



# St Ambrose Parish

**Mr. Robert Baird, Principal**

March 1, 2024

Greetings To St. Ambrose Parents & Guardians,

It is hard to believe March is here and it is registration time once again and planning for the 2024-2025 school year is well underway. Thank you for choosing a Catholic education at St. Ambrose. In choosing St. Ambrose, you have made a significant sacrifice, and you have prioritized the spiritual and academic growth of your children. We take that trust placed in us very seriously and are committed to a focus of student growth and continued improvement.

When we reflect on the year since last registration a lot of great things have happened with St. Ambrose Catholic School. Some of the most significant happenings include;

- A continued focus on an individual's spiritual growth. Many opportunities have been provided including; the return of Faith Family activities, weekly Masses, Rosary ceremonies, liturgy services, daily prayers, Vocations Day for 6th graders, National Speaker presentation to 7th & 8th grades, focus on supporting the work of missions, food drives to support local needy, charitable collections, and more.
- Fall 2023 MAP Test scores exceeded almost every category in comparison to National and Diocesan averages, thus making St. Ambrose one of the highest performing schools in the Diocese.
- Included in the MAP results are Math test scores that made significant gains from the previous years. In past years we were several points behind Diocesan averages. On the Fall 2023 test we exceeded the Diocesan Math average in almost every category. Previously, our math curriculum for years had been an area of concern. Sadlier Math was a new curriculum adopted at St. Ambrose in 2022-2023. With any new curriculum it takes a few years to realize success, and the early indicators are very positive. Our next area of focus for curriculum is our English-Language Arts curriculum. Our committee has already begun work to determine which new curriculum will be adopted for 2024-2025 and beyond.
- A focus on hiring highly qualified staff members. Recent additions to our staff have brought invaluable experience and strengthened the instruction being provided to our students.
- St. Ambrose was awarded \$144,000 in grant money from the Illinois Emergency Management Agency to improve safety and security (the projects to utilize the funds will commence soon).
- Completion of safety and security improvements utilizing Wish List donations. Combined with the grant funding, approximately \$225,000 will have been dedicated to improving safety and security, including recent additions of;
  - Door upgrades for classrooms and single doors
  - Security Camera Network Expansion

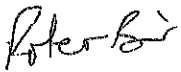
One challenge we continue to face at St. Ambrose are growing expenses associated with personnel, utilities, technology, curriculum, and other school related expenses. Given these cost increases, combined with a decrease in volunteerism, challenges with fundraising, and a slight decrease in enrollment led to a necessary tuition increase. For the 2024-2025 school year, our budget projects a total overall expense of \$1,606,631. With that expense our projected cost to educate each student for the 2024-2025 school year is \$7,078 per student. Being mindful that the average public school district spends around \$16,000 to educate each student,

it is apparent "we are doing more with less." Please see the attached school budget projections for this year and you can see details of the significant expense St. Ambrose incurs to operate our school. To maintain and improve upon effective Catholic education at St. Ambrose we must be mindful of and in step with the financial realities of the times and our current circumstances. Doing so allows us to make positive decisions in important areas such as tuition, staffing, and curriculum.

The 2024-2025 budget projections suggest that St. Ambrose Parish will subsidize approximately 27.5% of the school's expenses. While this subsidy is favorable in comparison to Diocesan recommendations and to most of our neighboring parishes, it still means that St. Ambrose Parish will have to allocate approximately \$490,000 to provide education to students at our school, next school year. In order to effectively control future tuition increases, we are focused on enrollment growth and increases in volunteerism and fundraising.

Please consider completing the registration as soon as possible, and no later than the end of March. Having a clear understanding of enrollment for the upcoming school year allows us to effectively plan and prepare, and be the best stewards possible with our finances. As always, if you have any questions about registration, the upcoming school year, or anything else, please reach out to us as soon as possible. Thank you for your continued support and GO SAINTS!

Sincerely,



Robert Baird  
Principal  
St. Ambrose Catholic School