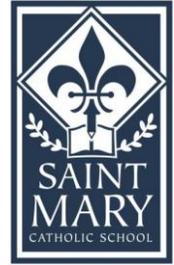




# ST. MARY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

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220 N. Cedar Street • Williamston, MI 48895 • P(517) 655-4038



February 11, 2019

Dear Saint Mary School parents,

You are fully aware that something amazing is happening in our small town of Williamston. A door has been opened, and our children now can receive a true Classical Education! Yet we also know that far too few of our parish children are receiving the academic and spiritual benefits of the outstanding Catholic education that is provided in our excellent school.

So what are we to do?

My conclusion, after prayer and study, and with the backing of the parish Finance Council, is that our tuition can be a substantial obstacle to growth. We often speak of Catholic schools being “available, affordable, and accessible,” but families often perceive our cost structure as prohibitive. The availability of limited scholarship assistance does not seem to change that perception. For these and other reasons, I am satisfied that we should make a substantial tuition cut.

But this is not just about the school. It is about the whole parish in at least two important respects. First, a successful Catholic parish cannot look upon its school as a separate entity or a separate endeavor. The school is simply one – albeit an important one – of many ministries in a vibrant and active parish. Second, the future of a Catholic parish is linked to the future of its school. If this parish is to grow and prosper, it needs an infusion of young families. And there is no better way to gain young families than to have a strong school that offers an excellent education and prepares young leaders.

We are going to cut tuition. Beginning with the 2019-2020 school year, tuition for kindergarten through sixth grade families at Saint Mary School will be \$1,000 per student. A higher scale will be in place for non-Catholic families, as they are not part of a Catholic parish community. The other fees – beyond tuition expense – that have been charged in the past will continue.

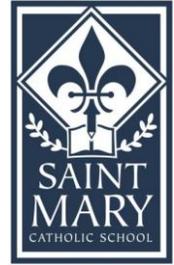
Just so you know – this is a change we are making in conjunction with Saint Martha Parish and School in Okemos. They, too, are reducing tuition to \$1,000. Lest rumors start, let me be clear that, for the foreseeable future, we will continue to be two separate parishes with separate schools and separate curricula (although the two schools may continue to sponsor some joint sports teams, till each grows large enough to have its own).



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As we make this move, all parishioners are invited to give prayerful consideration to how we can fully participate in the life of the parish. As good stewards of the many gifts given us by a generous God, we search for ways to share our time and talent with the whole parish, including the school. As parents, and as parishioners, I am asking you to find ways to help.

Obviously, the parish will always have a significant need for tax-deductible monetary gifts. You know that it costs more than \$1,000 to educate a child at Saint Mary School. Indeed, it costs more than our current tuition. The actual per-pupil cost of education is over \$7,000. Like any other parishioner, you will have the opportunity to assist in keeping our school available, affordable, and accessible. Please, dear friends, prayerfully consider and act upon your family's ability to share beyond present levels.

As current parents of Saint Mary School, you are already aware of the strengths of the school. So I need not list the reasons you have decided to enroll your children. Let me say, though, that all the things you love about Saint Mary School will remain in place – the Classical curriculum, the warm and loving culture, the call to academic excellence, the deep immersion in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

God bless you and your wonderful children!

Yours in Christ,

*Fr Mark*

Father Mark Rutherford