

ST. LAWRENCE SCHOOL ADVISORY TEAM NEWSLETTER

First Quarter 2018

HERE'S WHAT'S BLOOMING...

With spring break in the rearview, we are hurtling toward the end of the school year. Like many of our wonderful teachers, the St. Lawrence School Advisory Team is working to beat the clock with some important projects.



We continue to perform some spring cleaning, so to speak, with the SAT by-laws. Most of these changes so far relate to consolidation of, and cooperation between, our pillars. Other updates make adjustments to changes in school-oriented organizations since the last set of by-laws was approved in 2011. If you ever want to read the current by-laws, you can find them on the SAT page at www.stlschool.com (under the ABOUT tab). Our meeting recaps are also published there each month.

As you'll read in the SAT meeting recaps in this newsletter, there are a couple funding changes that our school is being forced to deal with. We believe Mr. Odar is doing his best to make the decision-makers controlling those funds aware of the importance of the funding and the school's concerns. We and Mr. Odar will do our best to keep you updated on the situation and how these funding changes might affect all stakeholders with the school.

Remember, registrations are being accepted for the 2018-2019 school year. If you haven't already, please sign your children up. The sooner this is done, the more accurately the school administration will be able to formulate a budget. Do what you can to spread the word about St. Lawrence's wonderful faith-based education, so that they may also choose to take advantage of all our school can offer.

Last but certainly not least - please continue to join us in praying for Father Peter.

SAT PILLAR LEADERS

President: Jason Schmid

Secretary: Steve Stoecklin

Curriculum: Lisa Freking

Finance: Julie Hafner

Marketing: Mike Perleberg

Retention: KC Witte

Spirituality: Amy Heinsman

Building & Grounds: Gary Hammerle

PTO: Amy Maxwell and
Melissa Lahey

Pastor: Father Peter Gallagher

Principal: Michael Odar

FISH FRY THANK YOUS

SAT thanks all the volunteers who worked at the St. Lawrence Fish Fry this year. An extra special bit of gratitude is due to the VanWassenhove, Longo, Lahey, Bennett, Thornton and May families for their leadership of the event this year. Also, thanks to "Mac" McGranahan and Al Stoll for frying up all the fish.



HAVE YOU COMPLETED SAFE AND SACRED TRAINING?

Indianapolis Archbishop Charles Thompson has asked that all people who work or volunteer with our parish and school to complete Safe & Sacred training along with a background check by July 1, 2018. This means if you help out at Bingo, volunteer as a recess monitor, minister in church, or a number of other roles, you must complete this training. Go to www.safeandsacred-archindy.org/login/index.php. The \$7 cost is paid by the parish.

JOIN THE SCHOOL ADVISORY TEAM OR A COMMITTEE

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth." **2 Timothy 2:15.**

Would you like to lend your time or talent to the School Advisory Team? We will need to fill at least three pillar leadership positions on SAT by the end of this school year: technology, spirituality, and PTO. Share your interest with an SAT member or email schooladvisoryteam@sls-apps.org. Please complete and turn in the application form at <http://stlschool.com/school-advisory-team>.

NEXT SAT MEETING

Tuesday, May 1 in the St. Lawrence Church basement, subject to change. The public portion of the meeting begins at 6:30pm, with a possible executive session to follow. Email schooladvisoryteam@sls-apps.org if you would like to be placed on the meeting agenda. Every meeting begins and ends with a prayer for our SAT, staff, students, and families.

JANUARY SAT MEETING RECAP

The January 10 SAT meeting focused on preparing for the open house, updating the SAT by-laws, social media's impact on the school's image.

After many years of dedicated service, Mr. Koelling is retiring at the end of this school year. There was some discussion about finding a new teacher to replace him as a middle school science and social studies teacher.

Principal Mike Odar shared about the impact of private schools in Dearborn County losing riverboat gaming revenue sharing dollars. This is due to a state audit which informed county officials that the revenue sharing with private schools is not legal, although the practice had been in place since 1997.

DID YOU KNOW?

Registrations, the school budget, enrollment, and tuition are all highly related and time sensitive functions. The school budget for the coming school year is projected by the school and approved by Parish Council in the spring. Registrations help us project our enrollment for the following year, which is needed to determine tuition, which is needed to finalize our school budget! Turning in your registration on time goes a long way in helping the school determine tuition rates and set the budget on time. If you ever want to help the school, here is one very easy way!

Amy Heinsman shared responses to a teacher spirituality survey. This led to a discussion on getting the school children more involved at mass.

K.C. Witte began an important discussion on ways to retain school families or students who may be considering other education options. Amy Maxwell raised a concern with the discipline policy, and Odar explained a discipline committee has been in place.

SAT members are now being provided with a list of action items following each meeting.

CONTACT US

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FEBRUARY SAT MEETING RECAP

The SAT met on February 6 with less than a quorum. The brief meeting's discussion centered around Principal Mike Odar's administrator update, updating the SAT by-laws, and a recap of the January school open house.

Mr. Odar said enrollment is up slightly when looking at early 2018-2019 school year sign-ups. He said the pre-school has been a help, and that the Monday-Wednesday-Friday option for four-year-olds is the most popular. Mrs. Leiker has done a great job with the program.

Preparations are being made for ISTEP testing. The Indiana Department of Education did not allow St. Lawrence a waiver this year to have a pencil and paper test, so all students will take the exam on a computer.

In reaction to a parent's concerns following an after-school incident, Mr. Odar and the SAT continue to formulate a process of staff, coaches, and volunteers of afterschool programs to follow when there is an emergency situation.

K.C. Witte shared more on getting feedback from parents and students who have left the school.

Amy Heinsman shared that the Shadow Stations of the Cross were approved as a Lenten Spirituality project by Father Danda. The SAT thanks the students and staff who volunteered to make the event happen.

Mr. Odar said the 8th grade mission trip will have a new venue this year.

MARCH SAT MEETING RECAP

The March SAT meeting included nearly all members. They discussed funding questions, facilities, continued to review the SAT by-laws, and were pleased to learn that Father Peter will be returning to St. Lawrence for Holy Week.

Another school funding question has been raised, this time with the Dearborn Community Foundation. Mr. Odar said St. Lawrence has received \$45,000 each year in the past from the Lawrenceburg Schools Endowment, but this may be the final year the school may qualify for it. Mr. Odar will continue to meet with the foundation about this. A separate tech grant for the school should be approved, he added.

On the enrollment front, more than 130 students have been registered for the 2018-2019 school year, but about 40 families still have not completed their registration. Mr. Odar said the preschool enrollment has been so brisk that a waiting list is now being used. An aid may be hired.

Also from the principal. ISTEP testing has began. Mr. Odar said kids are overall doing well with the online testing. Applications are coming in for a teacher to replace the retiring Mr. Koelling.

SAT President Jason Schmid will be meeting with the Parish Council soon. The SAT's update to the Parish Council will be separate from Mr. Odar's administrator update.

Facilities pillar Gary Hammerle raised the issue of school security, in light of the Parkland, Florida shooting. This led to a discussion about how St. Lawrence may be made more secure. Mr. Odar shared some new initiatives, which he and the SAT agreed should be put in place as soon as possible. PTO is purchasing walkie-talkies for the school.

Hammerle also brought up facilities maintenance and sharing of important facilities knowledge about the school.

Melissa Lahey said PTO is working to bring a speaker to the school. This speaker will address families. PTO is also purchasing a new awning for the school entrance.

SAT MEMBER SPOTLIGHT – GARY HAMMERLE ON SCHOOL SAFETY

The mission of St. Lawrence School is simple, in active cooperation with its parents and the community, pledges to promote positive academic and spiritual growth of each student. We strive to provide a quality education in a nurturing atmosphere. We are committed to teach as Jesus taught, instilling Catholic values and emphasizing respect for the individual in a caring atmosphere, which fosters a love for learning and continuous growth.

In today's society, unfortunately, we also need to add to this mission statement "while providing a safe environment against potential threats". We, as a school community, have to take a proactive approach to this very serious issue. While it is impossible to predict and prepare for every conceivable threat and situation, the school staff is taking steps to provide a comfortable place for learning while keeping the students and staff as safe as possible.

One key way to keep the students and staff safe is by limiting access to the buildings. This may come as an inconvenience at times because students and staff are taught to not open exterior doors for anyone. Only authorized personnel are supposed to allow individuals access to the school. All visitors should be entering through the main office doors during school hours. There are electronic locks and cameras in place to view the guest.

Another way St. Lawrence is taking steps to enhance the safety of our students and staff is by bringing in outside experts to perform the ALICE training program, which is approved by the Department of Education. Prior to the completion of formal training, the instructor staged a mock threat. This mock threat demonstration exposed a few areas that needed to be improved. The instructor showed the staff ways to make these improvements and things that could be done to provide safer options. The instructor then did another mock threat demonstration with these changes implemented. The school staff showed incredible signs of improvement by utilizing the tools they had learned. This program is a continuing part of the school's plan for all current and future members of the faculty and staff.

Looking towards the future, we are exploring different opportunities to continue providing a safe environment. We are exploring different forms of communication for faculty, parents, and first responders. We are trying to identify and minimize all potential risks to the building, grounds and classrooms. We are also encouraging all students, family members, faculty and staff to be more vigilant and aware of their surroundings and to report any suspicious activity immediately.

Thankfully we have not experienced any significant threat at St. Lawrence and feel confident that through these steps we are taking we will limit the impact that any potential threat may have.

SAT'S MISSION AND VISION

At St. Lawrence School, we strive to teach as Jesus taught, instilling Catholic values that emphasize respect for the individual while fostering a love for learning and continuous growth. In a positive and caring atmosphere, our staff is committed to developing the whole child, focusing on both the head and the heart developing judgment and critical thinking, with a strong sense of values. This Christian value-based approach to education benefits both our catholic students and our students of other faith traditions.

Our **Vision** is to foster intellectual curiosity and build the skills needed to inquire in an atmosphere that honors and promotes individualized learning while living out the Gospel value of service, rooted in the traditions of Catholic faith.