

Advisory Board Minutes
Thursday, January 16, 2025
St. John Neumann Library
4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

- I. Present: Father Bo Beaty, Kelly Mechelke, Mary Marlowe, Taylor Locke, Steve Eckstein, Mallory Nygard, Jenny Hay, Bailey Broussard, Jessica Louthan, Hiram Morales, Will Silverberg, Alex Lafasto, Patrick Wade, Andrea Gentile
- II. Call to Order 4:00 p.m.
- III. Opening Prayer by Hiram Morales
- IV. Presenter's/Spectator's
 - A. None
- V. Old Business
 - A. Approval of November 2024 Meeting Minutes-Approved
 - B. Photo/Bio from SAB Members for website Taylor Locke sent his bio and picture during meeting. Alex Lafasto sent his bio during meeting. Those will be posted to the website.
 - C. Library Discussion-Mallory Nygard lead the following discussion
 1. Parental access to the catalog.
 2. What kind of yearly audits I do for the collection.

1: Parental access to the catalog.

The catalog, or the list of every book in the library and where it is on the shelf is available on the school website.

Academics > Library Media Center > Follett Destiny link

Follett is the company that hosts the catalog website. It is commonly used by school, public, and university libraries. Destiny is the version of catalog service we receive.

The link has been up on the school's website since before I started at SJN (more than 6 years ago). It's best practice to have it available to the community.

Students in 3rd and 4th grade spend approximately 1 month - 6 weeks learning how to navigate the catalog during the fall semester. It can be searched by Keyword, Title, Author, Subject, and Series.

Every single book in the library is searchable and viewable in the catalog. Each page for each book has a lot of information that would not be present in an excel spreadsheet of titles (subjects linked to other books, publisher, number of pages, whether it was reviewed, recommended age range, etc). (Ferris by Kate DiCamillo)

The catalog does require the user to have something to look for (title, author, topic, series). It is a tool to be used for a purpose. Since I understand the parent's role to be connected to what their student is reading, I think it is fitting that they have access to the whole collection in such a way as to target their use of it.

I have heard from a couple parents that they aren't sure how to navigate the website. I am working on creating a Google Slides presentation that can be put on the school's library page to walk parents through the navigation of the catalog: what to search, how to read a book's information page, etc.

My goal is to have it completed and uploaded to the website by Spring Break. I will also email out to parents in my monthly newsletter when it is ready.

2: Yearly review of the library.

As a major library resource, Follett Destiny has numerous reports built into their program. I can see statistics for:

- how many books were checked out at any given time and cumulatively over the year.
- which books that were checked out the most
- which books were not checked out at all
- when books were published
- the last time books were checked out
- how many times they have been checked out since being added to the library.

I can see that data for every book in the library and it can be broken down into specific categories like just the 700s of Nonfiction, or just the Picture Books.

I can see which books were placed on hold and what patrons have been searching for.

I can run reports that show me how much of the collection is dedicated to each age range in the school, K-2, 3-6, 5-8, YA (1% includes lots of the classics).

Some up to date information from these reports:

- Total number of books in the library: 9,986
- Average age: 2010 (up from 1980s!!!)
- Half fiction and half nonfiction

These reports help me see where there are holes in the collection. It's how I knew the sports nonfiction needed to be updated this year. It tells me what parts are over saturated (WW2 nonfiction) and what is being checked out. It's how I see that the early chapter book section is finally robust enough for me to shift my focus this year to PB Nonfiction.

As I purchase books for the library throughout the school year, I need to know information as the collection changes. These reports are things that I use throughout the year, not just at the end of the year. This is an ongoing process, not something that happens only once per year.

I share some of this information in my newsletters and in my EoY report. Not all of this information is helpful or applicable to anyone besides me.

- I can share my End of the Year report more widely, if not to all parents, then to the SAB if they'd like it.

For the last 2 years I've served on the Executive Board of the TN Association of School Librarians. One of my colleagues on the board is the Supervisor of Media and Materials at Robertson County Schools in Nashville, which means she oversees librarians at 21 public schools. I reached out to her for information about what "audits" look like at public schools.

- She said they do a yearly inventory of their collection and regular analyses (using Follett like we do to look at age of the book, interest level for the books, the age it was written for, etc).
- She also said that no public school librarian has read every single book in their library.
 - "We rely on reviews and information from reliable sources to determine if a book should be added to the collection."
- Students and teachers can recommend books.

It sounds to me like I am **already regularly reviewing the collection for the information people have been asking about**, but I have not disseminated that information widely.

It is by no means secret, but I have trusted that when parents have questions about a book in particular or the collection in general, they would reach out to me and respectfully ask questions. Maybe I was wrong to assume that parents felt comfortable reaching out to me.

*It was noted by the Chair of the School Advisory Board that we have a library policy that we will follow. Which means questions and concerns should first go to the Librarian before being presented to the board.

Kelly Mechelke mentioned that all policies and handbooks are reviewed each summer, including the Library Policy. Ms. Nygard sends a monthly newsletter to families and she will start adding the top five most often checked out books for the month.

VI. New Business

A. Jenny Hay presented House & Senate Bill 1

[School Voucher Legislation.docx](#) Jenny Hay wanted to note a few items to contemplate and be aware of before deciding to participate in this legislation if/when it passes.

The following are notes from Jenny Hay.

Voucher legislation is very likely to pass, because it is the governor's highest priority. He has called a special session to pass it. Legislation may be amended from its current state before passing.

49-6-3507 (a) (2) on p. 8

Students enrolled in the voucher program must take the TCAP every year.

JLH Comments: Will this add to the testing burden on students? Will it burden curriculum? How will this be managed so it doesn't reveal who is in the program?

49-6-3507 (c) on p. 8

Testing results have to be reported to the State (office of research and education accountability in the office of the comptroller of the treasury.) Legislation allows test results to be de-identified. JLH comments: SJN should resolve to de-identify testing results (strip students' names).

49-6-3508 (b) on p. 8

The program does not expand the regulatory authority of this state...beyond the rules narrowly tailored to enforce the requirements of the program. JLH comments: "Rules" are not legislation. They are promulgated by the Tennessee Department of Education, and so they are easily changed. May unacceptably burden Catholic schools.

49-6-3508 (c) on pgs. 8-9

A private school... is not required to alter its creed, practices, admission policies, hiring policies, or curriculum in order to accept recipients. JLH Comments: Sounds good, but legislation can change. Years from now, a new legislature may amend the law to further burden schools that take students on vouchers. They may do this in a way that is unacceptable for a Catholic school. SJN (and other DoK schools) should resolve now not to accept any more of these funds than they can afford to lose in a year.

Section 3 (i) on p. 10

Public schools do not lose any money when students leave the public school to attend a private school with a voucher. JLH comments: This legislation asks Tennessee taxpayers to pay twice for students in the voucher program: once for the student to be in public school and a second time for the voucher to attend private school.

Section 4 (a) on p. 10

If the legislation passes, public school teachers get a one-time bonus of \$2000. JLH comments: This is just buying support to get the legislation passed.

Thank you Jenny Hay for compiling the minutes for this portion of your presentation.

Your help and attention to detail is much appreciated.

B. Mustang Dad's

SJN wants a dad's club. SJN is working with our dads that have created Mustang Dad's Club.

Dr. Mechelke and Patrick Wade were asked to discuss the Mustang Dads' Club (an independent nonprofit entity made up of SJNCS school dads).

Mr. Scharer contacted Kelly Mechelke about Mustang Dads' club in the summer of 2024. Mr. Scharer was excited about the ways the group could help the school both volunteering and financially. Kelly Mechelke asked if this would affect the Watch Dogs club that Mr. Toliver had brought to SJN School Advisory Board's attention. He indicated that Mr. Toliver was a part of this club and so the Watch Dogs presentation was now a part of this group, and it was not necessary to continue to look for how to implement something like that for SJN since it would be incorporated into this Mustang Dad's club. He also informed Kelly Mechelke the Mustang Dad's Club formed a 501(c)3, at which point she indicated she would have to visit with our Development Director, Patrick Wade to discuss with him.

There have been iterations of dads' clubs at SJNCS for many years and they have always operated as a school organization; the school remains interested in and committed to having a strong dads' club school organization. Dads' clubs are valuable to the school in that they provide opportunities for dads to meet other dads and they provide volunteers for a variety of school initiatives.

The Mustang Dads' Club formed during the spring semester last year (spring semester of 2024) and their board members had an informal conversation with Fr. Joe about being a fundraising organization that would raise money for the school. Fr. Joe did not initially object to this idea, but he said MDC representatives would first need to talk with school development staff about it. After in-depth conversations among Fr. Joe, Kelly Mechelke, Patrick Wade, and diocesan leadership, it was determined that such an arrangement was not a suitable arrangement for the school, which Kelly Mechelke and Patrick Wade shared with the MDC board members when they met. It was also communicated to the board members in a letter from Fr. Joe.

The MDC is interested in helping the school and making an impact at SJNCS, but it is in the process of deciding which option is best for its organization (becoming a school club or remaining an independent 501(c)3, unaffiliated with the school that would raise money for a variety of organizations). Ongoing communications continue between school leadership, diocesan counsel, and MDC board members as they consider their options. The chosen model that works best for the school - as has always been the case with previous iterations of SJNCS dads' clubs - is for the club to be a school organization and not an independent 501(c)3; this is the model advised by diocesan counsel as well. While the MDC is determining its preferred course, diocesan counsel has advised the school it is best not to be a recipient of donations from the 501(c)3.

School leadership is hopeful that the MDC will join the school as an official SJNCS organization that will provide social opportunities for school dads to meet other dads, encourage dads to volunteer at events, and help the school in other ways. Last summer (summer of 2024), the school offered the MDC multiple benefits to joining the school, including the option of being its own school organization (as opposed to being part of the PTMO), having access to funding, and the option to continue having its annual golf tournament that it launched in the fall of 2024 (the event would be an SJNCS event; SJNCS staff would oversee the event and help the MDC

coordinate and promote it). If the MDC decides to remain an independent, unaffiliated 501(c)3, the school has asked that it discontinue using the Mustang name and other marketing assets associated with SJN parish and school. The use of the Mustang name and other SJN-related marketing assets can cause confusion when the school has a dads' club school organization again. Additionally, the use of the Mustang name and other SJN-related marketing assets can cause confusion among SJN donors, as part of the MDC 501(c)3's mission is raising funds for worthy causes. Because of the organization's use of the Mustang name and a logo similar to the school's logo, there has already been some confusion among SJN community members about there being an independent 501(c)3 with this name that is unaffiliated with the school.

A school advisory board member asked if the school could be a recipient of donations if the MDC agrees to discontinue the use of the Mustang name and/or other SJN marketing assets. Dr. Mechelke confirmed that the school would work with the MDC in that scenario (as it does with other independent nonprofits), including – on a case-by-case basis - offering campus space for its activities and receiving donations basis if the MDC is interested in making contributions.

C. Dr. Mechelke's Updates

1. Mission and Catholic Identity

- a. Inservice started with Mass and a booklet that Staff will be completing together monthly until May called Education of the Heart
- b. Getting ready for CSW All School Mass twice that week, Retreat, All Family night BINGO Wednesday, Encouraging staff and students to wear Catholic attire to Mass on the weekend, readers, gift bears, and speakers at Mass as well.
- c. SJN always wants all classrooms to have a Mary Statue or honor to Mary area, Advent Wreath, Christmas Nativity Scene, Heart of Jesus, and Crucifix. We checked all classrooms and other areas for these. Sometimes when turnover happens they get misplaced, broken, or the person was using their own and not something owned by SJN. We had a donor offer to purchase those that needed replacing or didn't have these items.

2. Governance and Leadership

- a. Adjusting 5th grade to elementary school. Having the approach of primary (prek-2), Intermediate (3-5), & middle school (6-8) focus. Sent email to all families sharing this change for the 2025-26 school year.
- b. Sent home survey to will-be 5-8th grade to see new band options for the 2025-26 school year.

3. Academic and Behavior Excellence

- a. Annual spelling bee during CSW.
- b. Working on recognizing all honor students
- c. Saint awards given out at Mass Friday, Jan 17
- d. Recognized students with 0 demerits in first semester with an out of uniform coupon on Jan. 9
- e. Testing for STAR and IOWA scheduled

4. Operational Vitality

- a) Hopefully soon renovation will start to move the atrium to the elementary wing for the 2025-26 school year.

b) Getting ready for our Auction. What it is for will be announced soon.

VII. Closing Prayer by Hiram Morales