

Good afternoon St. John School Community,

Over the past few months, I have given a lot of tours of St. John School – I mean a lot! It is one of my favorite parts of the job (along with welcoming students every morning). When I talk to these prospective parents, I talk a lot about academic excellence, love/faith/service, and well-rounded students. I also talk about the financial stability of St. John School. Financial stability is an important point that I should continue to make to you, our current families.

I am happy to report to you that St. John School is in an excellent financial position now and in planning for the future. We have weathered the COVID storm and emerged in a strong position. On a leadership level, we are continually reviewing the financial position of St. John School. These conversations become more robust in November and reach a climax in January as we set the next year's tuition and budget.

At St. John School, we take great responsibility in being good stewards of the financial resources of this school. We look at past trends, current realities, and future projections to set our budget for each year. This budget considers how much money we are bringing in (of which approximately 85% is tuition) and how much we are spending (of which approximately 85% is employee salaries and benefits). As we look at the past, present, and future, a few important points emerge.

-While we have seen a large increase in students over the past few years, we have also seen a larger increase in staff. These additional staff were necessary for COVID purposes and beyond. We have kept additional classroom aides and recently hired a part time Speech Language Pathologist.

-The SJS enrollment catchment area has expanded over the past few years. We have gone from serving 12 towns/communities to almost 20. This makes our school more diverse in many ways.

-The cost of every utility, resource, and service we use (gas, water, paper, textbooks, technology, night/summer cleaning crew) has increased dramatically over the past few years and we need to plan for this to continue.

-Health care costs have increased dramatically over the past few years as have the number of employees opting for health care through SJS and we need to plan for this to continue.

- We have replaced our entire technology inventory over the past few years and dramatically increased it. We need to continue to plan for this in the future.
- Teacher salaries at SJS have increased at a 3-5% rate each year and need to increase more. If we want to keep the best, we need to pay them more. A 3% raise is nice, a 5% raise is great, but more is better.
- We are currently overenrolled and two of our grades are still cohorted. Over the next few years, we will move back to a single grade per class school, which will cause our enrollment to naturally decline. We are currently at 260 students and project that for another year or two. After that, we expect enrollment to slowly decline.
- The market rate for area Catholic elementary school tuition has increased dramatically over the past few years. We are well behind (\$1,000-\$1,500) our competitors in Norwood, Walpole, and Milton, and similar to our competitors in Weymouth and Abington.
- During the pandemic, we made a conscious decision as an institution not to raise tuition to support our families in a time of uncertainty.
- St. John School elementary tuition has only increased by \$300 over the past five years (less than 5%). St. John School prekindergarten tuition has only increased by \$100 (1%) over the past four years. St. John School preschool tuition has not increased in five years.

With all of this in mind, we have decided to increase tuition by \$300 at every level for next year. We believe this will set up St. John School for current and future success. This will allow us to continue to experience success and look to future projects and needs (such as air conditioning our gym).

As a reminder, St. John School does offer financial aid for families who qualify. Typically, about 10% of families receive some type of aid. To access this funding, you must go through the FACTS online system.

Please let me know if you have any questions and/or concerns.

Chris