



**From Kathy Barr
Director of Finances
Reviewing 2019, Looking toward 2020**

Our young school is healthy. The two most important “drivers” of revenue for any school are enrollments (tuition) and philanthropic giving (annual fund). With enrollments at 320 this year, up from 290 last year (and 190, 99 in the years before that), we anticipate tuition revenue at 2.97 million this year, an increase of 12 % from last. Philanthropic giving last year was exceptional, with 2.5 million coming in for the capital campaign (and 2.6 million to come through future pledges), \$234,000 for the annual fund and just over \$100,000 for the Guardian Angel fund. In addition, we received \$173,400 from the Baldwin County Catholic parishes as part of their annual subsidy for our school.

With increased enrollment also comes greater efficiency in spending, as we can better balance classes, and better use our faculty. This year’s budget anticipates we will spend \$12,920/pupil this year, vs. \$14,162 in actual per pupil spending last year.

All of these trends are positive!

Even so, we have debts we are paying down from the original construction of the school. Currently, we have bond debt of 3.55 million dollars and an additional first-second year operations debt of 1.4 million. Revenue to pay our debts is generated through three sources: a \$400/family assessment fee we began in June of 2019, the commitment of 15% of all monies raised in the recent athletic campaign to this debt, and a subsidy each year through our operational budget. We believe these pay-downs reflect responsible stewardship, even as we ensure the healthy functioning of our school in the here and now.

Tuition for 2019-2020 is at \$8,755 for contributing Catholic families and \$10,800 for all others. This puts us in the mid-range of regional private high schools, which range from \$6,800 to \$13,600 in tuition costs. To assist families unable to pay the full amount, we’ve developed an application process for financial aid that uses a third party vendor to estimate a family’s need, verified by review of tax forms from the previous year. This year, we were able to give over \$500,000 in aid to 100 students, representing 31% of our student body—made possible by the supporters of our annual fund and the Guardian Angel Fund. Those two funds will be critical to our future abilities to support these families.

We will work to improve some inefficiencies in 2020, especially in collecting incidentals such as A.P. fees and things like that. We can improve communications and advanced

notice! Also, Mr. Weber has asked me to begin publishing our “operations” each year, which we’ll begin doing in our annual report each fall.

Kathy Lollis, my predecessor, did a great job with the financial management of the school. As you may know, she retired this summer, and I began in August, so I’ve only been here a few months. I feel very blessed when God shines on me with opportunities such as this, just the perfect time. My youngest son Clay and I started at St. Michael this year. I am happy to be here and look forward to serving this community.