

SAC Meeting Minutes

December 8th, 2020

Members Present:

Chris Spilker, Erin and Mitchell Dawkins, Julie Swanson, Marjorie Bresson, Stephen Turk

Welcome to Our New Members:

Hillary Johnson – parent of a kindergarten and 2nd grader

Chris Chervenak – parent of a 2nd grader

Meeting called to order at 7:02 by Chris Spilker

Principal Report – Stephen Turk

So far this year, we have not had any cases of COVID-19 transmitted in the school. There have been a few families who have had it in their household, but those students were quarantining and learning remotely. They were never in the building while testing positive. All protocols are still being followed closely. Parents have been cooperative about keeping their children home and learning virtually when necessary which has really helped to keep everyone healthy and safe.

Oakland County Health Dept has worked closely with the staff of Guardian Angels, when concerns and questions arise regarding COVID exposures, etc. Julie Kane has been identified as the staff person responsible for contacting them when necessary. Mr. Turk provides follow-up contact as necessary. Responses from the health department have been prompt and are usually within 24 hours, if not the same day.

Enrollment at the building level is strong. Currently we are 33 students over our projected budget. There is currently a waiting list of about a dozen students. Mr. Turk has been cautious about taking these pending students as we are trying to limit outside exposures. He asked for input from SAC committee members. He explained that our classrooms are capped at limits Mr. Turk felt were appropriate given the COVID guidelines for space available in the classroom. But, even given those caps, there are currently a few openings available in kindergarten, first and fifth grades. SAC members felt that if our new families were notified that we have had 0 cases of COVIC at the school and asked to be mindful of that as they joined, we would be happy to welcome them as part of our school. We hope to provide their child's education now and in the future. As SAC continues meeting this year, we will discuss marketing strategies to keep our new and current families while also attracting new ones. Those families who are new to Guardian Angels this year have had so many positive things to say and indicate they are here to stay. We are so glad to have them!

Teachers have had time to prepare for virtual learning this time, as opposed to having to “jump in” last March. The transition to our days of remote learning went very smoothly. Feedback from families was primarily positive. The academy teachers have all been using the Google Classroom platform to assign work and students have been using it to submit their work. Several other platforms have been used in

the preschool and K-5 classes. Feedback on other platforms has provided mixed reviews. There was a parent inquiry as to why Google Classroom is not used in all classrooms, K-8. In lower grades that are using Class Dojo, parents have noted a few settings that can be frustrating. For example, the desktop and mobile versions look markedly different. Also, when an assignment is completed, it is not removed from the list. If more than one family member is monitoring a child's work, it is challenging to know what work has been completed and what still needs to be done. Google Classroom seems to be preferred by parents/families who have used both platforms. It was requested that the school consider switching to a single platform. Mr. Turk will take that feedback to the staff and consider using Google Classroom K-8 starting in the new year.

Mr. Turk indicated that he felt our period of remote learning prior to and immediately following our Thanksgiving Break was helpful to prevent possible exposures. Some families who had traveled during the holiday were agreeable to extending their child's period of remote instruction as a precaution. Mr. Turk wishes to repeat the same remote learning plan for students after the Christmas Break. He asked for input from SAC members who were all in favor. Mr. Turk will be sending out communication to families as soon as possible about this calendar change.

Some K-5 families wanted more "face-to-face" remote instruction during our remote learning period, versus videos and virtual assignments. During our period of remote instruction, several K-5 teachers kept their virtual platform link open for the majority of time school was in session, so they could be available to provide instruction or support for students that needed assistance. The feedback regarding a desire for increased instructional time at the lower grades will be shared with staff and taken into consideration as plans are made for our next period of remote learning.

2nd grade – Mrs. Silvasi has requested that her classroom desk configuration return to one familiar to her students; she would like her desks to be formed into pods of four students. Although all students facing the same direction is a preferred guideline, other configurations are allowable, given proper precautions. Pods are allowable if there is some type of barrier between students facing toward each other. Mr. Turk is hoping to honor Mrs. Silvasi's request. He will be working to create plexiglass dividers to be placed between students. A picture of the prototype will be shared with parents prior to their installation. Students will not be sharing supplies. SAC parents are in favor as long as it is safe.

Although this is a year the school is due for accreditation, Mr. Turk has not yet heard anything about how that will be happening. This year the school should be scheduled for self-study; next year is scheduled to be a site visit. There has been no notice about if that process has been modified due to the COVID situation.

Mr. Turk informed SAC that any gifts sent to school for staff will need to be quarantined for three days. SAC members asked that Mr. Turk notify parents of that fact so they can send their gifts in earlier than they may typically choose to. Mr. Turk also informed SAC that plastic bags will be provided to staff for gifts that may come in later than Tuesday so staff can bag the item and take them home to quarantine for the three-day period prior to opening them at home.

Another note-worthy safety precaution...classroom library books are quarantined for a two-week period prior to being put back into circulation in the classroom. Just one more way staff are striving to keep our students healthy and safe.

New Business

SAC wishes to thank parents and families for helping to keep things safe and consistent during this unprecedented time.

SAC has plans to bring the SAC bylaws and Archdiocese guidelines into closer alignment with each other. Because we are still meeting virtually at this time, plans to create this alignment have been put on hold, but remain a priority for the committee. Stay tuned for further details.

A parent raised a question/concern about IXL. Since incorrect responses reduce a student's "score", (sometimes significantly) it can be frustrating for a child, especially as students get older and the problems are more challenging and take longer to solve. The parent wondered whether the school staff had the ability to change the settings so that student's score does not advance, but also would not decline. At least the student score would always be advancing and the student would not feel such a sense of defeat. Mr. Turk indicated that the school staff does not have the option to change the settings. However, he did say that all families should be aware that a student can stop when they reach a score of 93; the student does not have to achieve 100 percent to complete the assignment. SAC parents indicated they were not all aware of that and said it was helpful information to have and that it might relieve some of the stress. A few parents indicated they may reach out to the company to provide feedback regarding the current setting.

Throughout the diocese, changes are happening soon. Parishes are being grouped in "families" and joining others in close proximity. These groupings have not yet been formally announced. At this time, Mr. Turk can only confirm that we will NOT be joining with Shrine or St. Mary's. Once the formal announcements are released, SAC will begin discussing how Guarding Angels grouping with other parishes may help boost our enrollment and how we can market to those parishes which may not currently have a school affiliated with it.

A parent inquired as to how school masses are going this year. Mr. Turk indicated that K-8 students are attending at this time. (Preschool students are not attending.) Students are spaced 6 feet apart. No one is sitting directly in front/back of another. There will be mass on Friday 18th at 2:00. Sorry, at this time, no families are permitted to join. Mass is for students and staff only. During school mass, the church is still at less than 50% capacity as required. (Actually, it is only about 25% capacity.)

SAC is considering another trivia fundraiser in the new year. The gym is being considered as a possible location. The Knights of Columbus (or in a tent on the property outside of K of C) was suggested as another possible venue.

Staff gifts will need to be quarantined for three days due to CDC guidelines and back to school guidelines. Mr. Turk will send out a notification to parents regarding this. Books are being quarantined for two weeks before they go back into circulation.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Marjorie Bresson, SAC secretary