

January 22, 2016

Questions from St. Joseph Families:

Responses from Principal, Karen Casper-Linn and Amy Makruski

Reviewed by Fr. Tim

Why is there no Advisory Board? This was Phase 2 of our plan and the Advisory Committee had an organizational meeting yesterday. More info at a later date will be shared.

Beyond raising tuition, what other strategies are being implemented to increase revenue for the school?

*We need to have one major fundraiser for the parish each year- In place now is the Reverse Raffle but it needs to be more lucrative. We need more donations for Auctions and more workers and participants in many ways. Looking to business to sponsor us and donate large ticket items. I believe getting alumni involved buying tickets and donating money as well as items. Committee needs to have persons who know how to get the most money from the fundraiser.

*Tithing and an increased offertory is another area of funds.

* Getting persons/families etc. to sponsor scholarships for our students.

What plans are in place to attract new students?

We have a marketing plan that was put in place last year by Mr. Flynn. We will continue to use this for now. We have targeted ads in newspapers, Invitations and speakers at area churches without schools, information and Invitations to our preschoolers and their parents- Open House invite and small treat to PSR students inviting them to the day school. Open House, Facebook page, and Community video all in the works. Staff assigned articles to be placed in the Amherst News Times about happenings at our school. Invitations and SJS Candy bar to 6th graders at St. Mary, Vermilion since they only go up to Grade 6.

For families fulfilling obligations to both parish and school, how does leadership intend on not making them feel more alienated by asking them for more.

I don't feel that those fulfilling obligations feel alienated but rather frustrated and angry. This has been an age old problem. I know those who didn't work bingo had no consequences because parish, not school, leadership and the diocese and state said that there could not be any.

Obligations now with Fr. Tim as the head will be monitored and persons not doing their part will be talked with and handled on a one to one basis. Extreme consequence would be asking them to leave the school since they are not totally committed to us.

What is the minimum amount of students in any particular grade?

Fr. Tim is committed to offering a K-8 Catholic parish school.

Can we provide incentives to families that bring new students to enroll in our parish school?

Yes, we could and have discussed it. Mr. Flynn brought this idea to Finance council two years ago and did not get a go ahead vote.

We can revisit this idea with Advisory Committee and Finance Council.

Why are only the school families hearing the message and not the entire St. Joseph Parish Community?

Fr. Tim has been spreading the stewardship message of Time, Talent, and Treasure (which includes the subject of tithing). Being an “active parishioner” includes participating in Mass every Sunday and holyday of obligation and showing one’s presence by the use of envelopes each week (whether full or empty) as well as contributing financially to the support of the church. And this is something that all parishioners should be encouraged to do. We need to continually invite people to our parish and welcome people back.

Given parents have a choice to either send students to public school or our parish school and considering our tuition is one of the highest, what strategies are we prepared to implement to make our school more competitive and attractive to families?

Before we made this tuition raise we were one of the lowest tuitions in the area. If you check the web sites of other schools I think that you will see that we are not the highest but comparable. It is a fact that our public schools in Amherst are good but the story needs to be told that students that stay at SJS through 8th grade on a whole have IOWA test scores in the grade 13+range . This means they are already way above the 8th grade average. Our students are also ahead in computer technology because they begin in Kindergarten with skills, are keyboarding accurately by Grade 4 and by upper hall doing power points, researching etc. Our students from Kindergarten on are also

beginning to CODE. Public speaking as well as Leadership programs like K-kids and

Academic Team are all positives. Also Homework Lab and the fact that parents can have all their children in K through 8 in one school. We have had students test out of Spanish I in High School. Students can also earn High School credit when taking Algebra in the 8th grade.

Mass attendance?? Is there a magic number of Masses we must attend at St. Joe's each year? Missing mass at our church due to vacations, being out of town, and illness??

- No magic number-
- Priests and Parish/ School staff are around all the time and know if you are usually around. The envelope is just an added tracker.

What about the Parish Scholarship?

If you are an active parishioner (according to Fr. Tim's guidelines), are presently enrolled in our school and check that you want the parish scholarship then you are entitled to it. Leadership is just asking that if you don't need the scholarship than please give it back in some way. It could be through donations, adopt a student, or scholarships for others that need them. Scholarships can be made in a family members name etc. (Example \$500.00 in my deceased grandmother's name) *** God wants us to give back when we are blessed.

A few Points:

Fr. Tim did not say that **non-Catholics** had to attend Mass each week. He said that they should be active in their church whether Catholic or not. No one is asked to give up their faith in order to have their children at SJS. Maybe a phone call could be made to your church of choice to see if you are an active member in your faith.

About tithing... Fr. Tim did not say any specific dollar amount was needed in the collection basket. He used 10%- 5 for charity and 5 for the parish as a Goal. He specifically said that if you were not tithing to start with 1 or 2 % of your income and work up to a comfortable amount. Fr. Tim stated that everyone even children can give a bit of their income/allowance.

Fr. Tim as well as Jack Kahmann from Finance Council both said that **previous financial arrangements** would be looked over and if in order to make SJS affordable we would honor them.

This is especially needed when you have more than one child in our school. Not very many people that I know of can pay \$4500.00 a year for more than one child. Again this will be looked at by the principal on a one to one family basis.

Please...Parents with more than one child in our school do not be afraid to ask for financial assistance when needed. We do not advertise a multiple family discount but will provide one when it is necessary. Most families with just an average income and more than one child in our school will be considered for a fair amount per child.

OVERALL MESSAGE

Come in and Talk to Us – Do not pull your children from our school for financial reasons- If you are committed to our school and parish we can make a Catholic education affordable for your family and put you in a comfortable spot where you feel good about your tuition amount and your volunteer efforts at the church and parish. It feels good to be a part of something good and to be giving back and making life even better for students and teachers at our school.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all our parents who spread the good news about our school and are committed to our mission. Many of you work tirelessly to be active parishioners, good role models, and hard-working volunteers for our school and parish. The “good” you have done and are still doing does not go unnoticed.

Thank you from all of us at SJS.