

**Our Lady of the Wayside School Advisory Board**  
**Wednesday, August 25, 2021 – Multi-Purpose Room, OLW**

**OLW SAB Open Meeting Commenced:** 7:30 PM

**Attending:** Mike Paine (Chair); James Cummings (Vice Chair); Randi Rooney; Sal Sammartino; Sam Carlson (Co-Secretary); Christine Bunzol (Co-Secretary); Danielle Kenney (Development Director); David Wood (Principal); Father Artur Marat (President); Ewelina Sokolowski (Operations Director); Erin Berwick (FSA)

**Apologies:** Julie Carlucci (Athletic Board); Tiffany Maloney; Brad Morrison (Co-Secretary); Matt Edwards (Co-Secretary)

**Opening Prayer:** Sam Carlson

**Approval of Minutes:** The final 20-21 meeting minutes were approved by all attending members

**Acknowledgement of Visitors:** 22 visitors, noted with comments reflected on Guest Comment page

**Principal's Report:** (David Wood) – Enrollment matches budget, all Day preschool is full; Window install was finished Aug 6, blinds to come soon; Emergency Asst Act – submitted for \$91,700 in reimbursements (51K for last year; 40K future thru 2023); \$36K endowment fund donation for remaining smartboards, so every class has a smartboard now; Successful Galileo summer camp yielded \$10K in revenue plus donation of excess supplies; three new teachers replacing the three who left (Anderson; Anderson; McGinn), compares favorably to other schools with more hiring needs

**Financial Report:** (Ewelina Sokolowski) – working on the Annual Report, due to the Arch this Friday to close the 20-21 year; didn't need to touch savings last year; lowered expenses slightly, had the PPP loans that helped us; numerous capital projects this summer, generous donors who helped with landscaping in the courtyard and near the playground; more precise Annual Report closer to November, more details to come at next school board meeting

**Development Director Report:** (Danielle Kenney) – Alumni Appeal from May 24 to fiscal year end yielded large donor to support a new STEM lab, Wood and Hoepfer to plan; Second ask for Endowment Campaign in May, had a few more donations; Sept Second Collection for Rebek; Need to promote tax credit scholarships, will receive more materials from the Arch

**Boosters Update:** (Julie Carlucci) – Athletics open to all 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> graders, Prowl on Sept 24, spirit wear sales coming, find them at [www.olwathletics.com](http://www.olwathletics.com) and on the SI PLAY app, meet second Tuesday of each month; Boosters provided for the refinished gym floor and painting, will have mats for walls and bluetooth speaker system soon, and looking at new basketball hoops and gym scheduling tool in 2022

**FSA Update:** (Erin Berwick) – Pizza Day is back; Marla's lunch is back as well with three days per week; For Gala, did survey with mixed responses on location, atmosphere; food and price were strong in favor of heavy app and \$100 cost; 25% of the response from parishioners; also looking to see options for buying tables, focused on making it as welcoming as can be

**Back to School Night:** (PR Committee) – BTS next week, James/Tiffany/Danielle working to combine last year and year before into a cohesive presentation, with David talking; focus on the mission, focus on what we can do this year; need to push Shop w Scrip; School will have a table at the Ministry Fair, may need people to be at the table

**OLW SAB Bylaw Update:** (Mike Paine) – Meeting schedule – bylaws specifically state meetings third Monday each month, want to be sure we have a quorum given competing schedules; motion by Sal, second by Sam, motion approved unanimously to move to bi-monthly meetings with more fulsome committee meetings during the off months

**Adjournment:** The open meeting was adjourned at 8:35pm with a closing prayer lead by Randi Rooney.

The next School Advisory Board meeting will be scheduled soon and posted in Monday Memos. All are welcome to attend.  
Respectfully submitted by James Cummings, Vice Chair

From the School Manual which is posted on the school website: Re: Agenda Items....."The Board invites and appreciates your interest. The Constitution states that any parents or member of the parish may formally petition the Board with a request to consider recommendations, proposals or other matters relating to the operation of the educational facilities of the parish. Such petitions must be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the Board at least one week prior to the meeting at which formal consideration is proposed. This procedure allows parishioners to discuss with the Board any matter requiring formal consideration. Ordinarily, policies and other proposals introduced at a Board meeting are discussed and voted upon at subsequent meetings."

### **Guest Comments:**

A group of approximately 20 guests attended the SAB meeting, with six speaking. All attendees and speakers were current OLW Parents. All expressed gratitude to the School administration and staff for their efforts, but had various concerns with the current Arch policy and Illinois mandate of mandatory masking in schools, and all were concerned about the lack of communication from the Arch. Tanya Petermann provided written comments/notes, so those remarks are reflected in full below. For other speakers, the below is a summary of their remarks.

### **Tanya Petermann**

Appreciation to hear voices. Also, recognize a school board is not in a position to change any mandates or Illinois state laws. We recognize and appreciate the fact that a principal or teacher cannot do this. Difficult position for the board. Unfortunately, everyone for the last almost 18 months have been put in numerous difficult positions. Gratitude for commitment and intentions as a school board member. Called and answered to represent the school – thank you.

Timely and coincidentally in this morning's Wayside Wednesdays there was a video put out that lasts 2 minutes. The video is called "Undefeated: The Man in the Arena." The presenter/narrator states, "the devil's lie after every setback is "Stay Down! But Almighty God says, "It's not over. Get back up!" He also speaks about not being timid. With all of these 'executive orders' and mandates - Where is the Archdiocese on this? Where has the fight been? Is there a fight? What has been its stance? We hear nothing. We see nothing. Transparency is requested. It is expected.

Also, in the spring, we received emails requesting to contact our local government members and vote against HB 2789. This was also a request from the Archdiocese of Chicago. In essence, the pending bill was to put the power and decision making for various reasons, but mainly related to COVID-19, not on an individual school/Arch/district level rather in the hands of the state via the ISBE and IDPH. We, as parish school families and parishioners, were asked to oppose this bill. There were individual emails. Social Media outlets. Mentions on the local radio stations. We acted. We answered. We replied. We succeeded, thus far. This month, the Governor came down with the mask mandate – a power, a decision from the state – oddly and contrary to what was asked - the Archdiocese complied. This is exactly what the Arch, schools and parishes asked us to vote against in the spring! When families, parishioners, community members asked the Arch, however, to speak up to the Governor/government – the Arch went silent.

Typically, when the Archdiocese requests something, whether it is to do charitable work, donating to the Catholic Appeal, donating to Renew My Church, fiscally and emotionally donating to local school and parishes – we as Catholics have responded and acted. We reply to emails. We reply to the Call to Action.

COVID-19 occurred and is still occurring. Mask Mandates came into effect this school year. Telephone calls, emails, social media posts are going out to speak/communicate with the Archdiocese. The Archdiocese is not responding to individual parishioners. The Archdiocese is not responding to school families. The gossip mill shares that the Cardinal is not one to really reply to issues. You might be wondering where I am going with this or why speak to the School Board tonight if I know that the School Advisory Board cannot change the mandate or other rules that have gone into action.

I ask that since an individual or individual family does not receive responses, perhaps a school board can or a school board and parish council can. We have multiple emails and phone calls going unanswered. A school advisory board member attends the Parish Council meetings, can someone be the liaison to them and begin a group? One of the responsibilities of the School Advisory Board is to 'Represent its Constituency.' Perhaps we are not happy with a particular decision but what is likely stirring people more is that lack of communication. The lack of fight. Why is the Archdiocese staying put or staying down?

My personal opinion and stance on mask mandates, vaccination status, cohorts, field trips, etc is not relevant. In fact, there are questions to the Archdiocese on each side. We need answers from the Archdiocese and we need a powerful voice / a council / a larger presence to advocate requesting responses. Can the school board commit to that? And not because of what is on my curriculum vitae or because a doctor asks, for example. It doesn't matter the credentials. I am not standing here for my ego. We all have children asking questions. My kids, my nieces and nephews, my friends' children – they are all my biggest heroes and role models in all of this. There are some children that hate wearing masks. There are some children that only feel safe wearing masks. They all deserve to know where and what the Archdiocese is standing with. They deserve some predictability. They deserve to know the Archdiocese is willing to fight for them. These are beautiful, brilliant God-loving children. They deserve much better.

**Kelli Schuch**

Mrs. Schuch expressed concern over a couple things that occurred at school this week regarding her children. One of her children had his mask replaced by the teacher due to her determination that it was not appropriate. Later that day, her son fell on the playground and had a bloody knee. The teacher didn't do anything to clean that up and also did not realize that the boy had a headache as well. For Mrs. Schuch, it seems the teacher was more concerned about a proper mask than the physical well-being of the children. In addition, Mrs. Schuch shared that her children told her of multiple different procedures for masking throughout their days at school, including different procedures for lunch and recess masking. Mrs. Schuch requested that the Board and staff investigate what is happening and ensure that the same processes are being followed by all. She also asked about mask breaks and ensuring proper cleanliness of masks as well.

**Kevin Dolsen**

Mr. Dolsen thanked Mr. Wood and Father Artur for their continued efforts, but expressed great concern with the lack of communication from the Arch. Mr. Dolsen is concerned that this issue has already caused many to halt their support (both monetary and other), and will continue that pattern if not reversed. Mr. Dolsen says he and others are left with an impossible choice between continuing to support an organization that has lost its way (the Church/Arch), or cutting off support that could lead to tearing that very organization down even though it is something he has loved and supported for so long. The continued pattern by the Arch of not communicating and not advocating for the parishioners is leading to more extreme responses, and unfortunately that will ultimately lead to more people being driven away from the church and the unfortunate result that many will not come back. Mr. Dolsen stressed how much he loves and supports OLW and the Church, but he and others feels abandoned.

**Fara Librizzi**

Mrs. Librizzi alerted the Board to the news that the Illinois General Assembly has plans to reconsider HB2789 in some form next week, and encouraged us to check with the Arch on a campaign similar to the one from the Spring to alert parents. The Spring campaign was fruitful with thousands of people contributing and ultimately leading to the bill not getting a vote, and something similar is needed now.

**Vita Massarelli**

Mrs. Massarelli is the chair of the OLW Gala Committee for this school year and she expressed great concern that donations will be impacted by the current stance of the Arch to withhold communication back to parents about their concerns over the mask mandate and other policies. She has already heard from some who have been major contributors in the past that they plan not to provide support (monetary and other) this year given the lack of communication.

**Other Attendees:**

Christa & Mike Schermerhorn

Heather Jackman

Matt & Feliza Gauthier

Monika Crossin

Mark & Ewa Sansonetti

Mary Schneider

Christina Butcher

Jamie Riley

Jeanine Andriano

Katie Papanicholas

Emily Paine