

**St. Ambrose Catholic School
School Board Meeting
Wednesday, November 8, 2023
6:00pm – Community Center**

MINUTES

Members Present: Stephanie King, Erin Kochan, Justin Lacy, Stephanie Monroe, Ashley Lack, Mary Terry, Abby Stephens, Maggie Kohl

Others Present: Bob Baird, Deacon Jay Wackerly, Father Steven Janoski

Call to Order: Chairperson Erin Kochan opened the meeting at 6:01 pm

Opening Prayer: Opening Prayer was led by Father Steven Janoski.

Committee and other reports submitted are included after the board minutes. The following notes are from discussion during our meeting about those reports.

Approval of October Minutes: A motion to approve the Minutes from the October meeting as previously distributed was made by Mark Terry and seconded by Justin Lacy.

Guest Speaker: Mark Terry spoke on behalf of Jules King, who was not present at tonight's meeting.. Mr. King expressed concerns regarding the camera/security system in the school. His concern was about the cameras being connected to the network and the risk of outside access to the cameras if someone accessed our network. He was also concerned with people being able to see the cameras at all times through remote viewing outside of the St. Ambrose campus. Mr. Baird noted that cameras have been added in middle school classrooms/coatrooms to discourage activities such as theft, physical altercations, bullying, etc. A discussion was held regarding safety vs. privacy and that classroom camera viewing is limited to administration only (Mrs. Preston, Mr. Baird). It was suggested to put up signs in the building that security cameras are in use. A question was asked about how long security footage is kept; this will be verified.

Standing Committee Updates:

- Executive Committee (Erin Kochan, Abby Stephens, Ashley Lack): No report.
- Policy/Planning (Justin Lacy/Abby Stephens): This committee is drafting a policy for middle school service hours. The draft of the proposed policy will be shared at the December meeting. Justin Lacy reports that he looked at 50 schools for reference on their policies. He proposed the following questions to the Board: (1) Should Applefest be a requirement? He noted that a lot of schools require 10-25% of the service hours to be dedicated to the school's big fundraising event. A discussion was held by Board members for the pros and cons of requiring Applefest service hours both as a middle school requirement and a family requirement. Mr. Lacy noted many school policies have

a process for selection with suggested fundraisers and allowing students to choose what events to volunteer, as well as encouraging volunteering in the community (outside of the Parish). (2) Should there be consequences for not completing hours and if so, what?: Some schools have a \$25/hour fee. A discussion was held regarding whether this money should go to a charity or to the school. (3) Should there be a reward tiered program for those who go above and beyond the 10 hour requirement? Mr. Lacy will have a draft of the middle school service hour policy for further discussion and voting at the next meeting.

- Development (Mark Terry): See the SAPA report for details. Mark Terry notes that the trivia night went really well. It was noted that the SAPA meeting had questions about using the gym for future trivia nights.
- Public Relations (Stephanie Monroe/Maggie Kohl): A PR meeting will be scheduled with the SAPA and School Board PR teams regarding a promotional video to be developed by Riverbender. The Spring Sing Open House on April 21, 2024 will include an open house for PreK/K for potential new families. Marketing will be targeted at the community.
- Building/Grounds (Paul Braundmeier): See the building/grounds report submitted by Paul Braundmeier in his absence at this meeting. Stephanie King asked about beautifying the front of the school (main entrance) including updates such as a sign, landscaping, larger statue, possibly of St. Michael. A discussion was held regarding plans for building upgrades at the main entrance and looking into landscaping updates in the future.
- Athletics (Bob Baird): See the athletics report submitted by Athletic Director Monica Ellebracht and Assistant AD Emily Kribs.

Strategic Plan Update: A first draft has been developed. The committee is awaiting MAP test results to add to the plan. A draft will be submitted to the Board in December.

IT Update: See the IT report submitted by Eli Hawkins. Stephanie King asked if there are still holes in camera views (such as the parking lot). Mr. Baird and Deacon Jay Wackerly note that the external holes in camera views have been corrected. Deacon Jay also notes that they are looking for a new host for the school/parish website as the diocese will no longer be hosting websites.

Principal's Update: Mr. Baird notes that MAP test retesting is available if the school feels like a student does not have a valid test. This is not to boost test scores, but to make sure they are getting the best picture of each individual student's performance and growth. Abby Stephens brought up a discussion on whether it was appropriate to offer gift cards as incentives for students to show growth from their last test scores. After discussion by the Board, it was decided to discontinue the gift card incentive and look for a new way to incentivize students to take the testing seriously and give their best effort. Father Steve suggested bringing back "St.

Ambrose Bucks”, which would be similar to the book vending machine tokens. Mr. Baird will form a committee for parent input on MAP testing incentivization. Father Steve noted that the current 2nd graders will have their 1st Communion/Confirmation on October 19, 2024. He also noted that there will be a meeting on November 28, 2023 looking at how the family school agreement is implemented in our school.

Applefest Required Volunteer Hours Discussion: See previous discussion under Policy/Planning. Paul Braundmeier was to submit suggestions to be discussed at this meeting, however this was tabled due to his absence.

Closing Prayer: Closing prayer was led by Father Steven Janoski.

Adjournment: At 7:01 pm Mark Terry motioned to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded by Stephanie King.

The next meeting is December 13, 2023.

REPORTS

SAPA REPORT

St. Ambrose Parents' Association
SAPA Meeting: November 1, 2023
Location: St. Ambrose Community Center

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. by Susan Kasten, Treasurer.

OPENING PRAYER: Jesus, our friend and our brother, please guide us with your wisdom and love today. Help us to do your will and to be open to hear your voice as we speak and listen to one another. Amen.

PRESIDENT REPORT- Susan Kasten reporting for Natalie Gordon, *Interim President*

- No report.

SECRETARY REPORT- Ashley Lack

- Approval of Minutes from October 4, 2023 meeting
 - A motion was made by Sarah Mendoza and seconded by Susan Kasten to approve the minutes as distributed.

TREASURER REPORT- Susan Kasten

- Current Bank Balance \$38,977
- Magic Match totaled \$11,000
- Saints Sponsors totaled \$11,500. This is an estimate due to the Knights of Columbus finalizing their donation after the Fish Frys.
- Saints Sponsors are:
 - Miller King Attorneys at Law
 - Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln Rev, Steven Janoski Charitable Fund
 - Godfrey Knights of Columbus Council 7804
 - Tarrant & Harmon Real Estate & Auction Co. Abby Delehanty, Agent
 - Bright Way Imaging
 - Liberty Bank
 - Alton Sports Tap
 - John & Sue Stirnaman
 - Deacon Bill & Pat Kessler
 - Deacon Jay & Kim Wackerly
 - J.A.D.

- Magic Match Sponsors are:
 - Ron Winkler
 - Deacon Bill & Pat Kessler
 - Shawn & Nancy Hanlon
 - Judith Clark in memory of her husband Jim Clark
 - J.A.D.
 - Kathy Rogers
 - Ric & Linda Jun
 - David & Mary Eckhouse
 - Mark & Rebecca Terry
 - Jim & Jennifer Hendrickson
 - Carla & David Totten; Nancy & William Orrill; Debbie & James Ellebracht; Donna & Stephen Mikoff
 - Terry & Noncy Dooling
 - Deacon Jay & Kim Wackerly
 - Greg & Georgia Adams
 - Michael Stephan
 - Tom Bechtold & Cynthia Gelsthorpe
 - Virginia Thomeczek
 - Godfrey Knights of Columbus Council 7804
- Saints Sponsors can specify where their donation goes; otherwise their donation gets spread among the larger fundraiser events as needed.
- Mel Bechtold made poster which will travel to school/parish events and will hang in school lobby to recognize these donors.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON TREASURER'S REPORT

- Jules King requested copy of SAPA budget.

PUBLIC RELATIONS REPORT- Emily Lacy reporting for Emily Lacy & Natalie Gordon

- Recent Facebook posts
 - Character Counts Assembly and Life Saving Awards given to Mr. Baird and Thea Mendoza.
 - Halloween Parade

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON PUBLIC RELATIONS REPORT

- A promotional video is being created by Riverbender. School Board members are working with Riverbender to create this video.
- A discussion was held regarding additional ways to advertise and promote our school including:
 - Reaching out to local daycares to promote our Pre-K program
 - Expanding to North County advertising since some Marquette students reside in North County
 - Community Open House
 - PK/K Open house is already scheduled this spring on April 21, 2024

- Reaching out to families with new babies such as gifting onesies that say “Future Saint”; could possibly work with local hospitals.
- Billboards in the community
 - The IT department is looking into using some grant money to put some large TV screens/Smart Screens in gym

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES REPORT- Sarah Mendoza

- Halloween Parade - Thank you to Amy and Brad Watts
 - It was cold but we had a great turn out. We won 3rd place for the Youth Division. This was the first year we didn't run out of candy!
- Upcoming events
 - Trivia Night
 - Saturday, November 4, 2023 - doors open at 6 pm, play starts at 7 pm
 - At the Sports Tap in Alton
 - Tables still available (9 tables as of 10.27.23)
 - As of tonight's SAPA meeting, 11 tables have been reserved out of 19 tables originally available
 - During the trivia there will be a 50/50 drawing and a booze raffle
 - Toys for Tots Drive to “Help Fill Santa’s Bag”
 - Sunday, November 26, 2023 from 12 pm to 3 pm
 - Christmas Community Event at Krueger's Orchard on Airport Rd
 - Bring an unwrapped new toy for the Toys for Tots toy drive
 - Visit with Santa, take a family picture at the photo booth, enjoy hot chocolate, and warm yourself by the bonfire
 - There will be seasonal items, baked goods and cut your own Christmas trees available for purchase
 - If you can't attend, there will also be a Toys for Tots box in the front entry at church
 - Krueger's did a pumpkin education session with PK-2nd grade
 - Family Movie Night
 - Saturday, December 16, 2023
 - Doors open 6:00 pm; movie starts at 6:30 pm
 - Saint Ambrose School Gym
 - Movie will be The Polar Express
 - Come in your comfy pj's, bring your favorite stuffed animal and/or blanket and your favorite movie snacks
 - Popcorn, treats and hot chocolate will be provided
 - Chris Varady and Mark Terry are running this event
 - Sign up will be coming soon

- Christmas Feast
 - Wednesday, December 20, 2023
 - At Saint Ambrose School
 - For the kids, a special lunch during normal school hours to help celebrate the season
 - Event Chair Maggie Monahan is working with Julia's on menu/pricing

DEACON JAY'S REPORT- Jay Wackerly

- The parish is in need of ushers during Masses. It's an easy way to get 1 volunteer hour.
- Reminder that Exodus 90 (for men) will be at the KC Hall on November 10, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. There will be beer and pizza.
- St. Ambrose will host a viewing of The Sound of Freedom on Tuesday November 14, 2023 at 6:30 pm

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON DEACON JAY'S REPORT

- Thank you to Deacon Jay for organizing St. Ambrose's participation in the Eucharistic Congress!

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT- Bob Baird

- **CALENDAR**
- -Nov. 3 – 12:45 Dismissal, Teacher In-Service
- -Nov. 4 – St. Ambrose Trivia Night at Sports Tap
- -Nov. 8 – School Board, 6:00
- -Nov. 13-16 – MAP Testing
- -Nov. 22-24 NO SCHOOL, THANKSGIVING BREAK
- -Nov. 28 – Picture Retakes
- -Nov. 29 – Character Counts Assembly, 2:00
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- **IEMA Grant Moves Forward!**-Finally after months of delay, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency grant to improve safety and security is about to move forward. In April, St. Ambrose was awarded \$144,000 through the grant. These funds will replace the glass entryways, install safety film on the windows, provide access controls, and provide intercom phones in the rooms. Soon, the State of Illinois will announce the timeline for the grant, and this will allow us to progress with the process. More updates will be provided soon.
- **Mite Box Collections & Mustache March Food Drive**-The collection for the MCA (Missionary Childhood Association) mite box runs from now until Nov. 21. All money collected will be sent to the MCA to support poor and needy children around the world. The Mustache March is hosting a food drive in honor of fallen officer Blake Snyders' 41st birthday. Food items (canned goods, and dry goods) can be turned in anytime between now and Nov. 17. The class that collects the most items will receive a pizza party.
- **Please Pray for Our Students To Receive the Sacraments**-On Saturday Nov. 4, 2023 our 3rd grade students along with a few others will receive the Sacraments of Holy Communion and Confirmation. Please continue praying for our young people as they prepare for these extremely important milestones in their spiritual lives.
- **MAP Testing Coming Soon**- Twice a year students in 3-8 grades complete the MAP test (Measure of Academic Progress). In past years we have tested in Reading, Math, and Science.

New this year, the students will also complete a test on "Language." Testing is scheduled for the week of November 13-17. Individual results will be emailed home to parents once they are available. Group results will be posted once they are available.

- **Marquette Catholic HS Service Hours-** Anytime St. Ambrose has an event that requires volunteers, we can reach out to MCHS and request the information be shared with students. All Marquette students are required to complete service and many would enjoy a volunteer experience at St. Ambrose.
- **November Character Counts Assembly 11-29-23, 2:00 -** November family resources and discussion questions have been posted to the school website. Our November Character Counts assembly, emphasizing TRUSTWORTHINESS, is scheduled for Wednesday Nov. 29 at 2:00. Mr. Tim Harmon, Principal at Marquette Catholic HS and volunteer fireman, will speak on the November topic of TRUSTWORTHINESS.
- Thank you for the life saving award. Thank you to Deacon Bill for speaking on responsibility.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

- Mr. Baird thanked SAPA for the Principal's Day gift basket
- Mr. Baird thanked everyone who coordinated and participated in the Halloween parade and the upcoming Trivia Night.
- Mr. Baird made a request to SAPA for funding:
 - for staff shirts (approximately 40 people including parish staff).
 - for gift cards to be used to incentivize students for MAP testing. The plan is that any student who shows growth from their last testing will have their name put in the drawing for gift cards. He's requesting \$500-\$1000.
- Mr. Baird also noted that \$1000 was donated by Jeff Lauritzen from Country Financial for the book vending machine.

NEW BUSINESS

- No new business was brought forward.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION- Open Forum

- 7th Grade's Trunk or Treat event raised \$1345
 - There was an issue this year with people showing up who were not on the sign up list. This will be discussed with event coordinators to address this issue for next year.

CLOSING PRAYER: We give you thanks, Lord, for helping us to learn more and how to love one another. Please help us to always be instruments of your perfect peace in our school. Amen.

With no additional questions/discussions, the meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m. by Susan Kasten, Treasurer.

BUILDING & GROUNDS REPORT

St Ambrose Buildings and Grounds Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Bob Baird, Tim Douglas, Paul Braundmeier

Date: 10/23/23 @ 12pm

Items Discussed:

1. Progress of the safety improvements at the school. The replacement of doors and vestibule is in a holding pattern waiting on the approved grant funding from the state of IL.
2. Roofing leaks at the church steeple. Bids were reviewed for work to correct water infiltration at the church steeple and other areas. There was a recommendation made from the committee to proceed forward with Old Town Roofing for a total of \$55,720.29.
3. Replacement of double doors between the church and community center. There is a desire to replace the doors leading from the church to the community center to accommodate Wake's. Multiple bids were reviewed, and a recommendation was made by the committee to proceed forward with Slayden for a total of \$8,689.
4. Repair/replacement of two HVAC units serving the church sanctuary. It was discussed that an electronic board was anticipated any day to repair the one HVAC unit serving a portion of the sanctuary. Bids have been received for replacement of the aging units. However it was determined that the first attempt should be to repair the 20 year old units. Future replacement is anticipated to be needed but for now this should repair the unit and make it operational again. The funding that is set aside for replacement should remain in place as these units are at the end of their useful life span.
5. Parking lot repairs and resealing. It was discussed that parking lot repairs and resealing continues to be on the radar, but funding does not exist at this time for this work. Bids have been received from multiple contractors so this work can be budgeted for in the future.
6. Discussed the roof replacement on the school and the success of that project. Tim noted that it seems to be performing well.

Next meeting: TBD

FATHER STEVE'S REPORT

SCHOOL BOARD

November 8, 2023

16 of our children (13 from St. Ambrose School and 3 from the Parish School of Religion) were confirmed and received their first Communion on Saturday, November 4, 2023.

Parent Meeting for children preparing for the Sacrament of Reconciliation was Tuesday, November 7 in the Church.

Date for Confirmation and First Eucharist for current second graders: Saturday, **October 19, 2024** at 11:00 a.m. at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Springfield

Several children who have attained "catechetical" age (7) will be prepared for the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) to be celebrated at the Easter Vigil on Saturday, March 30, 2024 at 8:00 p.m.

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Sunday Mass is an expectation for our Catholic families to retain/receive the "active" parishioner tuition rate. Exceptions must be approved by Fr. Steve. We have been following this practice for five years now and the Catholic Churches/Schools in Springfield have adopted it.

IT REPORT

St. Ambrose Tech Department Monthly Report

Submitted by Eli Hawkins

Reporting Period

Start Date: 10-11-2023

End Date: 11-06-2023

Ticketing Metrics:

Tickets submitted: 26

Tickets resolved: 16

Tickets unresolved (all-time): 24

Tasks accomplished:

Installed and configured new cameras in middle school classrooms

Updated and set up all Chromebooks for MAP testing

Researched and compared new hosting options for the school website

Installed and configured a new PC for the library

Researched TV/signage options for the gym

Updated all network switches and routers in the school

Short term projects (to complete by the end of the school year):

Create a full asset inventory for tracking and budgeting

Clean and reorganize the IT office and basement storage areas

Establish practices for maintaining compliance with all laws and regulations

Create KPIs for measuring progress in our department

Reorganize the network structure, and increase security site-wide

Install phones in all classrooms

Install door access controls

Establish maintenance calendars for equipment and software

Create and implement staff training

ATHLETICS REPORT

ATHLETICS REPORT - Bob Baird (from Athletic Director Monica Ellebracht and Assistant AD Emily Kribs)

Once again we had a good golf season. We are very thankful that Scott Rose volunteered to coach our golf team. A total of 14 students participated in golf.

Basketball is in full swing. We have 52 students participating in basketball this school year. We have the following teams this year:

3rd/4th grade boys coached by Tom Schmidt and Justin Johnson

4th/5th grade girls coached by Erin & Tom Kochan assisted by David Dornes

5th grade boys coached by Pat King, Steve Noss, & Dan Cruz

6 grade girls coached by Ryan Jacobs & Brad Jacobs

6th/7th grade boys coached by Joe Monroe & Phil Robinson

8th grade boys coached by Nic Stotler & David Dornes

We compete against St. Mary's Alton, Our Lady Queen of Peace, Evangelical, Maryville Christian, St. Boniface, St. Mary's Edwardsville, SSPP Collinsville, St. Paul Highland, St. John Neumann, St. Elizabeth & Holy Family

St. Ambrose continues to host 6th grade games on the weekend. A few teams will have the opportunity to participate in some tournaments.

Volleyball & Track sign ups will begin in the next couple of weeks.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT- Bob Baird

CALENDAR

- Nov. 13-16 – MAP Testing
- Nov. 22-24 NO SCHOOL, THANKSGIVING BREAK
- Nov. 28 – Picture Retakes
- Nov. 29 – Character Counts Assembly, 2:00
- Nov. 30 - Safety and Security Committee, 1:00

- **IEMA Grant Moves Forward!**-Finally, after months of delay, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency grant to improve safety and security is about to move forward. In April, St. Ambrose was awarded \$144,000 through the grant. These funds will replace the glass entryways, install safety film on the windows, provide access controls, and provide intercom phones in the rooms. Soon, the State of Illinois will announce the timeline for the grant, and this will allow us to progress with the process. More updates will be provided soon.
- **Camera Expansion & Additional Doors** - Recently our camera expansion was completed. Cameras were installed in additional areas on the interior and exterior of the building. Cameras were installed to provide enhanced coverage on exterior doors and approaches to the building. Cameras were included to better cover hallways and the gym. Cameras were included in the middle school classrooms and coat closets to provide additional internal security. The doors in the back of the building will ship this week and we will schedule installation soon.
- **MAP Testing Coming Soon**- Twice a year students in 3-8 grades complete the MAP test (Measure of Academic Progress). In past years we have tested in Reading, Math, and Science. New this year, the students will also complete a test on "Language." Testing is scheduled for the week of November 13-17. Individual results will be emailed home to parents once they are available. Group results will be posted once they are available.
- **Wellness Plan Update** - The group had an initial meeting and is working on a draft and gathering necessary information.
- **Alton Foundation Grant** - We are applying to receive funds to obtain screens in the gym to enhance presentations, assemblies, performances, and more.
- **St. Ambrose Students Receive Sacraments** - Congratulations to all St. Ambrose students that received the Sacraments of First Holy Communion and Confirmation on Saturday Nov. 5 at the Cathedral in Springfield.
- **November Character Counts Assembly 11-29-23, 2:00** - November family resources and discussion questions have been posted to the school website. Our November Character Counts assembly, emphasizing TRUSTWORTHINESS, is scheduled for Wednesday Nov. 29 at 2:00. Mr. Tim Harmon, Principal at Marquette Catholic HS and volunteer fireman, will speak on the November topic of TRUSTWORTHINESS. Mr. Harmon will also talk to the students about fire safety and will show the students typical equipment for a firefighter.
- **Chess Club & Model UN Begin** - Each group has met twice. They will meet most weeks until well into Winter (Feb.). The Model UN Conference is scheduled at SIUE on Feb. 26 & 27.
- **Marquette Catholic HS Inducts New Members to National Honor Society** - Recently Marquette Catholic HS inducted new members into the National Honor Society. Seven of those numbers are former St. Ambrose students, and they represent 17.5% of the new NHS membership. St. Ambrose students account for roughly 8-10% of the MCHS student population in a given year. Congratulations to our St. Ambrose alumni and all the new members of the NHS!

Submitted by Ashley Lack, Secretary