

Shepherd of the Hills Catholic School  
School Commission Minutes  
Tuesday, September 1, 2015 – 6:00 p.m.  
“Walking the path of Christ, with Love and Service, through a Catholic Education”

**Members Present:** Carl Christensen (Chairperson), Shannon Casper (Secretary), Sarah Desiderio, Melanie Knowles, Betsey Gitter, Joe Loehr (Pastoral Council Rep), Jeanne Bitkers (Principal), Fr. John

**Others:** Rose Baker, Nicole Baus, Erin Tucker, Brenda Christensen, Mr. Moody,

**S.P.I.R.I.T. Committee:** Amy Timblin, Heather Koffman, Jill Stoffel

**Teachers:** Karen Schreiner (3K/4K), Nici Colwin (3rd), Amanda Dwyer (4th), Kelly Harvey (8th)

Minutes from August meeting were approved.

**School Good News:**

Good first day for students & teachers, a \$10,000 grant was received for staff computers, 250 new computers were received for student use by Mr. Holden that were from a bank that was no longer using them, coffee & donuts were a hit this morning, Alumni good news-our students were prepared for Spanish at the high school level, Mike Mueller is pursuing a country music career in Nashville & has two singles (a former Jesus from LWOC), it is great that we have a column in the bulletin for our school and a health report in the newsletter!

**Parishioner Comments/Concerns:**

A suggestion to move the minutes from the website to Option C was made. Discussion to make new families feel more welcome took place (ie-signs at homes, mentoring, etc). Positivity should be more focused on by everyone with emphasis on Catholicism vs. negativity. School lunch program pricing structure & serving sizes for upper vs lower grades should be reviewed in the future with nutritional and state guidelines taken into consideration. A question was brought up about when it was appropriate to discuss items listed on the agenda. A notation was made that the hope is that the upper grades are still able to utilize the playground equipment.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Playground Equipment:** Pictures are available and some adjustments will still be made, a tree will be moved, the location has been determined due to drainage, safety and boundaries, and available space for fencing if needed in the future, a grant has been received to pay for this equipment. The new playground equipment will be for pre-school K3-K5 and childcare use. Insurance has indicated our current equipment can be used by 1st grade and up due to its size.

**Mission Statement:** Previously the accreditation team requested a vision statement in addition to the mission statement. The vision statement should include what we want to achieve and the mission statement should be how we will achieve that goal. Fr. John suggests we incorporate parents & family into these statements. \*November Agenda Item\*

**Constitution & By-Laws:** Corrections & review of rough draft at November meeting. Suggestions were made in regards to how members are elected and to add the salary scale information from the archdiocese. \*November Agenda Item\*

**Handbook Expectations:** Expectations of parents are to follow the handbook in regards to policies, including recess. The archdiocese will have changes coming in the coming weeks and those will be forwarded to parents when available. Additional information will be discussed at the middle school parent meeting in regard to recess and “mental health breaks”. Parental involvement policy should not have been included in the handbook.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

**S.P.I.R.I.T. Committee:** Discussion of the need for positive publicity for the school was addressed. A parent meeting will take place on 9/21 to discuss opportunities for involvement as additional help is needed to continue activities that have taken place in the past. Communication, recruitment, involvement and loyalty to our school were all mentioned.

**Teacher/Student Participation at Commission Meetings:** Discussion took place with goal to increase communication and parent participation at meetings. A suggestion was made to include a student council report. This would also allow teachers to respond to concerns brought up at school commission meetings. Ms. Bitkers will forward the minutes to teachers to address concerns at staff meetings and bring responses back to commission meetings.

**Commission Representative at Staff Meetings:** Initially presented in an attempt to further communication, it was decided to have teachers come to commission meetings due to confidentiality and private matters addressed at staff meetings.

**Pastoral Council Representative:** Meeting times & dates need to be consistent in an effort to have Fr. John attend meetings regularly. LWOC meeting with parents was discussed, school commission is to take the first step in regards to this and if a major decision is to take place, then the commission needs to go back to pastoral council. Ms. Bitkers' concern had a concern that LWOC involved religion curriculum; however, a parent listening session or other form of communication may be scheduled in the future to address this issue.

**Principal's Report:** Mrs. Witt has returned as Phy Ed teacher, Gerry Loos is current bus driver running a combined route, the spanish teacher from last year will not be here this year since she has a full time job but we are in the process of a possible hire and that teacher will be meeting the students 9/2. Paperwork is in process. We are still looking for another bus driver. Current enrollment is at 104. On 10/22 the Archdiocese school marketing liaison will be at SOTH, Jenny Hively and several teachers have access to facebook and follow archdiocese guidelines. The focus group was in preparation for the middle school parent meeting on 9/8 at 6pm. The discussion included student preparation for high school (perception vs. reality), individual help &

assistance, encouraged students to ask questions, teacher scheduling during study halls, student transition and the 5th/6th combination class, lunch program and LWOC.

**Ending Parishioner Comments/Concerns:** It was reiterated to add elections to the by-laws, discussion took place that concerns are being heard & not necessarily agreed with; however, we need to admit when there is a problem & fix them, “address-admit-solve” & have a dedication to action. We have a lot of advantages as a small school-sell how small we are!!!

**Next Meeting:** Commission Training 10/6/15 at 6pm

Respectfully submitted,  
Shannon Casper