

# Town Hall Questions and Answers

May 14, 2009



**1. Are new books purchased every year and why?**

*Principal Gigliotti:* No, new books are not purchased every year. Our curriculum is revisited, reviewed and studied every five years by the Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools. The books we do purchase are many consumables [workbooks] in all subject areas each year.

**2. Does St. Mary have a reserve fund to be prepaid for an unpredictable economy?**

*Susan Benke:* St. Mary's currently has \$250,000 in reserve and no debt, including the school. We place money in savings every month that we can. Over the summer we do not have the money to save as we are still paying out teachers and overhead at the school without income (tuition).

**3. Would lowering the cost of tuition increase enrollment enough to have a net gain in revenue?**

*Susan Benke:* We have discussed this several times at the finance council. But St. Mary's is the lowest tuition in the Archdiocese. We have to cash flow the school, meaning that the school has to show a budget that we at least break even. When we first started St. Mary's we did a survey that showed we would open the doors with a tuition of \$2,400 – we had enough people sign up that we should have filled the school, but in reality less than 1/3 of those people actually sent their children to St. Mary's. So the question is, is it the cost or is it that people are not committed enough to send their children to a Catholic School.

**4. Since there are many families who attend St. Peters and other parishes, may we petition or ask the Archdiocese to provide assistance based on educating children from these parishes?**

*Susan Benke:* Not totally understanding the intent of the question, no parishes get money from the Archdiocese for school (including St. Mary). On an individual basis we do not determine individual assistance based on parish (all are treated the same). It is up to the Pastor of your parish to support Catholic Education by providing a \$1,000 subsidy per child from their parish.

**5. Are there going to be any provisions made to begin/continue teaching Spanish to upper grades 6,7,8?**

*Principal Gigliotti:* Yes, we are incorporating Spanish into the 6<sup>th</sup> grade and grandfathering it into the middle school, meaning in 2009, 6<sup>th</sup> graders will have Spanish, in 2010, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders will have Spanish and in 2011 and ongoing, 6<sup>th</sup> thru 8<sup>th</sup> graders will have Spanish.

**6. What is the plan for next year's 7<sup>th</sup> grade teaching?**

*Principal Gigliotti:* Presently we will have four teachers providing the core curriculum with staff members providing education support. For example, Becky Buhler will support Health and so on.

**7. St. Mary has the lowest tuition in the Archdiocese. How does it rank academically?**

*Principal Gigliotti:* We are ranked very high amongst the Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools. We have 39 schools in the Archdiocese. Our ranking changes according to our ITBS scores.

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8. What is the status of the Catholic High School?
9. Back to the capacity of the school, has an assessment been done on the number of children available (families registered to the parishes with children) that don't attend St. Mary School? Is there a plan to try and actively recruit beyond just word of mouth?

Principal Gigliotti: Yes, we have had a newly formed PR committee this year. We have been submitting press releases. We have created a new brochure for the 2009-2010 school year. We have a new Development Director. We have a webmaster that keeps our St. Mary site updated and current. The Angel's Herald has new and improved look filled with information. Parishes are provided with school news to place into their bulletins, of course, at their discretion.

Susan Benke: Last year [2008] during Catholic Schools Week an invitation was sent to every child currently enrolled in Religious Education but not at the school. This invitation went to all feeding parishes RE students. According to SAC only 4 families responded to the invitation to take a look at the school. Probably the best way to recruit is word of mouth from you the parents in the school.

10. How can we help reach out to other parishes in and around Greeley to support the school for enrollment and fundraising?

Principal Gigliotti: Continue with PR efforts and church members from all parishes should actively share information.

Susan Benke: Have a representative from each parish go and talk to the Pastor, but remember that each Pastor has to make that decision as they have their own needs for their ministries.

11. Will 7<sup>th</sup> grade with 20 children have 1 home room? If they have electives, will they register this summer like they do in high school to pick their electives?

Principal Gigliotti: Once we have a firm number on our enrollment we will have information the website. Keep checking through the summer!