



SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL PARISH SCHOOL

February 16, 2018

Dear St. Vincent de Paul Parish School Parents,

This year's starting diocesan teacher salary is \$30,152 while the starting salary for Granite School District is \$41,000.) Our teachers have had minimal raises since the recession in 2008, and with public districts increasing teachers' salaries by as much as 10%, our pay gap continues to widen. We are blessed to have such professional and caring teachers. However, I have seen several great teachers leave St. Vincent's for more lucrative positions in other schools or in other fields. In my three years as principal, three prospective teachers refused to interview with me based on our pay scale—that is just the candidates I am aware of. And, with all schools suffering from the teacher shortage, it is of critical importance that the Catholic schools raise salaries so we can retain and recruit the very best teachers for our children. We cannot continue to expect teachers to make significant monetary sacrifices to work in our school. We must do what we can to ensure that they are paid a just wage.

I am writing to you to explain the changes in the tuition tiers for the 2018-2019 school year. A tuition committee comprised of Superintendent Mark Longe, Associate Superintendent Sr. Cathy Kamphaus, and several principals, gathered extensive financial information from each school to investigate the possibility of moving to a "Fair Share" tuition model that reflects the true cost of educating a child based on the idea of raising teacher salaries. For the current school year we have the following tuition scale:

2017-2018 Current School Year

Tier 1 -Regular Rate \$6,924

Tier 2- Catholic Rate \$5,540

Tier 3- Based on Need--FACTS application necessary

Under the traditional tuition model, Catholic Schools in Utah have charged families less than the true cost of educating their students in order to make a Catholic education more affordable to those who would like their children in a Christ-centered educational community. For the 2017-2018 school year, those paying the Catholic rate pay about 79% of the true cost of educating a student at St. Vincent School. Families paying the non-Catholic rate pay about 92% of the actual cost of educating a student. Each year, the school has needed to make up the difference between tuition payments and expenses, and pay for “extras,” such as costs associated with having many specialty teachers and full-time aides, and having a large campus, through fundraising, grants, and other means. The traditional tuition model has also led to large discrepancies in teacher salaries between diocesan teachers and public school teachers, as was shown above.

In order to close this funding gap and help recruit and retain the highest quality teachers, the Tuition Committee recommended the following tuition changes to the Bishop and he approved them. For the 2018-2019 the tuition structure will be as follows:

2018-2019 School Year Tuition Rates

Tier 1- \$7,750 -Average Cost to Educate Rate- New Tier

Tier 2- \$7,478-Formerly the Regular Rate (\$55.40 monthly increase over 10 months)

Tier 3- \$5,983-Formerly the Catholic Rate (\$44.30 monthly increase over 10 months)

Tier 4-Based on Need—FACTS application necessary

As you can see, the new Tiers 2 and 3 reflect the regular and the Catholic rate. The new Tier 1 reflects the average cost to educate a child in diocesan schools as calculated by the Tuition Committee. For the 2018-2019 school year, we are asking those who can, to pay the Tier 1 rate. (If, for example, you currently pay the Catholic rate and choose that rate for the 2018-2019 school year, you could make a tax-deductible contribution of \$1,767 to make up the difference between what you are paying and the true cost of educating your child.) We are asking families to pay more so that we can increase teachers’ salaries to bring them within 80% of the Granite School District salary scale (up from 70%-75% of the district scale, which is how the diocesan salary scale currently sits). For the 2018-2019 school year, if you feel that you cannot pay the Tier 1 rate, that is fine. If this is the case, you will continue to pay the tier you were on for this year, Tiers 1, 2, or 3. Included in the packet you will receive at your parent/teacher conference is a form where you will indicate if you will pay the Tier 1, 2, or 3 rate.

Beginning with the 2019-2020 school year, all families will pay the Tier 1 rate which reflects the true cost of educating a student. A family will need to apply through FACTS in order to receive any tuition rate other than the Tier 1 rate. So, for the 2019-2020 school year, there is no longer a Catholic tuition rate. All families pay the same tuition regardless of their religion unless a reduced rate has been determined after filling out a FACTS application.

Many dioceses have gone to “Fair Share” tuition models, where parents are asked to pay the true cost of educating their children. All of us involved in running the diocesan schools know that you sacrifice to send your children to St. Vincent School and that raising tuition will be an additional hardship. You have chosen to make a significant investment in your children by enrolling them in our school. **We do not want you to pull your children out of our school because you believe you no longer can afford the cost. It is one of the missions of Catholic schools to ensure that anyone who wants a Catholic education for their child can receive it. We will do everything we can to work with you so you continue to be part of this school.** So, we encourage those who feel that they cannot afford the tuition increase to apply for tuition assistance through FACTS--the system that diocesan schools use to determine how much a family can reasonably afford. (This is particularly applicable for the 2019-2020 school year when all families will be required to pay the Tier 1 rate.) For \$30, FACTS gives the school a report of how much a family can pay given the financial information that the family submits.

Due to these tuition changes I have discussed, St. Vincent School is no longer requiring parents to participate in the SCRIP Program as of the 2018-2019 school year. The school will continue to run the SCRIP Program, and we highly encourage you to continue your regular orders as it helps provide the “extras” that we supply, but this participation is completely voluntary.

I have attached a Diocesan FAQ Sheet with this letter to answer possible questions that you may have. Please feel free to contact me as well with any additional questions (801-527-2042 or ggreen@stvincents-school.org). Also, Mrs. Lambert and I will be available during Parent/Teacher Conferences to personally answer questions.

Blessings,

Gary Green, Principal, St. Vincent de Paul Parish School