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November 30th, 2023

Dear Parents of Saint Thomas:

As we look to the future of our beloved school, we know that enrollment will be key to our success on many fronts. Sadly, we have faced a 36% decline in enrollment over the past several years. As a result, from a financial perspective, this has caused strain on other ministries within the parish. Therefore, we must do all that we can to increase enrollment at our school while balancing the need to accept only qualified students who can and will be successful here.

The advantages of growth are numerous. First, growth in numbers will enhance the experience of our current students while still having a commitment to personalized class sizes. Second, we do in fact have empty seats that can and should be filled with the hope of lowering the cost to educate a child. The objective of implementing new enrollment and retention practices will not only help our families, but the entire parish community. A strong and healthy enrollment builds an unshakeable future foundation for STS. It provides the opportunity for our current and future families to establish roots and become legacy families for years to come.

To help us achieve these goals for growth, we are implementing a Transfer Grant Program that will Provide incentives for new families to come to our school in the next several months and in preparation for the 2024-2025 school year. We hope that you will consider joining the movement in helping us spread the word about our beloved school. How can you help? Here’s how!

**The Transfer Grant Program**

* Effective immediately, a $1000 grant will be offered to all students transferring into STS in grades 1-7 from public, private or charter schools starting now until August 2024. Students from other parish schools in our Deanery do not qualify for this grant opportunity as we wish to have our neighbors remain strong.
* If a student transfers to STS at any point and claims a current STS family as their sponsor family, the current family will receive a $300 waiver for book and tech fees in 2024-2025.
* The transfer student must be first accepted to the school and remain at the school for the remainder of the school year.
* Current families will not receive any waivers or credits if a sponsored transfer student is asked to leave the school for behavioral or academic reasons.
* For graduating families in spring of 2024 who bring in new families between November and June, a $300 credit will be applied to 2023-2024 tuition.
* Students from other parish schools in our Deanery do not qualify for this as we wish to have our other schools remain strong.

It is our sincere hope that this program, which has been successful in other parts of the country, will help us to secure our future that we are all seeking as we work towards our 100th Anniversary as a school. We want this future to be built on optimism, quality, and excellence so that our next 100 years will continue to shape the lives of young people. We look forward to your support as you help us embrace and promote this new and exciting initiative!

Sincerely,

Rev. Robert Jones – Pastor Mrs. Gina Houston - Principal

**Frequently Asked Questions**

1. **Can students who left STS take advantage of this?**

**Yes! So long as they left on good terms and go through the process of being admitted to the school.**

1. **If a family comes to STS under this program and they have multiple children, does each child get the $1000 grant?**

**Yes! A family with 2 children will receive $2000 and so on.**

1. **If our current family is used as a sponsor family, will we get $300 in waivers EACH time we sponsor an individual student?**

**Yes! If you bring three students into the school under this program, we will waive $900 beginning first with your fees.**

1. **Who is the intended audience for this program?**

**We are looking for families who will enhance our school from any part of the community including our own parish, our local Hispanic community, our religious education programs, and the programs in our other parishes like Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton and Saint Mary – Huntley.**

1. **Is there a limit to how many students you will accept under this program?**

**We believe that optimal enrollment for STS in grades K-8 is 240-250 students. Our goal for this Transfer Grant Program is to increase enrollment by at least 15-20 students over the next several months.**

1. **How long is this available for new families?**

**The program begins today and continues through August 2024 provided we still have seats available for students. We hope students consider transferring to STS in January at the start of the new semester and again for the new school year. Families can apply to transfer at any time.**

1. **Have we thought about doing anything like this as an incentive for families in the Pre-K so that they enroll with us for Kindergarten?**

**Yes! We are looking at ways to retain as many students as possible from our wonderful Little Saints Pre-School. Among those are financial incentives but we have to do more analysis before committing to this.**