



St. Paul Lutheran School

325 North Colfax Street
West Point, Nebraska 68788



April 28, 2020

Dear Parents & Guardians:

As you have read in the previous letter from the various boards within the church the school and the church are experiencing financial difficulty at this time for several reasons. As you may know our school's budget is supplemented and supported by our church. Please understand that the true cost to educate a student at St. Paul Lutheran School is much higher than what is charged to families for tuition each year, however, the Board of Education realizes that this is not a rate that is fair or reasonable to charge parents for their child's tuition. Therefore, we are subsidized by the church and other sources of revenue such as donations, bequests, fundraisers and more importantly offerings that come into church each week. In the past we have been fortunate to receive large donations from community members as well as count on a steady income from the offering plate. This has changed. Offerings have decreased and donations are not something that we can continue to rely upon. As the church continues to look for a Pastor to lead our congregation they need to leave room in the budget for what it may cost to bring him to be the shepherd of our flock. The boards within the church have met numerous times in the past months to try to find a good solution, but the money just isn't there, and then you throw COVID-19 on top of it and it paints an even bleaker picture of the situation. The Board of Education was given a budget that they needed to meet in order to keep the doors open at St. Paul Lutheran School. The budget given to us and the amount that the church was able to subsidize us gave us no choice but to cut costs, and unfortunately the largest costs in the budget are staff salaries and benefits.

The Board of Education did make the decision not to renew Pat Dunklau, Tracie Reeson or Danielle Reppert's contracts for the next school year. The Board of Education values our called teachers very much and we now have a staff that is made up of all called church workers (please note: Morgan Jacobsen is halfway through her colloquy training right now). The staff has been meeting two times a week since given the information from the board on who the remaining staff members are, and how to best split up grade levels and teaching responsibilities as we move forward into the upcoming school year. We will continue to keep you updated with this information as it is decided and approved by the Board of Education.

We would also like to mention that enrollment is always a best guess scenario, especially in a private school and given the economic state of our society at the present moment. We would love to see 100% of our school families return to school in the fall, but realize this is not always the case. This is why a family's commitment to re-enroll is so important and decisions for adequate planning and instruction can take place. We do our best to predict class sizes each year and will continue to do our best in predicting class sizes for this coming year again as we plan. Given the above situation the Board of Education has also decided to increase tuition slightly for the next school year to help meet our budget. Please see the update and approved Tuition Rates & Fees for 2020-2021 school year.

Finally, we wish we had a crystal ball and could tell you for certain that we will be able to come back to school in the fall and that there is a vaccine for COVID-19. Even as Mrs. Penrose has sat in on meetings

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with area superintendents, principals and public health directors there has not been a clear indication of where we are headed, time will tell. We will tell you that a thought process amongst educational leaders is to just push the calendar back and have the school year be prolonged, but again time will tell. Please note that a school calendar will be released soon.

Again, our intentions of this letter is provide you with accurate and transparent information leaving little room for misinformation to happen.

We would like to leave you with this thought, if we might.

We have experienced and seen with her own eyes the value that a Christian education will continue to provide for your children and there is no doubt in our minds that no matter who the teacher or what classroom your children may be in next year that they will be given the best possible instruction that we can offer.

Christ will be in their life daily!

We are thankful that we have developed a trusting relationship with each of our families over the years and we hope that these words can provide some comfort to you in this uncertain and challenging time when we are faced with many unknowns.

God's continued blessings to you and your family!

*Mrs. Kari Penrose, Head Teacher
St. Paul Lutheran School Board of Education*