

ST. ALEXANDER SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES
February 27, 2018

Call to Order:

President Devine called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm in the School, 7025 West 126th Street, Palos Heights, Illinois. Present were School Advisory Council (SAC) Members: Maria Anderzunas, Dave Devine, Meghan Dougherty, Dan Nicholson, and Carol Reckwerdt. Also present were Principal Cathy Biel, Assistant Principal Mary Dombrowski, and Parish Finance Director Paula Somers.

Opening Prayer: Principal Biel lead the opening prayer, as Father Michniewicz was not present.

Minutes: There were no minutes from the January meeting available. Secretary Nicholson apologized, and asked to delay approval to the March meeting.

Principal's Report: Principal Biel provided an enrollment update, and announced that School tours are being given with offers of shadowing days to interested students. Principal Biel noted that some grades had wait lists, with some having wait lists long enough to justify opening up second classes (next year's 4th and 7th grade classes). Opening up second classes in grades is a financial risk, given that many new families were also registered at other area Catholic Schools. Principal Biel noted, however, that if the students currently registered do indeed attend St. Alexander School, there will be two 4th grade classes and two 7th grade classes in the 2018/2019 academic year. Secretary Nicholson asked if registered families in the grades slated to have two classrooms next year could be asked to pay a "lock in" fee, which would underscore their commitment to attending St. Alexander School next year (similar to what some Catholic high schools require). Principal Biel noted that the Archdiocese's Office of Catholic School has asked area Catholic schools not to solicit such fees from registered families. She also noted that Empower Illinois, a tax credit scholarship granting organization went offline due to overwhelming demand, but was scheduled reopen its application system on February 27th. Principal Biel also reminded the Council of the upcoming Raffle Party (March 3rd, from 6pm to midnight). The theme for Lent was also announced as Up, In, Out, which was based on Father Gorsky's Ash Wednesday Homily. Principal Biel also informed the Council that the 5k Fundraiser will take place on Thursday, May 10th. Dates for the Bunny Breakfast, Archdiocesan 'School Improvement Visit,' and the St. Baldrick's event were also announced. Finally, Principal Biel announced that the Family School Association is sponsoring a barbecue focused on welcoming new families to St. Alexander School. It will take place on June 15th and Principal Biel encouraged Council members to attend.

Safety Procedures: President Devine and the Council discussed School safety procedures. Principal Biel noted that St. Alexander School participates in yearly safety drills with the Palos Heights Police and Fire Departments, including both hard and soft lockdowns. Principal Biel noted the strong and close relationship between the first responders and St. Alexander School, and noted that she had the personal cell phones of several of them in the event that she had any questions. Though safety procedures differ across the country and across schools, Principal Biel pointed out that she works closely with the Palos Heights Police and Fire Departments to implement safety procedures that take into account the ages and abilities of the students. Principal also noted that faculty at St. Alexander School will be meeting with the Palos Heights Police Department in April to discuss safety procedures.

Luck of the Irish Party: Member Dougherty provided the Council with an update, including that the food for the party will be provided by Swanson's Deli (in the Beverly neighborhood).

Pastor's Report: Father Michniewicz was not in attendance, so there was no Pastor's report.

Questions from Visitors: A visitor provided feedback from several parents from an area Catholic school that will be closing after this school year. Feedback was very positive and Principal Biel emphasized the importance of new families contacting her or Mrs. Somers, so that information can be conveyed directly to them.

Principal Biel ended the meeting with a Closing Prayer.

Adjournment:

Council Member Dougherty motioned and Secretary Nicholson seconded the motion to adjourn. On a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 pm.

The next Council Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 27, 2018 at 7:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Dan Nicholson