



Learn Fearlessly. Lead Responsibly. Serve Joyfully.

2023-24 Tuition and Re-Enrollment Information

It was just a little over three years ago that our world stopped and closed as the mysterious COVID-19 virus spread like wildfire. St. Benedict Prep, like all schools in Illinois had to pivot to remote learning for the remainder of the school year. United in faith, with the strength of our community and the blessings of foresight in technological investments, we were able to pivot smoothly to remote learning. With courage, we opened in the fall of 2020 for in-person learning, implementing many mitigation strategies to keep our faculty, staff and students safe. We were able to complete the 2020-21 school year safely and successfully, and our students benefitted from being in-person for most of the year. During the 2021-22, we were able to reinstate many aspects of our school program that had been put on hold the year before: clubs, athletics, and in-person events. We pulled these activities off safely despite the challenges of the Delta and Omicron variants. We were able to be with each other in-person, celebrate the blessings of our community, and see your children thrive.

During the current 2022-23 school year, we've been able to enjoy almost all aspects of our traditional school program and extra-curricular program once again without having to give much thought to COVID-19. Our current challenges are also our nation's challenges: the teacher shortage, supporting student mental health and learning loss, and strengthening a faith community that embraces diversity and inclusion. Providing Catholic education has been no small feat over the past three years. I cannot fully express my gratitude to the faculty and staff who have been with us through these past three years, as well as the supportive families of SBPS. The past three years have challenged us, but through all of this, God continues to bless our St. Benedict Parish and School.

As we have now returned to typical school routines, we are able to look forward with a long-term lens. This past year, the SBPS Advisory Board, with the input of many stakeholders, has been authoring a new strategic plan that will guide us through the next 5 years. This strategic plan addresses how we hope to make the most of opportunities and challenges on the horizon. We will be continue focusing on being a leading Catholic school who cultivates well-rounded, academically challenged students by continuing to promote the vibrancy of SBPS while evolving the campus spaces and responsibly investing financially in the future. In a few weeks, we plan to roll out this new strategic plan. Thank you to all who have helped shape this vision.

Each year, the school administration in consultation with the School Advisory Board sets tuition rates for the coming school year. Our goal is to keep a quality, Catholic education affordable, while investing in programs, facilities, personnel, and our long-term plans. Tuition increases are carefully considered and are not recommended casually.

After much thoughtful consideration, the following adjustments have been made to the 2023-24 Tuition Rates:

- There is a 5.5% increase on all programs: preschool, elementary school and middle school.
- The parishioner discount will be applied to the family's overall tuition, rather than per student.
- All other fees will remain the same with the exception of the 8th grade graduation fee (increasing \$50).
- Extended care fees remain the same as last year.

There are several factors impacting the cost of tuition for the coming year:

- An average 5-6% salary increase for faculty and staff
- Health insurance increased \$850 per benefits-eligible employee (we have over 80)
- Other Archdiocesan-mandated fees and costs increased by 10%
- General increases from vendors and service providers

Employee salaries and benefits make up over 85% of our total operating expenses and we are grateful for the staff we have! We often have parents ask us how we can pay our teachers and staff more. The Office of Catholic Schools, which is part of the Chicago Archdiocese, mandates salaries and pay increases for schools and is doing their best to raise salaries for teachers while being mindful of the impact on tuition. While the increase in tuition may at first appear to be considerable, please know that most of it is going to well-deserved salary increases for our faculty and staff. Please keep in mind that the starting salary for a Catholic school teacher for the 2023-24 school year is \$35,000, well below what they would earn at a public school. Through leadership and committee stipends, clubs and coaching, we are able to provide, on average, an additional \$6K each in stipends to our teachers. This money is mostly funded through important fundraisers like our Annual School Fund and Gala which support operating costs. We are doing everything we can to pay faculty and staff a just salary. Thank you for your continued support of the Annual School Fund and the Gala.

Please remember that the cost of tuition is mostly all-inclusive. There are no mandatory volunteer hours or fundraising. Most school supplies and curriculum materials are included. Parents can read the tuition charts for a full listing of what tuition dollars actually provide.

Finally, I would also like to thank the 30 families who referred 35 NEW students to SBPS this past year alone. These families each received a small "referral credit" for encouraging friends, neighbors and prospective families to consider SBPS for their children. The additional new students help us also keep the annual tuition increases as small as possible. We are pleased to have a number of new families also joining us for the 2023-24 school year. Parent WORD OF MOUTH is our best form of advertising! We respectfully ask families to consider spreading the good word about SBPS! Your good word might turn into a "referral credit" next spring. This program will help SBPS continue to flourish as well as help families afford SBPS.