

Missing registration dates, tuition assistance dates, will be costly

Changes should simplify the process and make decision-making more efficient.

"The world as we have created is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking." Albert Einstein

"Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself." Leo Tolstoy

"To live is to change, and to be perfect is to change very often." John Henry Cardinal Newman

Things are always changing, but nobody likes to change for change's sake. Sometimes it's hard to discern which direction the change is taking us. But through a lengthy process of evaluation and consultation, there are significant changes coming in the registration process. Owensboro Catholic Schools will do everything possible to educate families and guardians to get the dates in the attached graphic etched in their calendars.

TUITION ASSISTANCE

The first round of tuition assistance begins February 4-15th. We don't expect there to be much of a change in tuition assistance allocations unless a families' financial circumstances have changed. The out-of-pocket expenses for tuition increased 2.5% per household. The tuition number will appear higher because the Scrip goal and some of the school fees were integrated into the tuition number to make accounts receivable easier to administer and it will be easier for families to understand their statements. But not all fees were eliminated.

Nearly \$1 million dollars is distributed to families across four schools to help with tuition costs. The FACTS Tuition Assistance company allocates most of the assistance through their formula-based program, but a school based financial review team takes on the difficult task of allowing families special circumstances. Dollars are stretched as far as possible to accommodate requests. It's tedious and difficult, but it's also an honor when we get to work with people who are so committed and passionate for the Catholic School System. These family commitments also inspire us to go into the community and ask again, and again for financial support. The community always generously responds.

The largest contributor to tuition assistance are the parishes who contribute nearly \$3 million to working class families across the Owensboro area to make Catholic schools more affordable. The community is blessed with a large system. It's a very rare gift for a community our size. Every parish expects their investment to translate into active participation, vocations and increased generosity. There is also the hope that families who have benefitted from a Catholic School Education understand that they never bore the full costs for their child's 12 years. They can demonstrate that appreciation in their support of others.

REGISTRATION

It's free to register for the Catholic School System. The online forms are a little cumbersome and aren't always easy to navigate. However, for returning families, there were modifications to the form which will automatically populate the health questions. That will provide some relief, especially for large families. It also means IF your child's health condition has changed, you will be responsible for changing the populated health care question to reflect your child's change in health. As many questions as possible were eliminated from the forms.

Another online registration issue is that it's very difficult to locate mistakes or blank questions on the forms. A missed question prevents families from completing and submitting the document. We have complained to the manufacturers of PowerSchool, but no changes will assist the process this year.

The \$50 registration fee was dropped but returning families who do NOT register in March will have to pay a \$200 late registration fee beginning April 1. Starting June 1, that grows to a \$300 late registration fee. Everything will be done to assist families who are having a difficult time with the on-line registration process. But it would be wise to not wait until the last minute to attempt the registration process. The penalties will be automatically added to late registrations and cannot be removed.

When families register on time, administrative and hiring decisions can be more effective and efficient. Late registrations require an extensive number of expensive follow-ups. The expense associated with late registrations will NOT become part of the financial burden for the families who registered within the two-month grace period.

DOWNLOAD THE APP!

Search the APP Store for the new Owensboro Catholic School System App. Several upgrades have been made that should allow the system to communicate quickly the changes in schedules, deadlines and dates. The app is going through several more upgrades in the coming weeks, but it is ready to download now.

HOW ARE DECISIONS MADE?

For the sake of space and time, I'll save the topic of how decision-making processes are driving some of the other changes in the Catholic School System, and how you can be an important part of this process. That will be the next column!

IMPORTANT CALENDAR DATES:

February 4-15	Tuition Assistance Round 1
February 25-March 31	Tuition Assistance Round 2
March 5	4-6 Campus Open House
March 7	K-3 Campus Open House
March 11-31	Open Registration (New and Returning Families)
April 1-May 31	\$200 late registration fee charged to returning families
June 1	\$300 late registration fee charged to returning families
July 1	Billing Statements sent out
July 19	Early pay discount deadline
July 29	Families must be in FACTS or paid in full to avoid 2% penalty fee
August 7	First day of school