

Dear Parents:

One year ago, I stood before you and gave what was essentially, a "state of the school" address wherein I told you that I wanted to take a good school and make it even better. With the assistance of Mr. Kenny, the faculty and you, the parents, I believe that progress toward the fulfillment of this goal is already measurable. Since last year, we've implemented the FACTS program which has drastically reduced delinquent tuition and has allowed us to know, each and every month, exactly how much money is on hand to meet payroll, to pay our utility bills, book fees, etc. Moreover, the FACTS program has freed both the church business administrator and the school support staff to use the time that was absorbed collecting tuition on other worthy endeavors. I want to thank you all for getting on board with this program which has given the fiscal health of our school a structure it sorely lacked its implementation in September.

Since the last Catholic Schools week, our remedial-enrichment program has been launched with Mrs. Morra investing 20 hours a week in working one-on-one with close to fifty students. Since last year, numerous electives have been added to the curriculum of our Middle School Students. Italian has been added to the world language department and a full time physical education and health teacher has joined the faculty. These are all positive things.

Since last year, morality has been incorporated into the upper grades' religion classes so that we can foster better morale among the students, reduce incidents of bullying and exclusion through education by teaching our adolescent students right from wrong. To solidify this effort, Mr. Kenny and I began this year with an assembly of Grades 5-8 wherein we basically laid down the law and told our students that un-Christian behavior would not be tolerated. I believe that, overall, the students have heeded this warning. From what I can perceive, students are interacting better with each other and morale, or the most part, is much improved.

Since last year, our H.S.A. has been very instrumental in assisting the Church in reducing parish subsidy by their tremendous Night Under the Stars fundraiser and other sundry events such as the Wall of Remembrance, which hallows the corridor leading into the gym. While parish subsidy to the school is still high, presently at 26% of the school's operating budget—and we should be at 18%, I realize that it will take a few more years before this goal is achieved. But I assure you that we are heading in the right direction.

What do I foresee for the academic year ahead? Well, as you know, I decided to raise tuition on the first child by 5.6%. Why? There are three reasons.

First, I want to hire an additional teacher with dual certification in science and math. The role of this teacher would be to join the Middle School teachers of science and math so as to provide our children in Grades 6-8 with exposure to more than one math or science teacher during the last three years of their education at St. James. Why?

These classes meet five days a week. With entrance exams placing so much emphasis on “technical skills,” it seems to me that just as procuring a second opinion from a physician before undergoing surgery is good medicine so, analogously, bringing in another educator of math-science is good pedagogy. By adding another faculty member to take on certain sections of math and science, I believe that more electives could enter their curriculum. By adding another faculty member, we could all see the advent of smaller sections of math and science classes which would then give all the teachers concerned, more opportunities for one-on-one and small group instruction.

The second reason for the increment in tuition has to do with my field of expertise: world languages. In most parochial schools, “foreign language” is offered to students once a week. This has also been the case at St. James School. While this is acceptable at the primary and intermediate levels of education, it’s my opinion that this is sorely insufficient for students in the Middle School grades.

Effective September, students in Grades 5-8 will have their Spanish, French or Italian class not once but twice a week. This will give us, world language teachers, an extra class wherein we can reinforce skills introduced at the beginning of the week. It will also facilitate retention on the part of our students.

The third and final reason for the tuition hike of 5.6% has to do with the hidden costs of running a school. Teachers receive and deserve each year a cost of living raise. School utilities are always rising. The cost of educational materials, be these textbooks, workbooks, music and art supplies are forever escalating. In a word, to run a school requires more money each year.

Last year, I was happy to discover a portfolio of mutual funds and stocks under the umbrella of a school endowment in the amount of \$500,00. While this amount has not changed substantially, in consultation with my parish finance council, I've since employed the services of Merrill-Lynch to evaluate and reinvest these funds so as to give us the

highest possible yield. Up until this year, the portfolio has been dormant. Now, it's dynamic and will give us a better return. On this note, please do not be bashful. Contributions into this endowment are always welcomed. It's my hope that alumni and even some of you, parents, may put something aside in your estate planning for St. James School Endowment. Our school will soon turn forty-three, and it is my hope that this endowment will ensure that our school will be around for many more years to come.

Finally, the cost of educating a student for the next academic year will be \$4,600. I challenge those among you who can afford this, to pay this sum for your child's education. In so doing, you would be providing me with a little more levity—as I endeavor to help those families who find themselves in financial difficulty. And, if you are among those families who cannot afford to pay the tuition increment, due to financial or personal factors, please do not hesitate to contact me. All calls are confidential and my door is always open. At the same time, I would also

encourage all such families experiencing financial woes to complete an application for diocesan tuition assistance, bearing in mind that this must be filed with Diocesan School Office no later than March 30.

St. James School continues to evolve from a great school into an even better school. Thanks you for your support, for choosing St. James School and may God bless you all.

Sincerely yours,

Fr. Glenn