



School Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting Details

Date: Monday, August 11, 2025

Scheduled Time: 7:00PM – 8:30PM

Location: Virtual

Facilitator: Courtney Chianello (Board Chair)

Note/Timekeeper: Ana Maria Grady (Secretary)

Mission Statement:

Saint Mary School is a community where children learn to see God in all things, develop their faith in the Gospel virtues of Jesus Christ and demonstrate the highest levels of academic achievement and service through Jesus.

Meeting Norms:

- Take an inquiry stance.
- Ground statements in evidence.
- Assume positive intentions.
- Start and end on time.
- Stick to protocol.
- Be here now

Meeting Outline:

1. Welcome Remarks & Prayer
2. Principal's Report
3. Pastor's Report
4. Chairperson's Report
5. Strategic Planning and Committees
6. Closing Remarks & Prayer

To prepare for this meeting, please review the agenda and other documents provided in advance (when applicable).

Members Present: Courtney Chianello, Father Dan Whiteside, Vince Vasquez. Principal John Fuja, Paola Nacci, Jennifer Ree, Marianne Sutcliffe, Neha Soni, Melanie Dolak, Lisa Schwabe, Peter Wisniewski, Ana Maria Grady,

Members Absent: Marek Wisniowski, Guy Karm

Other attendees: None

TIME	MINUTES	ACTIVITY
7:00-7:10	10	<p>Welcome Remarks & Prayer Meeting starts promptly at 7:02pm</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Opening Prayer - Courtney leads the group in our opening prayer. 2. Member Introductions – Courtney informs Board members that 2 new members have joined the group for the school year 2025-2026, Peter Wisniewski and Neha Soni. Peter introduces himself and mentions he has 4 daughters that have all attended SMS, 3 of which have graduated and his youngest, Brooklyn is currently in 8th grade. Neha introduces herself and mentions that she has 3 children, 2 of which are currently in SMS, 1 in Kindergarten and 1 in 3rd grade.
7:10-7:30	20	<p>Principal's Report (Principal Fuja)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enrollment Update- Principal Fuja informs the group that enrollment to date is at 228 and we expect that number to fluctuate but it is slightly better to date than it was last year. We have 49 new students, 15 of which are from St. Alphonsus in Prospect Heights and 2 from St. Thomas of Villanova in Palatine. 2. Staffing Update – Principal Fuja informs the group that there have been 3 new hires for the 2025-2026 school year. Daniel Sarlitto has joined the SMS Faculty team as the middle school Math teacher. During his career he has held several Administrative positions including Dean of Students, Principal and Vice Principal and has extensive teaching experience in Math and Science, most recently in several cities in Alaska and in Seattle. Jennifer Muccianti will be joining SMS this year as the Physical Education Teacher. Jennifer has over 24 years of experience in Physical Education, most recently in District 15 in Palatine. Megan Cortese has joined SMS as the Resource Teacher. She will have a section in 6th grade language arts and will provide student intervention when needed. She was most recently a teacher at St. Francis de Sales in Lake Zurich. The interview process is ongoing for a STEM teacher for 4th-8th grade. Principal Fuja goes on to say there are 3 pending interviews with candidates for that position this week. 3. Academic Schedule – Principal Fuja informs the group that there will be some changes to the school schedule this year, mainly the all school Mass which was previously on Wednesdays will be transitioning to Tuesdays to allow Ms. Kinyon, the music teacher to provide support to the choir and to play the piano during Mass. Additionally, the first 10 minutes of the school day will begin with announcements and will be available for the kids to get organized for the day ahead and the last 28 minutes will end with support for lessons learned

		<p>throughout the day and during this time kids will be able to get a head start on their homework.</p> <p>4. Prior year results – Principal Fuja reviews the iReady results for last year and states that while our goals remain strong, we are below the Archdiocese goals, for math and reading. Principal Fuja and Faculty are exploring ways and options to increase this year’s scores. There is hope that the new reading curriculum will improve school scores. Professional Development sessions will have a main focus on achieving academic success and faculty will be reviewing iReady data to create teaching opportunities for improvement.</p> <p>5. Updates to facilities: Several activities occurred over the summer break to prepare for the return of school. Some of the improvements that were made include painting the Religious Education Office, Main Office, Activity Center and the main Pre-K areas. Additionally, there was an Eagle Scout Project that involves Stations of the Cross that was implemented outside of Saint Mary Church. The Musical Program Storage Area was also cleaned and organized.</p> <p>6. Discussion on Fall Open House (potential shift to school shadow/parent info session on a weekday) The Fall Open house has always had the lowest attendance of the 3 main activities like this that are done throughout the year. There is a proposal to convert the Fall Open House into a “Shadow Day” opportunity for prospective parents and kids. The idea is to have the prospective kids “shadow” in the class grade they will be joining for a few hours and have the opportunity of hands on experience in the school with fellow classmates and teachers. Prospective parents would then have an opportunity to have an info session about the school at the end of the day. This would be something to explore for kids in 1st-8th grade.</p> <p>7. Playground Dedication (8/19 @11:40am) There will be a playground dedication on 8/19 with the attendance of the 2 families that had in the past donated the funds to build the previous playground. Immediately after this ceremony, the FSO has arranged to have a Ice Cream Social for everyone.</p>
7:30-7:40	10	<p>Pastor’s Report:</p> <p>1. Father Dan has a few updates to share with the group related to capital campaigning starting in earnest now, meaning that in October/November there will be more visibility for making public requests for donations. This phase will end the first week in December. The financial goal is to raise \$1.7 million of which the Archdiocese will allow us to keep half that amount. The majority of the money collected will go towards repairs needed in the school roof and the creation of an endowment fund with approximately \$100,000. Additionally, some funds would be utilized to add an accessible ramp in the front of the chapel. The addition of this ramp also entails a complete rebuild of the front steps of the chapel. Another portion of the funds will be going towards the addition of an Evangelization Staff person who would be working to create</p>

		adult faith development programs. Father Dan informs the group that interviews for this position have already started. He also goes on to report that we will have a new Deacon- Matt Hahn, who was ordained in 2004. Deacon Hahn is coming from St. James Parish in Arlington Heights and had previously been a Deacon at Saint Mary in 2008.
7:40-7:50	10	Chairperson's Report (Courtney) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Coffee Tent (8/19 at 7:20am) – Courtney requests the assistance of Board members to help in the traditional coffee tent that is placed outside school to welcome back students and parents on the 1st day of school. Meet the Teacher Night (Thurs. 8/28) – Courtney requests the assistance of Non-school parents (if possible) on the Board to help greet and inform parents who might be interested in joining the Board and its subcommittees throughout the year. Schedule Reminder- Courtney shares a reminder that Board meetings for this school year will be modeled on a Virtual/In-person Hybrid schedule. This is being done to offer some more flexibility and hopefully to have a more consistent attendance from Board members.
7:50-8:25	35	Strategic Planning and Committees <ol style="list-style-type: none"> FSO Update – Paola Nacci, President of the SMS FSO shares that the activity calendar for the school year is ready. She shares that some events will be new for this year, and some other events have been removed. The 1st activity of the year will be an Ice Cream Social on the 1st Day of School that will occur immediately after the Playground Dedication Ceremony. Everyone is invited to attend this event. The 2nd event will be the Back to School Picnic that will be held on September 7th, Donuts and Mass will happen on September 23rd. Strategic Plan – Vince Vasquez, reminds everyone to touch base and select one or more strategic objectives to work on this year. We will discuss choices and how these will be moving forward at our next meeting. Digital Sign- Jen Ree, shares an update on the proposals received for the V shaped digital sign that is planned for the corner of Lake Cook Road and Buffalo Grove Road and would take the place of the existing non-digital sign. The team working on this has received 3 quotes per Archdiocese rules. All 3 quotes are more costly than anticipated, however the proposal received from Doyle Signs is more accommodating. This project is anticipated to go on for 2 years. Finance - Courtney informs the group that Marjorie Granville will be joining the Board as the new finance committee chair.

8:25 –8:30	5	Closing Remarks & Prayer 1. Upcoming board discussion on student/family retention Courtney informs the group that this topic will be the main topic for our October Board meeting. 2. Closing Prayer -Courtney leads the group in a closing prayer and thanks everyone for their attendance. Meetings ends at 8:23pm
		Executive Session: No executive session held for this meeting