

ST. LAWRENCE SCHOOL ADVISORY TEAM NEWSLETTER

First Quarter 2019

WE HAVE OUR WORK CUT OUT

What an eventful start to 2019 for St. Lawrence School! Aside from school basketball, the school open house, and the annual staff vs. students volleyball game, we had two big pieces of news to share.



First, Principal Michael Odar announced in a letter to school families in February that he will not be returning as our principal next school year. The School Advisory Team is grateful for all Mr. Odar has done to improve our school in his five years of leadership. Being a school principal is not an easy job, but Mr. Odar has always handled matters professionally and with only the best interests of our students and staff in mind.

Because of the pending principal transition, Father Ben Syberg has made the decision to put our strategic planning on-hold until a new principal is in place. Father Ben has also assembled a search committee of staff, parents, and parish members to hire the best person to fill Mr. Odar's big shoes.

Second, the decades of Sunday night bingo at St. Lawrence are history. SAT and the school are grateful to all those who came to play or volunteer at bingo over the years. Bingo was a critical fundraiser for the school, helping keep the cost of tuition down. Unfortunately, the money it generated wasn't what it once was. SAT, with the consent of Father Ben and Mr. Odar, last year began discussions of ending bingo, but we knew a new mechanism for fundraising would be needed.

A special committee consisting of Ryan Padgett, Lindsay Lohmiller, E.G. McLaughlin, and Amanda Corsmeier formulated the idea for a fundraising gala. While many of the particular details are still under consideration, we know the inaugural gala will be October 18, 2019 (save the date!) at the Dearborn Country Club in Aurora. With the proper amount of planning and support, we believe this gala could become an even better fundraiser for our school. Expect to see communications on how you can help make the gala a success.

*"Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety."
-Proverbs 11:14*

SAT Pillar Leaders

President: Jason Schmid

Secretary: Steve Stoecklin

Curriculum & Learning: Cathy Siemers

Facilities: Gary Hammerle

Finance: Julie Hafner

Marketing: Mike Perleberg

PTO: Katie Lainhart

Spirituality: Brandy Branham & Kathy Strasser

Student & Staff Retention: KC Witte

Technology: Troy Webster

Pastor: Father Benjamin Syberg

Principal: Michael Odar

WE ARE NOW ENROLLING FOR THE 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR

St. Lawrence School has opened enrollment for next school year. If you are a current school family, you should have already received re-enrollment information. If not, please contact the school office. If you have any friends or family interested in St. Lawrence, please let them know that now is the time to enroll.

THE PLAY IS COMING!

The St. Lawrence School Panther Players present their spring play April 26, 27, and 28. This year's feature is Shrek The Musical Junior. All three productions will be at the Lawrenceburg High School Auditorium. Get your tickets early for just \$10 per adult, or \$5 for children 12 and under. You can also support the play by becoming a sponsor starting at just \$25. Contact the Panther Players Committee at (812) 537-3690 for sponsorship information.

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.*

The School Advisory Team is seeking applicants to fill upcoming SAT vacancies at the end of the school year. Would you like to lend your time or talent to help advance the mission of our school? Share your interest with an SAT member or email schooladvisoryteam@sls-apps.org. Please complete and turn in the application form available at <http://stlschool.com/school-advisory-team>.

TAKE THE ST. LAWRENCE SCHOOL PARENT SURVEYS

Although the school strategic plan has been put on hold until a new principal is in place, we are still collecting data that will be useful in the process. We want to know what our school families think of the St. Lawrence School experience. Please take a moment to complete the Parent Surveys. There are three, each taking just a few minutes to complete:

1. Parent Survey: www.advanc-ed.org/survey/public/9068709
2. Catholic Identity Program Effectiveness: www.advanc-ed.org/survey/public/9552772
3. Catholic Identity Defining Characteristics: www.advanc-ed.org/survey/public/3979753

NEXT SAT MEETING

Tuesday, May 7 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 MEETING

The SAT held its first meeting of 2019 on January 8.

In his administrator update, Principal Mike Odar shared an update on submitted surveys for the strategic plan. Preschool enrollment has filled up quickly. A new social studies teacher, Derek Leiker, will finish the remaining school year. The search continues for a permanent, full-time science teacher. Mr. Odar shared the positive development that St. Mary's School in Aurora is remaining open beyond this school year. E-learning days will be utilized by Lawrenceburg in the future, so St. Lawrence is now reviewing how to best use them and determine whether we have the needed technology.

The end of bingo was discussed, as well as plans for a replacement fundraiser. Ryan Padgett, EG McLaughlin and Lindsay Lohmiller are leading a committee on creating a new fundraiser, and they shared that a gala-type event to be held in the fall would be a good idea. The target fundraising amount is \$30,000. No name, theme, or other particular details for the event have been established yet, but are in development.

CONTACT US

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The SAT held some discussion on improving the school and parish connection. Sunday donuts after mass in the school was mentioned as a possible effort. Another idea is to begin a pen pal program between students and "shut in" members of the parish.

Mr. Odar shared that he met with junior high teachers to review the grading situation. He will meet with retired teacher and SAT member Cathy Seimers to discuss the results of her findings.

Troy Webster was voted to become the new technology pillar chair on SAT. One of his first duties will be considering a new computer server in the school.

Mike Perleberg discussed a marketing plan for the upcoming school open house in hopes of driving attendance.

FEBRUARY MEETING

SAT met on February 5, the first meeting since news of Mr. Odar's planned departure as school principal. Mr. Odar and Father Ben Syberg explained the announcement and the initial steps toward hiring a new principal.

The school open house in January brought in 11 new families to tour and learn more about our school.

E-learning days were officially approved. Mr. Odar explained that staff would be trained, the need for a survey of families' technology in the home, and a test run.

Next year's preschool class is full with six more pre-K students on the waiting list. Mr. Odar said we may add a second pre-school class due to the success if interest grows.

An official final date was set for the bingo on February 24. The SAT discussed the best way to share this news with school families.

Gary Hammerle gave an update on new video cameras for security purposes around the school, but the school is waiting on a grant to become available.

The school strategic plan is on hold until next year, when a new principal is in place.

There was some discussion on junior high grading, an issue which had been brought up at a meeting last year by a parent. The SAT decided to end discussion of the issue for now.

PTO member Katie Lainhart said the PTO is putting on the school "Fun Run" on its own this year in hopes of raising more money for the school. Another bowling night is being planned for February 22.

Brandy Branham is organizing the Shadow Stations of the Cross for Lent this year. It received great reviews last year.

Troy Webster and Mike Perleberg worked together on some updates to the school website, while giving Troy an introduction to management of the website. Mike is also preparing the next SAT newsletter.

MARCH MEETING

The March SAT meeting was convened on March 5 and Father Ben Syberg gave approval for the school to officially welcome a second preschool class in the 2019-2020 school year. To make room, first grade or the music room will have to move upstairs.

Two important members of our staff announced their retirements: Mrs. Noel in 4th grade and Mrs. Becker the resource teacher. Principal Mike Odar said some reshuffling of teachers will be reviewed to replace Mrs. Noel. Mrs. Becker's position will not be filled, but Mrs. Schmuelling will take on a role as the "needs" teacher.

After years of fundraising for the school, the final night of St. Lawrence Bingo was held in February. Ninety-nine people came to the final night of bingo, quadrupling income for one night. Final bingo numbers will be given at the April SAT meeting. The school plans to retain its gaming license for special events.

Fr. Ben said the principal hiring committee held its first meeting. There is no deadline for accepting candidates - the important thing is to find the right person for the job, he said. Some discussion was held on what action to take if an ideal candidate does not come along. "God will give us what we need to move on!" Father Ben said.

Work continues by Ryan Padgett and others for the school gala to replace bingo fundraising. He is updating SAT regularly through email.

A grant is still being eyed for the school's planned video camera update project, an important part of improving school safety being spearheaded by SAT facilities chair Gary Hammerle. New SAT member Troy Webster has been attempting to get certain specifications on the technology needs.

The 2019-2020 school year will be St. Lawrence School's 150th year!

SAT spirituality chair Brandy Branham is working on a production of the Shadow Stations of the Cross to be held on Good Friday. School students will participate in this wonderful display of Jesus' passion.

Melissa Lahey said PTO is continuing to plan the Fun Run Walk-A-Thon on March 15. She reminded that the fish fry is held at the school most Fridays during Lent.

SAT MEMBER SPOTLIGHT – CATHY SIEMERS

Hello! My name is Cathy Siemers. I am pleased to continue my involvement with St. Lawrence School as the curriculum chair on SAT. I was previously the first grade teacher at St. Lawrence, retiring after 31 years of teaching at this wonderful school. I have a bachelor's degree in elementary education and a master's degree in reading. As a member of SAT, I am interested in using my professional qualifications and experience to ensure that St. Lawrence effectively prepares its graduates for successful futures, especially in the areas of faith, academics and citizenship.

My husband, Don, and I have been St. Lawrence parishioners since we moved to Lawrenceburg from Cincinnati 40 years ago. Don, who is also retired, was president of Dearborn Savings Bank, then owner of Fish Window Cleaning. Our four children graduated from St. Lawrence School. Jennifer, an accountant, now lives in Denver with her son Evan (11). Allison, a nursing student, lives in Encino, CA with her husband, Chris, and sons Walter (7) and Max (5). Mark, a software developer, lives in San Diego and Ben has just returned home to attend nursing school. Don and I spend a lot of our time out west with our children and grandchildren!

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.

