

# School Advisory Board Minutes ( APPROVED)

## **December 14, 2015**

Attendees: Board Members

Fr. Jim Weiner, Pastor

Mrs. Lynda Wright, Principal

TJ Sullivan                      Ellen Mahoney

Colleen McCarthy      Stephen Bommer

Ivan Arteaga                  Cathy Corbett

Steve Napolitano      Joe Tweed

Community Members: Parents (see list attached)

Opening Prayer: T.J. SULLIVAN

Welcoming remarks: T.J. SULLIVAN

T.J. SULLIVAN: Quorum met; motion for approval of the minutes for the November 9, 2015 meeting. Motion EM, Second JOE TWEED. Approved.

T.J. SULLIVAN:

- Introduction of new business manager for SES, Teresa Lucas for the Archdiocese. “Theresa has a fantastic background: a BA in Accounting and a Masters in Finance. Most recently she was running the finances for a Methodist Church and school for eight years. Prior to that, she was the controller of a food distribution company in Elmwood Park. Early in her career, she was auditor for New York Life and broker for Bear Stearns”
- She will be meeting with Mike Humes on December 17, 2015, and then shortly thereafter with MB and IVAN ARTEAGA to review and discuss the financials and budget of SES. Ms. Lucas spoke briefly, thanked SES for opportunity to meet.

IVAN ARTEAGA: **Financials as of October**

- As of November, final budget submitted to Newark, however not available to Board. Brief discussion of budget.
- Satisfied we have fulfilled the Archdiocese requirements, “We’re good.”
- Accounting needs to be understood better, to make budget process easier in the future.
- Additional capital campaign commitment of \$20,000. over last year’s \$20,000 was discussed.
- Annual Fund letter ready and WILL BE OUT by 12/18/15, per LYNDIA WRIGHT and FR.J. JOE TWEED: This is especially important because of yearend tax planning.
- HSA responsible for \$150,000. plus \$20,000. scripts.

## **LYNDA WRIGHT: SCHOOL REPORT**

- K-8 237 students - 2 moved in last month; 29 in pre-k 3/4: Total 266
- January commitment of 1, plus 2 others visited pre-k3/4; 2 registered in K-8 for Jan.: Total 269
- 2016-17 estimated enrollment will be released after Catholic Schools Week.
- JOE TWEED estimates enrollment now for returning families. Need for tuition number BEFORE registration, based on estimates.
- LYNDA WRIGHT to watch numbers in pre-k 3/4 to keep compliant with NJ state requirements.
- She will be asking Teresa Lucas to do a financial analysis of our pre-k 3/4.
- Committed to February 1<sup>st</sup> enrollment projections for 2016-17 and set tuition at that time.
- \$6,000 in security funds available to spend before year end.
- Open house and baptismal letters went out
- 4 families visited, 3 calls from baptismal letters (visiting in near future).
- Five other parishes allowing or to reply to our request, to speak at their masses in an appeal for SES enrollment.
- Napolitano family is Family of the Month.
- CATHY CORBETT - Lizzie Patterson would be a good candidate to speak at Nativity.
- Looking for volunteers to speak at other parishes.

## **Fr.J: Parish Update**

- New parish business manager Jack Polito
- Parish finance committee meeting happened last week
- Drawings for addition to parish center coming from architect soon. Will be sent to Wyckoff Borough Hall for approval.
- SES needs to complete a space utilization study to present to church. The church will also need to complete one; from these, it will be determined what additional space may or may not be available for use by SES.
- CATHY CORBETT: School needs to show parish the space utilization study, before a decision for space in new building is used by current space users. Mrs. Wright is going to get this class schedule for all grades and rooms and share with Cathy Corbett as part of the Strategic Plan. should be for 2017-18 school year.
- Fr.J: Discussion as to here and now taking place. Another capital campaign rolling out "Living Stones" will be requiring \$1,700,000. from St. Elizabeth. 50/50 split between Newark and St. Elizabeth Church, AFTER Mercy Campaign takes their expense cut.

## **COLLEEN MCCARTHY: HSA Report**

- "On target with last year."
- March 1<sup>st</sup> will kick off "Local Produce" shopping fund raiser, estimates of \$1000-\$1200 per event. Teacher's luncheon set for 12/18/15.
- HSA providing teachers' holiday gifts. \$14,000 between that and year end gifts.
- \$14,000 should be budgeted for next year. Noted.
- Official HSA bylaws are being sought going forward for 2016-17 school year.
- JOE TWEED too send copy of his school's HSA bylaws.
- Apparel sales part of HSA

- Branding Tyme will only do spirit wear from now on - Gym uniforms being changed over to other vendor
- “Volunteerism” needs to be addressed Lunch duty is in the contract though many miss their designated times
- Most of the same people volunteering for all other fundraisers and activities.
- Discussion on volunteer “hours” as a requirement of, either hours or fee, in the future will be considered.
- Analysis of top fundraisers to be done
- Need to pare down events.
- Maybe fix specific fundraiser to a specific grade.

### **Facilities/Security Report**

T.J. SULLIVAN:

- re-capped notes from old study.
- Specifically address fortification of front, not to be part of the available \$6,000.
- Possible camera at pre-k doors
- Exterior siren

T.J. SULLIVAN: **Marketing**

- Baptismal letter out.
- Middle school and upper grades next
- Highlighted items **found in agenda** to create a “One Off” marketing product for use by SES for many different scenarios.
- Possible template with interchangeable pictures/event photos.
- Early childhood education letter to go out AGAIN before next open house.
- Social outlets – Opt Out letter to go out ASAP
  - Original version was with signature required, but after speaking to the marketing head of the Archdiocese, just a mention of the use of pictures is more than sufficient
- LYNDIA WRIGHT CAP program. Alumni getting a letter to go out soon from the archdiocese, to visit SES.
- Second letter to go out in 2016 for financial appeal. Handout #2

CATHY CORBETT: **Strategic Plan**

- Utilization study on classrooms and other spaces needs to be done for the church.
- January 7 2016 committee meeting.

### **Parent Community Comments/Questions**

T.J. SULLIVAN: Food allergies of children topic to be presented.

**\*\*\*Please note that SAB recommends, suggests and supports Principal’s decisions, but does not set policy, make policy decisions, nor does the SAB set rules for the school.\*\*\***

**Mrs. Wright, in accordance with the Archdiocese of Newark, make policy decisions.**

- Mrs. Wright formed a new food allergy committee – and they expressed a desire to add additional layer of protection in creating nut-free classrooms., want to put procedures in place for allergy readiness.
- Church programs after school in our classrooms are nut free, per Jonathan.
- Tim Chisholm spoke (Notes Attached)
- Mrs. Wright read statement from Nurse Jaffe. (Notes Attached)
- Safety and education video sent out to Board.
- L. Daniels: Synopsys of Committee meeting
- Special need for pre-k 3 &4, because they eat in their classroom.
- Request for allergy drill and ensuring nurse coverage all the time, and nut awareness meeting for classrooms and cafeteria.
- T.J. SULLIVAN: Thanked school community.
- FR.J: Also thanked community.

After closed session, Fr. Jim and Mrs. Wright agreed to call the archdiocese to check their allergy policy for schools

### **New Business**

- Denise LaGalia asked when was the parent survey coming out for the Strategic Plan.
- CATHY CORBETT responded soon.
- Asked when or if Science Next Generation to be offered at SES.
- LYNDIA WRIGHT stated Mrs. Leniew had been to two meetings /workshops so far.
- Denise LaGalia Asked about website addition for Brown Envelope Button and Lindsay Daniels asked if basketball schedule and link to league play could be included in the website... both Designs would be looked in to.

### **Closed Session**

COLLEEN MCCARTHY: **Closing Prayer**

Meeting adjourned

Next meeting set for January 11, 2016

Merry Christmas and Happy and Healthy New Year to everyone.

**ATTACHEMENTS** (Sign in Sheet, Jaffe letter, and Chisolm Letter)

St. Elizabeth School  
School Advisory Board

Date:

Please sign in and print your name.  
Thank you.

1. Christopher Grasso
2. Lindsay Daniels
3. Darcey Chisholm
4. T. Chisholm
5. Quillian + Pat Frayne
6. Denise LaGalie
7. Elizabeth Luciwski
8. Salvatore Fallitta
9. Antoinette Gillespie
10. Stephanie Brown
11. Nicole Dostroy

I am sorry that I am unable to attend tonight's meeting. The topic of "Allergies in Schools" is a very important and changing issue. It is time we review and I believe reevaluate our position as a school community.

There are 21 children in Saint Elizabeth School with a "life threatening allergy". By that I mean 21 students require Epinephrine use as a life saving measure should they be exposed to a variety of allergens. Every classroom has at least one severely allergic child.

Documented allergies to peanuts and other nuts, (and other foods) in the State of New Jersey, is at epidemic levels. State law has mandated starting September 2015 that every school must have a stock EpiPen and Epi Jr. for use in school. Our supply is in a bright yellow box mounted next to our defibrillator next to the gym door. Through education both in the classrooms and at home I hope to increase awareness of this very important issue. For these reasons, I would suggest that we add another layer of protection for these children at risk in our school. These measures are simple and easy to implement in the classroom. I am proposing that we make our classrooms "Nut Free". This means that no food containing nuts be eaten in the classrooms. Reactions to peanuts and other nuts can be caused by inhalation, touching a contaminated surface, as well as ingestion. Reactions can be delayed for as long as four hours. The offending food source may not be visible. Reactions may present in many different ways, making it very difficult to decide what course of action to take. This situation is even more difficult to manage in the Pk program where there is so much sharing of things like toys and other classroom materials.

These are changes that I have wanted to make for many years. In my 17 years at St. Elizabeth we have had 5 allergic reactions to food. Three were managed with Benadryl and the other two were sent to the

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hospital for treatment. I welcome the opportunity to work with you and hope you will include me in any decision making policies.

### Letter from Chisholms

Thank you on behalf of the 21 food allergic students at St. Elizabeth's school for allowing us to speak to you this evening. Parents of Ellie (3rd grade), Dawson (7th grade) here at St. Elizabeth School and Sammey (a former student at St. E's and currently in 11th grade at Mary Help of Christian's Academy). We have been asked to speak to you about a new food allergy initiative. Initially, Mrs. Wright brought up the idea of having nut-free classrooms, after some discussions about food allergies. When a few troubling situations later occurred, and follow-ups were held with several concerned parents regarding the current food allergy policies in this school, we all agreed that this very important topic needed to be addressed immediately. A Food Allergy committee has subsequently been formed at SES. After multiple discussions and a few meetings with Mrs. Wright and Mrs. Jaffe, the committee has concluded that SAFETY and EDUCATION are the two factors to consider when improving the current policies.

Before going into more depth about safety and education, we feel it is important to let the experts explain to you in this brief video a little bit about food allergies.

Show video...

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AKVjKC3u9hk&feature=youtu.be>
- In the U.S., every 3 minutes a food allergy reaction sends someone to the emergency room.
- A reaction to food can range from a mild response (such as an itchy mouth) to anaphylaxis, a severe and potentially deadly reaction.
- Whether ingested, inhaled or merely making skin-contact (depending on the individual), even trace amounts of a food allergen that is invisible can cause an allergic reaction.
- A reaction could occur with a peanut allergic student complaining of itchy, swollen eyes and a tight chest, only to discover later that the arts and crafts products in the classroom contain peanuts.

We think everyone in this room tonight has at least one thing in common... We want ALL the children at SES to be SAFE. When considering the school setting, we realize that SES is equipped with multiple fire drills, per year, to handle a potential fire. Over the last few years our school has invested quite a bit of money to update our security system, to further protect our students and staff.

The Food Allergy committee feels it is time to be better prepared to handle food allergic reactions. In order for SES to be Pro-active instead of Re-active if the situation arises.

Our personal goal is to help put procedures in place to keep ALL students Safe inside our school building.

If you have read any of the letters that go out to the parents from SES administration you will notice on the letterhead the words: Community and COMPASSION among others. I ask you tonight if our Community here at SES can be more Compassionate to the needs of the food allergic children?

Speaking of letters, I have one that was sent out to the parents of SES dated September 4, 2015 from Mrs. Wright.

It reads:

**“Your children are very precious and we do not want them to be placed in unsafe situations coming to and from school. Our procedures for arrival to and departure from school have been designed for the safety of all. Safety is not always convenient, but the cooperation of everyone will create the safest environment possible.** I have enclosed a diagram of the correct method for dropping off and picking up your child. We also ask you to place a large card in your car window with your last name and grades of your children. **Please respect the safety concerns of everyone by your observance of the procedures in place. No one’s convenience is worth injury to a child.”**

In the mentioned letter, Mrs. Wright was referring to the importance of the Safety of the students entering and exiting the building. Tonight, I am referring to the Safety of ALL the students INSIDE the building, and INSIDE the classrooms. Putting procedures in place to keep ALL students safe INSIDE the school building is of the utmost importance.

Our family has found FARE (Food Allergy Research & Education), which is the leading national organization working on behalf of the 15 million Americans with food allergies, to have a wealth of resources readily available. One statistic states... Today, 1 in 13 children has food allergies, and nearly 40 percent of the children have already experienced a severe allergic reaction. Many of these reactions happen at school.

At our very own St. Elizabeth School we have 21 students with food allergies, (with doctor prescribed epi-pens) which seems to be right on target with this statistic.

- Food Allergies among children increased by 50% between 1997 and 2011, according to the The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC).

The CDC and the American Disabilities Act (ADA) are very cognizant of the prevalence of food allergies in our society today.

- The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) guidelines seek to protect the physical and emotional health of students with food allergies by providing practical information and strategies for schools while reinforcing federal laws and regulations. The guidelines are intended to support the implementation of school food allergy management policies in schools and early childhood programs, and guide improvements to existing practices. Implementing these guidelines may help schools reduce allergic reactions, improve response to life-threatening reactions, and ensure current policies are in line with laws that protect children with serious health issues.
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a civil rights law that gives you the right to ask for changes where policies, practices or conditions exclude or disadvantage you. As of January 26, 1992, public entities must ensure that individuals with disabilities have full access to and equal enjoyment of all facilities, programs, goods and services.
- The ADA borrows from Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. In both the ADA and Section 504, a person with a disability is described as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, or is regarded as having such impairments. Breathing, eating, working and going to school are "major life activities." **Asthma and allergies are still considered disabilities under the ADA, even if symptoms are controlled by medication.**

- Several states have also passed laws that allow students to carry injectable epinephrine at school and Good Samaritan laws, that can shield from legal liability school personnel who administer epinephrine to anyone they believe in good faith to be having a severe allergic reaction.
- In addition to the AED (Automatic External Defibrillator), as of September, 2015 SES has Epinephrine accessible outside the gym to be used in the event that a life saving measure is needed for an allergic reaction. This is great news; but this is just one step in the right direction in making SES a safe environment for ALL.
- Just last week on December 7th, 2015 the Senate passed The Epinephrine Access and Emergency Treatment Act. This legislation, having been passed unanimously by the full legislature, now heads to Governor Christie's desk for his signature.
- These are all examples of how food allergies are a concern at the National, State and local levels. SES seems to be lagging behind in providing a safe environment for ALL students.
- With many other schools in the area are nut-free or at a minimum, having nut-free classrooms; prospective parents have assumed SES was as well. We have heard upon learning that SES does not provide a nut-free school or nut-free classrooms, SES has been crossed off the list as a prospective school for some families.
- SES has had a number of food allergy reactions in recent years, with at least 2 occasions the need for additional emergency medical care!
- Prior to relocating to Bergen County in 2010; our family researched and visited every catholic school within 30 minutes of his place of employment. This is our sixth year having our children at SES and it will be another 5 years until our youngest child graduates! One of the primary reasons we chose SES was because of Mrs. Jaffe. At that time we were confident with her and the administrations ability to do their best to keep our children safe. We are so appreciative of everything she does at SES to do just that. Any parent at SES that has a child with additional needs can understand Mrs. Jaffe's role as an excellent advocate for all our children.
- With food allergies on the rise, we feel it is time to revisit the Food Allergy practices at SES.
- In addition to reviewing and revising the Food Allergy policies at SES, I propose we make all classrooms nut-free during the school day. Therefore, reducing the risk and possibility of an allergic reaction **in** the classroom. This would also take the burden off the teacher or faculty member that may not feel comfortable handling this type of situation.
- Why are we not doing this already? We have the ability to keep our children safer, by not allowing nuts in our classrooms! There would be no additional cost to the school and would require very little effort to make these changes.
- I think especially in a Catholic school we have a moral and ethical responsibility to protect our children.
- **Let's be the 'Blue Ribbon' leader in providing a SAFE Food Allergy environment for our children.**