form that included explicit policies regarding Late and Delinquent Tuition Payments and other tuition and enrollment issues. Discussion focused on the purpose of the Form and how it would fit into the flow of enrollment and Community Tuition Assistance applications.

The Policies are needed for to provide greater clarity to parents about tuition expectations and for the Principals and President in communicating with families whose tuition payments are not up-to-date. Business Manager Mike Mazzio reports that Stella Maris is currently carrying approximately \$30,000 in late or delinquent tuition. President Hauer reports that many families, when they encounter unexpected financial difficulties, immediately begin to work with the school to create a different payment plan and agreement. In other cases, both Principals and the President have attempted to contact families, and messages have been sent by SmartTuition, but none of these have resulted in a meeting or payment plan. The policies are

designed to provide the President with a range of actions to use, as appropriate, in these situations. They also provide clarity to all parents about tuition payment expectations.

Based on this discussion, the Board decided to separate the Policies into a separate document that would be provided to parents at the same time they received a Tuition Agreement Form. The final appearance of the Form and the Policies were left for the President to work out with her staff.

The Board continues to support the Stewardship view of tuition, which recognizes that the true cost of educating our children is significantly more than the Standard Tuition Rate. The Stewardship perspective invites families to contribute beyond the Standard Tuition Rate if their income allows, offering something closer to the true cost of educating their children.

Financial Review

*The Board entered executive session at 5:35pm for this discussion.
The Board ended executive session at 6:40pm.*

Closing Prayer

Chair Bob Lisi asked Bishop Sirba to close the meeting in prayer.

Adjournment

Without objection, Chair Bob Lis adjourned the meeting at 6:45pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sister Edith Bogue". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sister Edith Bogue, O.S.B.