

## SJNCS Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 15, 2023

St. John Neumann Library

4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

I. Call to Order by Chair– 4:00 p.m.

Attendance: Kelly Mechelke, Principal; Fr. Joe Reed, Pastor; Mary Marlowe, Director of Admissions; Patrick Wade, Director of Development; Jenny Hay, Board Member; Will Silverberg, Board Member; Alex LaFasto, Vice-Chair Board Member; Jessica Louthan, Board Member, Steve Eckstein, Faculty Representative; Jennifer Dzermejko, PTMO President; Mallory Nygard, Director of Library and Information Services; Stephanie Greiner, Director of Communications (Recording Secretary)

Absent: Hiram Morales, Chair; Sabrina Talley, Academic Dean; Christine Roeck, Director of Human Resources and Account Management; Taylor Locke; Board Member

II. Opening Prayer by Dr. Mechelke

III. Discuss / Approve previous Meeting Minutes

- Motion to approve minutes
- **Vote:** Motion approved by unanimous aye

IV. Old Business

- Review challenged books and final decision:
  - Milo Imagines the World, The Summer I Turned Pretty, and Ready Player One have been removed from the SJNCS Library.
- Review of Library Manual Changes
- Discussion of how Ms. Nygard chooses books for the library.
  - Ms. Nygard uses a variety of sources so select books for the library (approx. 1100 were added over the last year).
  - A member suggested adding Common Sense Media and Pluggedin.com for book reviews.
  - Peer librarians are also consulted for book suggestions.
- A member suggested that the book review process worked seamlessly and well and that we do not need an Ad Hoc committee to review books. Creating a committee could be answering needs that we don't have.
- A member had questions regarding the Rubric used for choosing books. The rubric will be removed from the manual as it has too much information (much of which is subjective) and is unnecessary for parents to see.
- Ms. Nygard stated that she welcomes recommendations from parents on books to add to the library.
- A member suggested that an adult reading group could be formed to review higher-level books, taking some of the burden off the librarian. It was mentioned that high-school students could get service hours for participating in the group.
- Open Meetings

- Our next meeting will have an open portion
- We will start with 4 slots, limited to 5 mins per slot to discuss one issue
- Presenters must be prepared
- A member suggested we make sure to ask presenters what they propose to correct the issue.
- We will send an email announcing that at our next meeting we are ready to welcome parents to the open portion.
- An institutional email should be created ([advisoryboard@sjncs-knox.org](mailto:advisoryboard@sjncs-knox.org)) to be used for further communication from the board. More than one board member can have access.
- A member asked if parents can email requesting that a topic can be discussed even if they are absent
- A member asked if we would make the half-hour of parent presentations open as public school Board meetings are.
- Dr. Mechelke explained that we are different than a public school board because Fr. Joe, not the Advisory Board, has the final say on decisions. Our Advisory Board can only make recommendations.
- Our goals are not to start debates
- A member suggested it is prudent to start with a closed session and then revisit.
- A member recommended that if we do open the presenter portion of the meeting, it only be to stakeholders.
- A member said opening up the meeting shows transparency.
- Fr. Joe mentioned that logistically, we do not have a lot of space, so if the presenter portion of the meeting is open we should cap admission.
  - The decision was made to create a Sign-Up Genius with 4 parent speakers and up to 10 spectators.
  - The spectators are to be adults only and no recording will be permitted.
- March Agenda
  - We have a Finance Council, so no finances need to be discussed.
  - All Board members approve of the format for the March Meeting.
- Art Concerns
  - A parent has expressed concerns because an artist (Keith Herring) was mentioned in 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Art Class.
  - In the class, the teacher read a portion of a children's book about him and his pop art. They also watched a Sesame Street clip about that type of art, and mimicked his pop art.
  - The parent expressed concerns because this artist is homosexual, was married to a man, and died of AIDS.
  - Some of his art also includes sexually graphic art (no inappropriate art was shown or discussed in class).
  - A member suggested that this type of art can be taught without mentioning the artists name, so students can't go home and research the artist and accidentally stumble across the sexually graphic art.
  - A member stated that the motive of the teacher is to introduce a type of simple art that children can easily reproduce.
  - A member suggested that we defer this topic until next time, and have the art teacher come in and explain the lesson.
  - The art teacher has already shared that she can use a different artist to represent pop art moving forward.

- A member asked if we needed to create a framework for reviewing art like we have for the library. The parent handbook states to go to the teacher first and not to the administration or the Advisory Board.
- A member stated that as a board we are trying to encourage teachers to be more careful about the material they select.
- A member stated that they are uncomfortable with setting a precedent that teachers can be called to the Board to defend a mistake.
- A member suggested asking teachers to Google Image search material first before presenting to class.
- Steve Eckstein expressed concerns that it would be extremely stressful for a teacher to be asked to defend their lessons to the Advisory Board.
- Dr. Mechelke stated that to prevent the stress and anxiety that Ms. Nygard has experienced, she will reach out to Ms. Hinds first, ask her to explain and defend the situation, offer a resolution, and then the Board can determine if she needs to come to a meeting.
- A member stated that we want to make sure that when a parent is upset that they follow the correct protocol laid out in the handbook and don't immediately go to the Board.
- Dr. Mechelke will reach out to the parent and ask them to go first to the teacher, and then we will reevaluate.

VI. Closing Prayer by Fr. Joe - Meeting adjourned at 5:30 pm