



Archbishop Riordan High School

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February 4, 2020

# Community Report: Riordan's New Direction

**Prepared For:**  
ARHS Community

**Presented By:**  
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Tim Reardon, Principal



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# Archbishop Riordan High School

## Community Report

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## I. Introduction

Dear Archbishop Riordan High School Community,

In this document you will find the results of the exploration that led to the ultimate decision to begin accepting girls to Riordan starting in the 2020–21 school year. A great deal of information was collected, analyzed, and presented between the announcement of Mercy's closure on Friday, January 10 and Archbishop Cordileone's final approval on Wednesday, January 29 at 2:10 pm. My hope is that this document will help clarify the expedited pace with which the recommendation was proposed and finalized. We are now developing a comprehensive plan to prepare us for the first day of school on August 20.

The **timeline** of events will give you a sense for the condensed timeframe of the process, as well as the many meetings, conversations, and approvals that were necessary to arrive at a decision. I provide an overview of the **key stakeholder meetings** held and votes taken (in certain cases) with the ARHS administration, Board of Trustees, and the Archdiocese of San Francisco. The **community response** survey results give a general sense for major stakeholder groups' stances on the topic. In addition, please read the **summary** and the **updates** to learn about what comes next in our process.

Looking forward to the future,  
Andrew Currier, President



**January 10**

- Community notification of Mercy's June closure

**January 11**

- Message from Riordan to the community regarding the closure
- Internal Administration Meeting—determine to explore the possibility

**January 12**

- Request a meeting with the Superintendent and Associate Superintendent
- Request a special Executive Committee meeting with the Board of Trustees for January 14

**January 13**

- Meeting with Superintendent Lyons and Assoc. Superintendent Schild—permission granted to explore the possibility and gauge the level of interest
- Faculty and Staff Meeting addressing the exploration
- Meeting with Mercy SF Head of School Sister Carolyn Krohn and Catholic schools (Mercy B, ICA, SI, SHCP, Convent, Notre Dame Belmont, and Riordan)
- Let the schools know we are considering the possibility and will keep the group posted on whether or not Riordan would be a viable option

**January 14**

- Executive Committee Session with the Board of Trustees
- A motion is made and a unanimous vote by the Ex-Com supports exploring the co-ed possibility
- Chairman Steven Herrera calls for a full, special Board of Trustees session on January 16

**January 15**

- Meeting with the Moderator of the Curia and Vicar for Administration for the Archdiocese of San Francisco
- Special Parent Board Session scheduled for January 17
- Parent Board poll taken; considerable amount of feedback sent from parent board members
- First Student Survey deployed; discussion sessions held



### January 16

- Board of Trustees Meeting
- Motion to accept applications from Mercy students is denied 13 (opposed) – 5 (in favor)
- Motion to explore the possibility and gauge the level of interest from Mercy students carried 17 (in favor) – 1 (opposed)
- A follow up special session is slated for January 24

### January 17

- Chaminade Day Award Ceremony and Mass (Steve Mayer, recipient)
- President Currier thanks the community for their thoughtful input and consideration of the possibility of accepting girls
- President Currier is granted a meeting with Archbishop Cordileone, Superintendent Lyons, Moderator of the Curia Piderit, SJ, Associate Superintendent Schild, CFO Passarello, and Associate Superintendent Morey requesting permission to explore and plan for the possibility of accepting girls at Riordan
- It is clear that Riordan must preserve single gender classes to the extent possible
- Archbishop Cordileone supports the possibility given a sufficient level of interest
- Special Parent Board Meeting: considerable opposition with a few members open to the possibility
- General/Open Meeting: Stakeholder groups well-represented; a broad range of viewpoints are voiced

### January 18

- Draft messaging to the community
- Report summary from the meetings to the Board of Trustees

### January 19

- Issue a community wide message and FAQ regarding the exploration

### January 20

- Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday

### January 21

- President Currier meets with Sister Carolyn Krohn
- Request permission to put a survey of interest on the Mercy website (denied)
- Parent Survey deployed
- Alumni Survey deployed



**January 22**

- President Currier meets with Clint Reilly and the Bay Scholars Staff
- Bay Scholars Program gives full support for co-education
- Board Meeting postponed until Tuesday, January 28
- Moderator of the Curia, Fr. Piderit, SJ issues a letter of support of the process of exploration

**January 23**

- Open House at Mercy (135/155 Mercy students complete the survey; 83 indicate Riordan as 1st choice, if given the opportunity to apply)
- Alumni Board Chair calls for comments from Alumni board members

**January 24**

- Alumni and Parent Surveys close

**January 25**

- Crab Feed
- Prepare report of findings to the Board of Trustees

**January 26**

- Prepare report of findings to the Board of Trustees

**January 27**

- Senior Leadership Meeting to discuss draft report to the Board of Trustees
- Full Administration Meeting to present findings and vote; vote carries 15–5
- Deploy second survey to the student body

**January 28**

- Faculty and Staff Meeting to present findings
- Board of Trustees Meeting to present findings (5:00–9:00 pm)
- Administration makes a recommendation to the Board of Trustees to accept girls to Riordan for the 2020–21 school year
- Board of Trustees votes, motion carries with 14 (yeas) and 5 (neases)\*  
\*1 board member votes in opposition in absentia



## Archbishop Riordan High School Community Report

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## II. Timeline

### January 29

- Request Archbishop Cordileone (in Rome at the time) to accept female applicants
- Archbishop Cordileone grants permission at 2:10 pm
- Application opens up online at 5:00 pm
- Student Assembly postponed due to timing
- Parents are notified of decision
- Community is notified of decision

### January 30

- Media inquiries from KQED, KTVU, ABC
- PA announcement to students that Riordan will be accepting girls for the following year

### January 31

- 9:00 am Student Assembly; President Currier addresses students
- 178 applications received as of 3:30 pm



#### **January 13: Meeting with Superintendent Pam Lyons and Associate Superintendent Jonathan Schild**

President Currier requests permission to explore the possibility of admitting girls to Riordan. Superintendent Lyons and Assoc. Superintendent Schild give counsel of what factors to consider and reiterate that Archbishop Cordileone would have to be the final decision maker. Superintendent Lyons requests that President Currier gauges the community's disposition on the topic.

#### **January 14: Executive Committee Session**

The 8 members of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees gather with President Currier, Principal Tim Reardon, Director of Development John Ring, and Director of Admissions Danny Curtin to discuss Mercy's closure and the exploration of the possibility of accepting girls at Riordan. The Executive Committee votes in favor of exploring the possibility and convening the full Board of Trustees.

#### **January 16: Mentor Group Discussions**

Teachers and students consider some questions regarding the possibility of accepting girls at Riordan. Input from the students is given to the administration.

#### **January 16: Board of Trustees Meeting**

Currier, Reardon, Ring, and Curtin present current data on the topic. The Board of Trustees considers a motion to appeal directly to the Mercy families and begin accepting applications for the 2020–21 school year with the Board's support, acknowledging that the Archbishop would make the ultimate decision. This Board denies the motion. The Board nearly unanimously passes a second motion to continue exploring the possibility and gauge interest from Mercy students and parents. Chairman Herrera schedules another follow up special session for Friday, January 24.

#### **January 17 at 2:00 pm: Meeting with the Archdiocese**

President Currier meets with Archbishop Cordileone, Moderator of the Curia—Father Piderit, SJ, Superintendent Lyons, Associate Superintendent Schild, Associate Superintendent Morey, CFO Joe Passarello. It is agreed to continue the exploration process and to gauge the level of interest among the Mercy students at the January 23 Mercy Open House.

#### **January 17 at 4:00 pm: Parent Board Meeting**

Currier, Reardon, Curtin, and Ring discuss the possibility and topic of accepting girls to Riordan with the Parent Board members. The Parent Board members voice significant concern especially as the topic seemed rushed. There is concern about the boys' experience being affected by the change and the anxiety of the change for both the boys and the parents. Administrators share information about the enrollment trends and key factors that inspired such an exploration on such a short timeline. A few mothers voice openness to the possibility, but the majority are opposed to any further consideration unless it were considered well into the future.



#### **January 17 at 6:30 pm: General/Open Meeting**

This meeting is well attended with over 300 members of the community including parents, alumni, teachers, staff, students, and former parents. Currier and Reardon present on the key factors inspiring the exploration and describe the exploration process. Academic Dean Michael O'Brien is on hand to discuss how scheduling and single gender classes could possibly work. The floor is opened to questions and concerns. There are a broad array of viewpoints on the topic. Some parents are genuinely concerned while others are open to the possibility.

#### **January 22 at 12:45 pm: Professional Development Meeting with Teachers and Staff**

President Currier presents on the exploration process and findings to this point. Teachers and staff work together to propose questions and possible solutions to such a transition.

#### **January 27: Full Administration Meeting**

The full administrative team meets to discuss the report to the Board of Trustees. A vote is taken after the presentation of findings. 15 administrators vote in favor of accepting female students for the 2020–21 academic year, with 5 that requested more information.

#### **January 28: Board of Trustees Meeting**

Currier, Reardon, Ring, and Curtin present a full report to the Board of Trustees, covering the following topics:

1. Current enrollment trends
2. Current enrollment at Riordan
3. Community/Stakeholder dispositions on the survey questions
4. Level of interest from Mercy students and families
5. Impact on Development
6. Staff requirements and costs
7. Facilities requirements and costs
8. Financial projections

President Currier delivers a recommendation on behalf of the administration to accept Mercy students and incoming girl applications for the 2020–21 school year. The Board of Trustees are given time to ask questions and comment. The motion passes with 14 in favor and 5 opposed.



Several surveys were deployed to help the leadership, the Board of Trustees, and the Archdiocese of San Francisco gain a sense of the community's disposition on the topic of accepting girls.

The results indicate a general openness to the idea of adopting a co-educational model over a longer, strategic planning cycle.

Mr. Ray Dominguez, our Religious Studies Chair and a doctoral student, assisted us in deploying the survey to various stakeholder groups including students, parents, teachers and staff, and alumni. We appreciate that Mr. Dominguez went above and beyond to assist us in the data collection and was on hand at the Board of Trustees meeting to answer technical questions about the survey.

The initial student survey was handled by Mr. Chris Fern, History Department Chair. The questions were intended to gauge the students' disposition on key questions and topics. The second student survey was adapted so that an analysis could be made in comparison to the other stakeholder groups' disposition on certain general questions.

Following are the survey results.

- Parent Survey – p. 9
- Alumni Survey – p. 11
- Student Surveys – p. 13
- Faculty/Staff Survey – p. 22



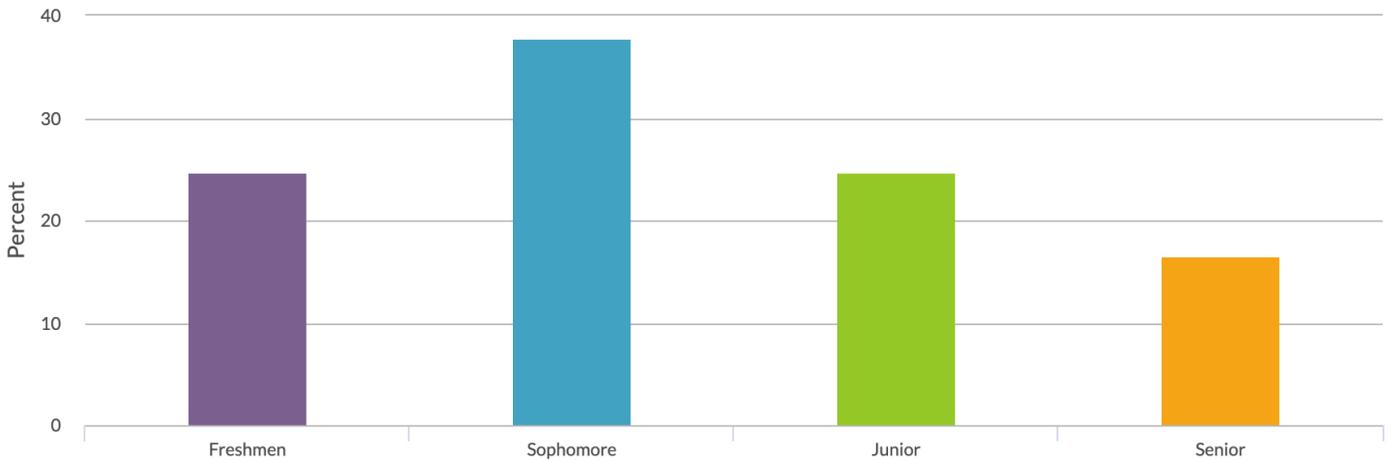
**Parent Survey Results:**

- 458 total responses
- 24.5% in favor of accepting girls for the 2020–21 school year
- 60.2% not in favor of accepting girls for the 2020–21 school year
- 53.3% support the idea of adding a co-educational model to Riordan’s 5 Year Strategic Plan

**Response Counts**



**2. What grade level is(are) your son(s)?**

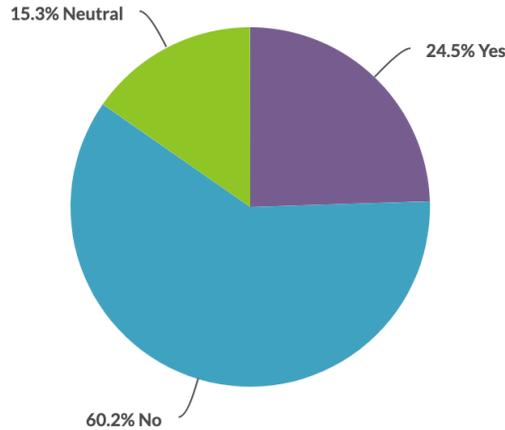


Value	Percent	Responses
Freshmen	 24.7%	113
Sophomore	 37.8%	173
Junior	 24.7%	113
Senior	 16.6%	76



Parent Survey Results Cont.

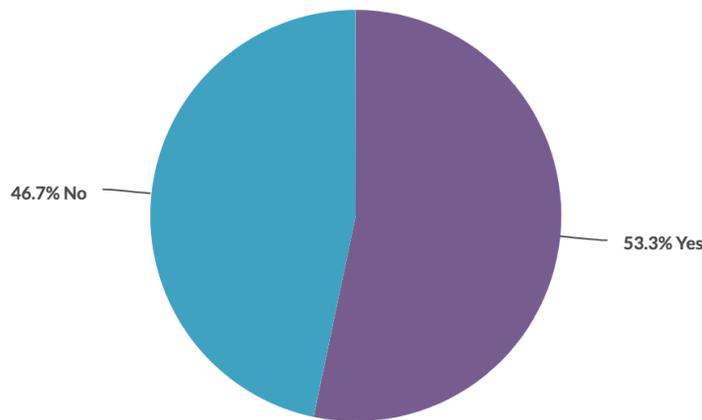
3. Are you in favor of accepting girls at Archbishop Riordan High School for the 2020-21 academic year?



Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	24.5%	112
No	60.2%	275
Neutral	15.3%	70

Totals: 457

4. Do you support the idea of adding a co-educational model to Riordan's 5 Year Strategic Plan?



Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	53.3%	242
No	46.7%	212

Totals: 454



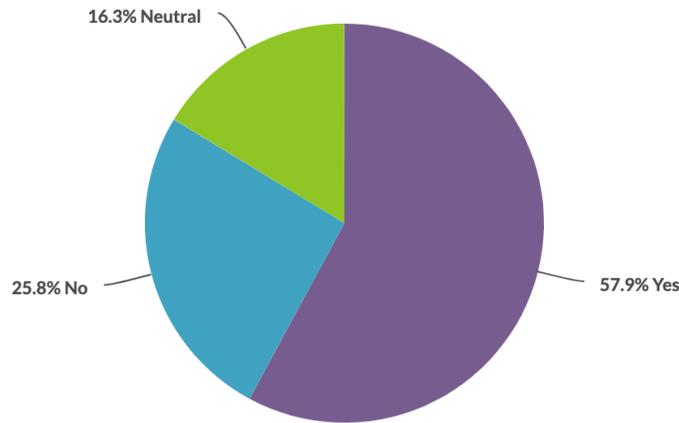
**Alumni Survey Results:**

- 758 total responses
- 57.9% in favor of accepting girls for the 2020–21 school year
- 25.8% not in favor of accepting girls for the 2020–21 school year
- 74.9% support the idea of adding a co-educational model to Riordan’s 5 Year Strategic Plan

**Response Counts**



3. Are you in favor of accepting girls at Archbishop Riordan High School for the 2020-21 academic year?



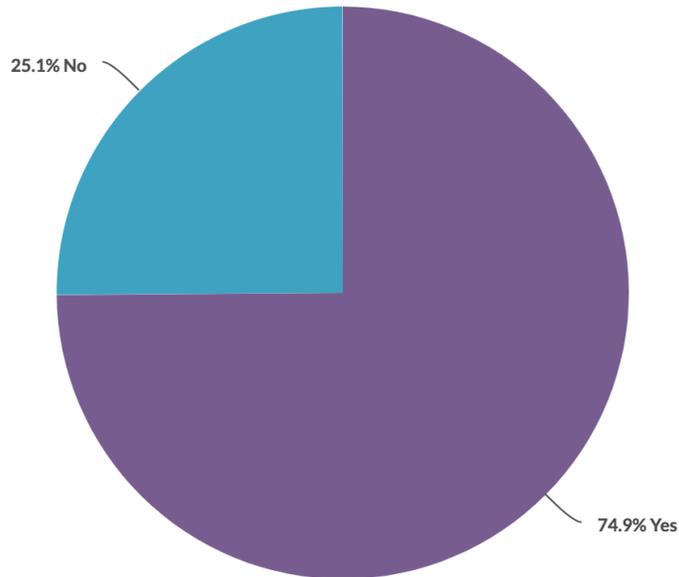
Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	57.9%	438
No	25.8%	195
Neutral	16.3%	123

**Totals: 756**



Alumni Survey Results Cont.

4. Do you support the idea of adding a co-educational model to Riordan's 5 Year Strategic Plan?



Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	74.9%	566
No	25.1%	190

Totals: 756

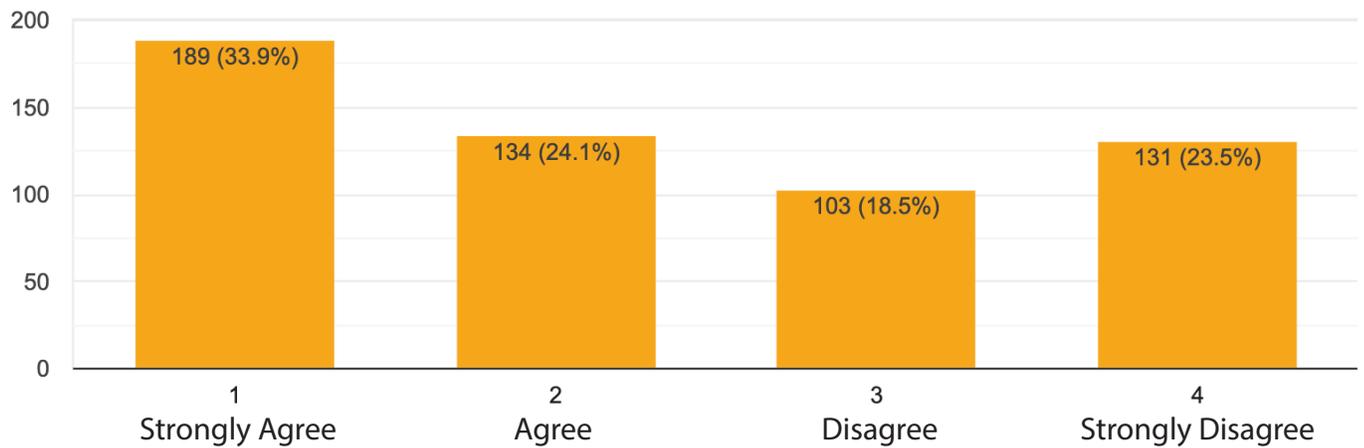


**First Student Survey Results:**

- 557 total responses
- 58% Agree/Strongly Agree with “I am open to having co-ed educational programs at Riordan”
- 42% Disagree/Strongly Disagree with “I am open to having co-ed educational programs at Riordan”

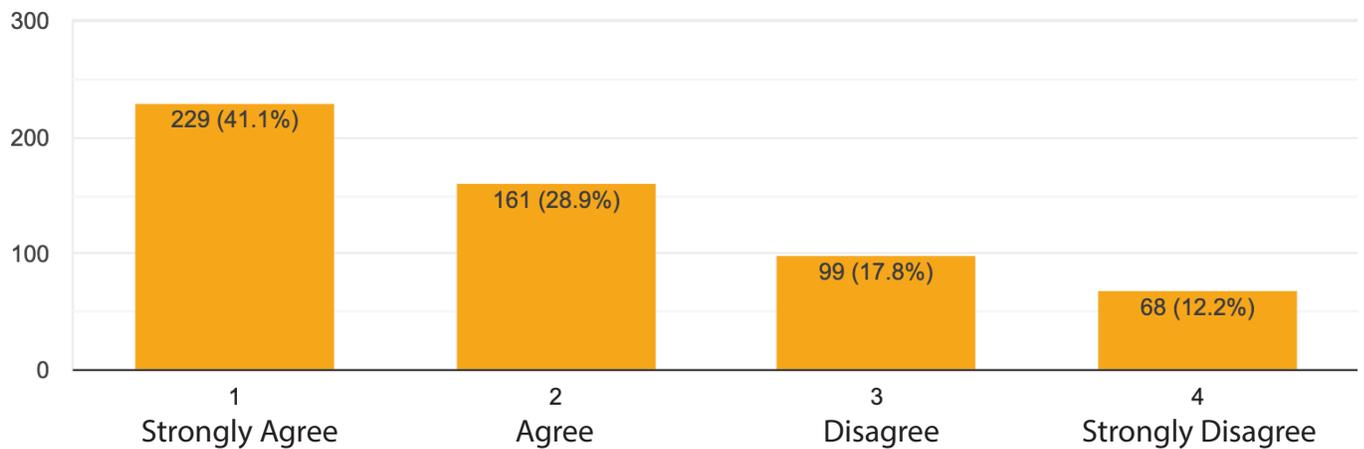
**1. I am open to having a co-ed (dual-gender) educational programs at Riordan**

557 responses



**2. I believe that Riordan should help the Mercy girls complete their high school education**

557 responses

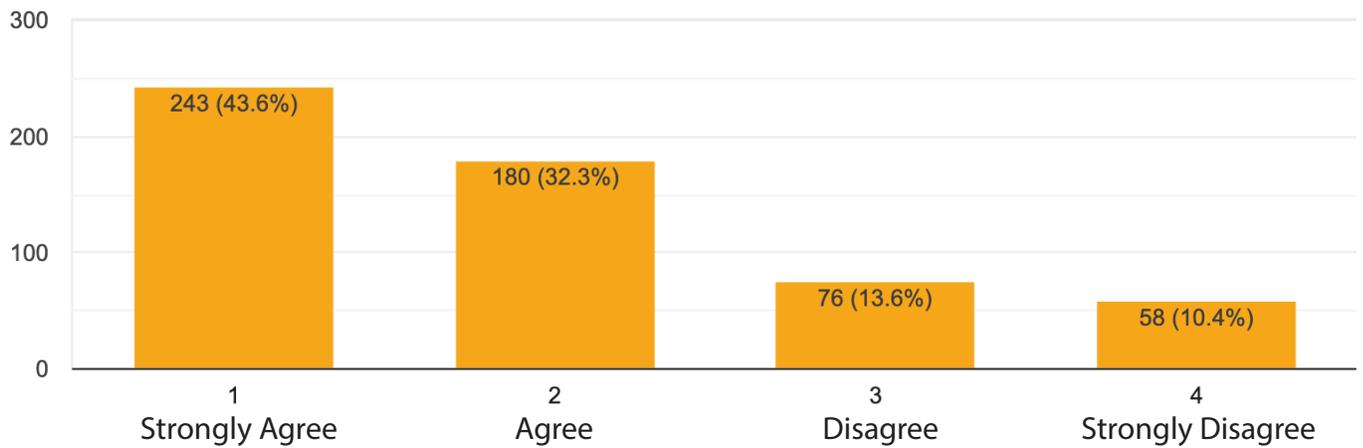




First Student Survey Results Cont.

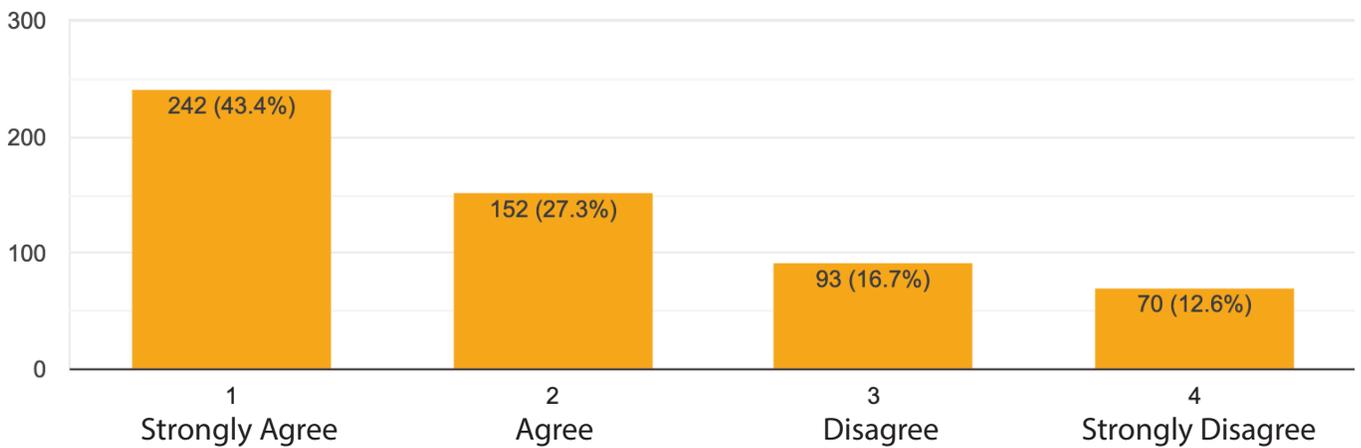
3. The Mercy High Class of 2021 (currently juniors) should have the opportunity to stay together as a group and graduate as a single class from a single school

557 responses



4. If Riordan is the only place where the Mercy Class of 2021 can graduate together, then we should help them

557 responses

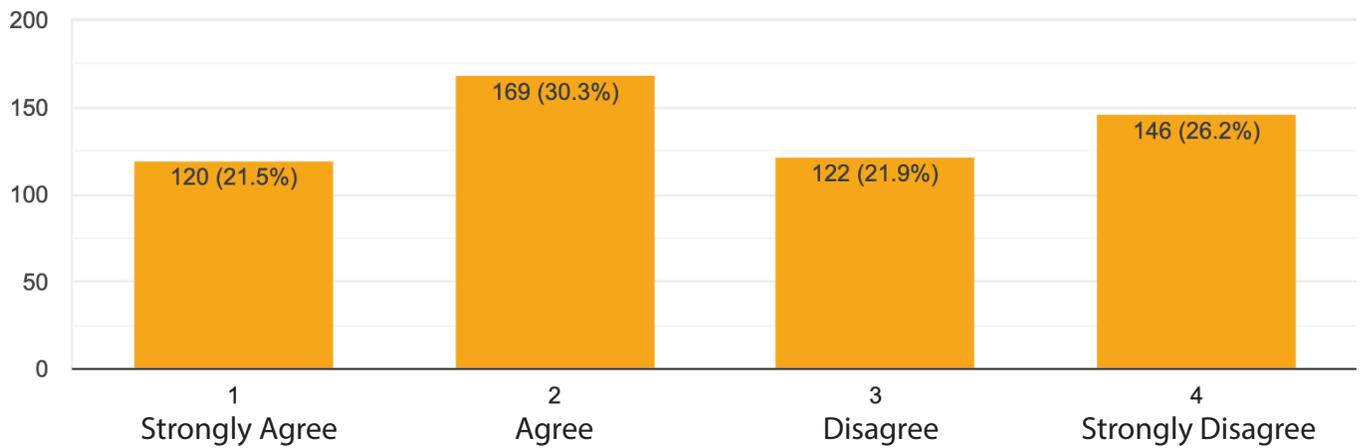




First Student Survey Results Cont.

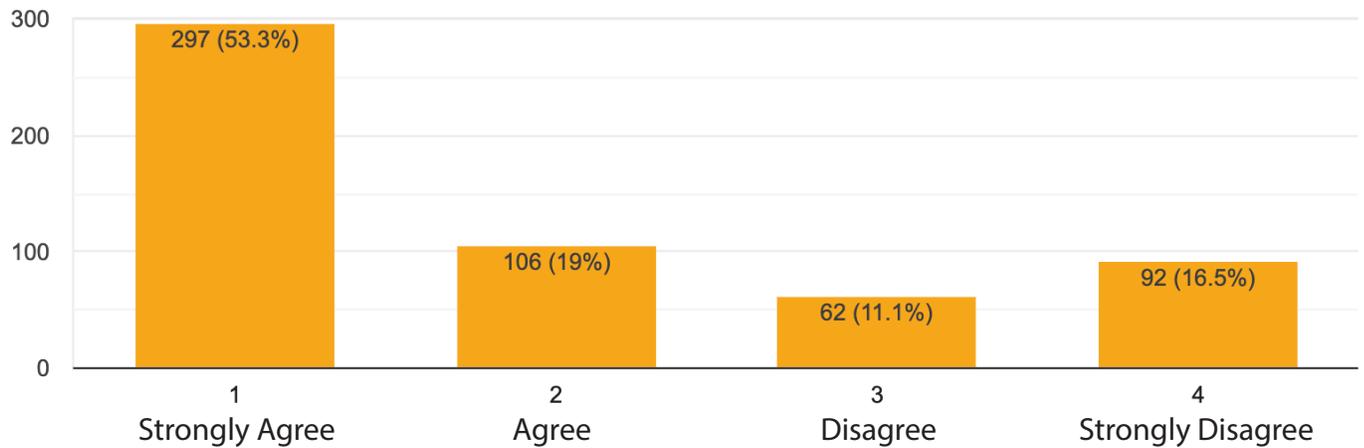
5. I am more accepting of the idea of adding girls to the Riordan community if there is a maximum of 50 girls per grade level at this time

557 responses



6. I would not be likely to leave if girls attended Riordan

557 responses

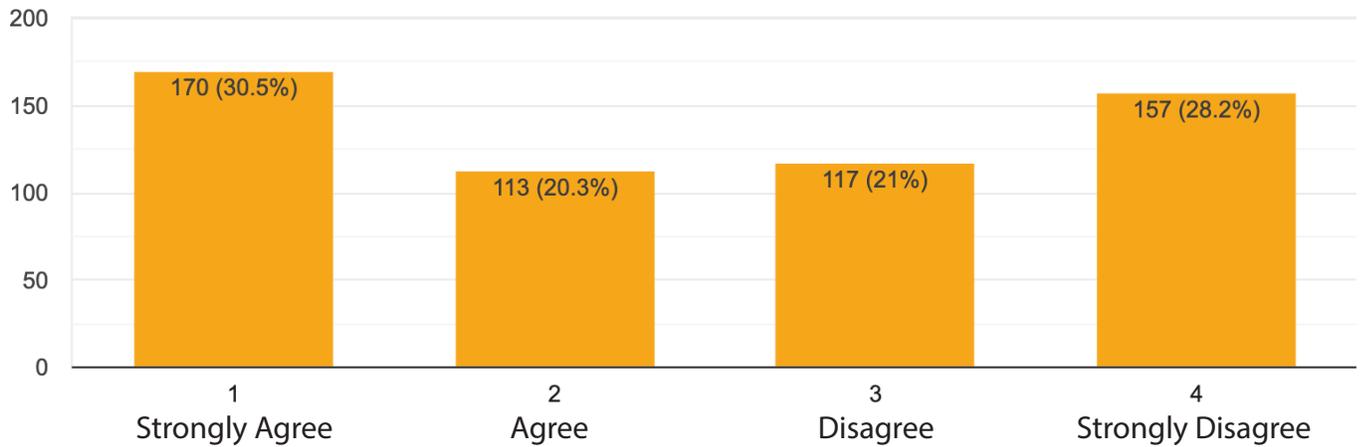




First Student Survey Results Cont.

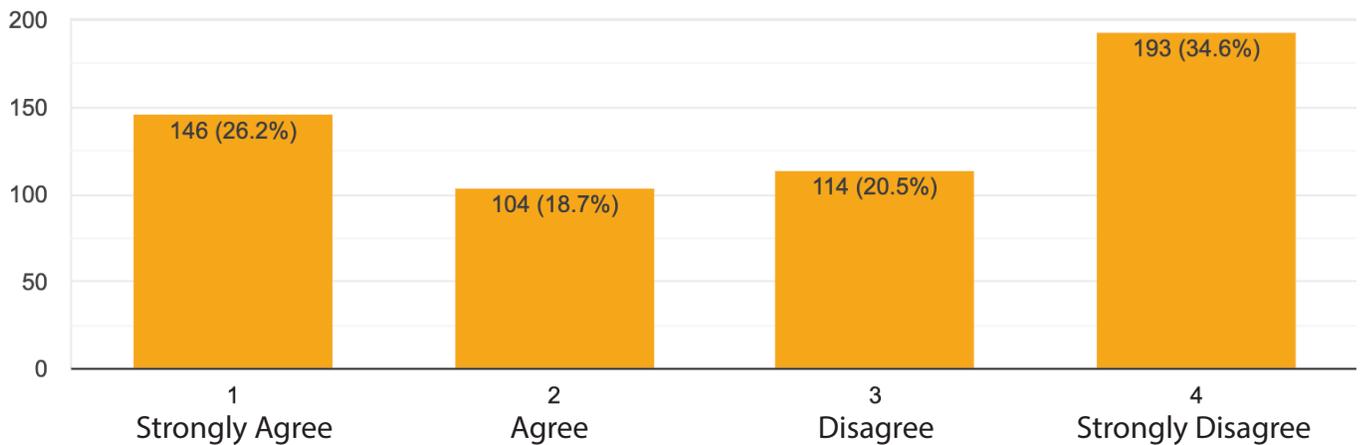
7. If Riordan were co-ed, I believe that most individual classes should remain single-gender

557 responses



8. If Riordan were co-ed, I believe mentor groups should remain single-gender

557 responses

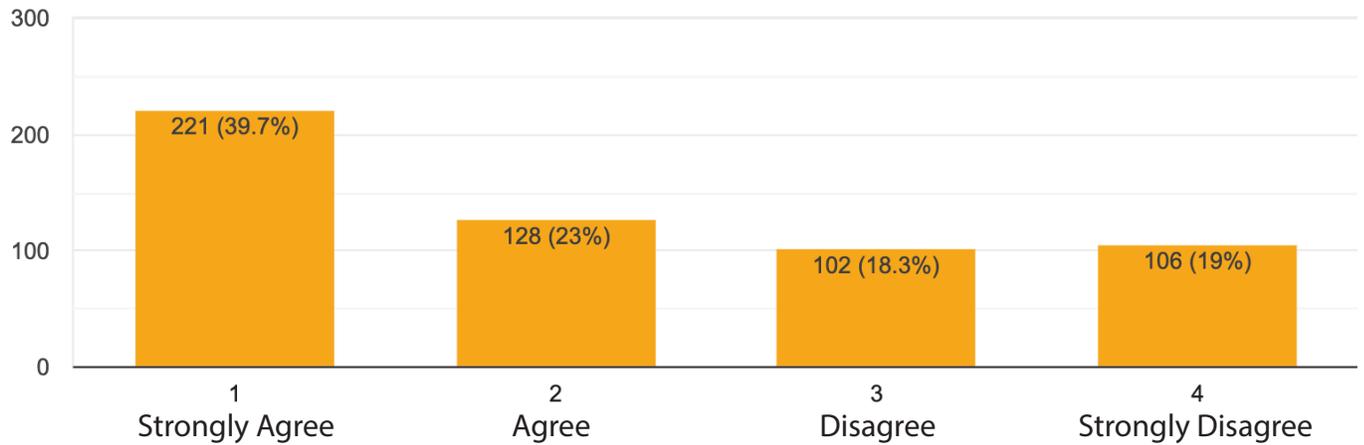




First Student Survey Results Cont.

9. Riordan should consider going co-ed within the next ten years

557 responses





**Second Student Survey Results:**

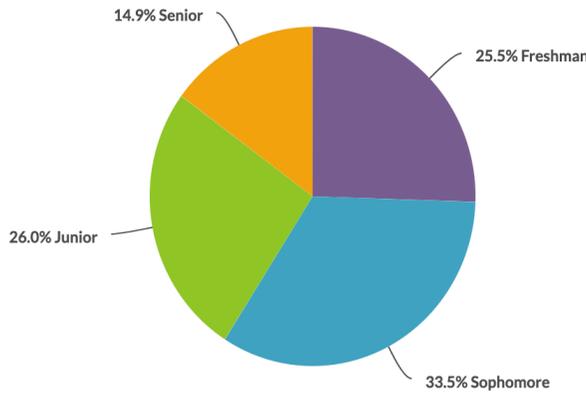
- 462 total responses
- 37.4% in favor of accepting girls for the 2020–21 school year, 35.7% neutral, 26.8% opposed
- 67.7% support the idea of adding a co-educational model to Riordan’s 5 Year Strategic Plan
- 69.9% would definitely or probably not leave for another school if Riordan went co-ed
- All-Boys was the 5th most important factor that led students to attend Riordan

**Response Counts**



Totals: 462

1. Please indicate your current grade level.



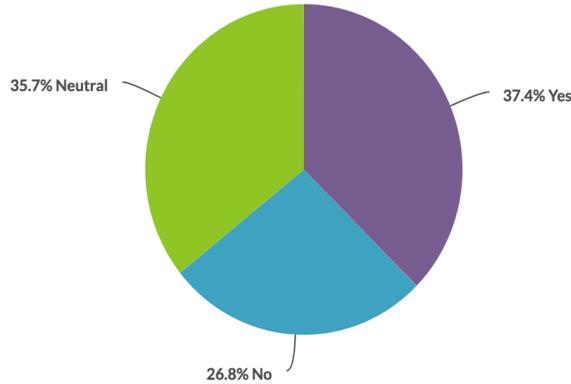
Value	Percent	Responses
Freshman	25.5%	118
Sophomore	33.5%	155
Junior	26.0%	120
Senior	14.9%	69

Totals: 462



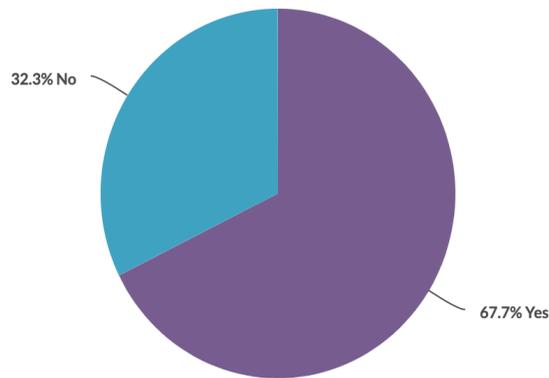
Second Student Survey Results Cont.

3. Are you in favor of accepting girls at Archbishop Riordan High School for the 2020-21 academic year?



Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	37.4%	173
No	26.8%	124
Neutral	35.7%	165
		Totals: 462

4. Do you support the idea of adding a co-educational model to Riordan's 5 Year Strategic Plan?

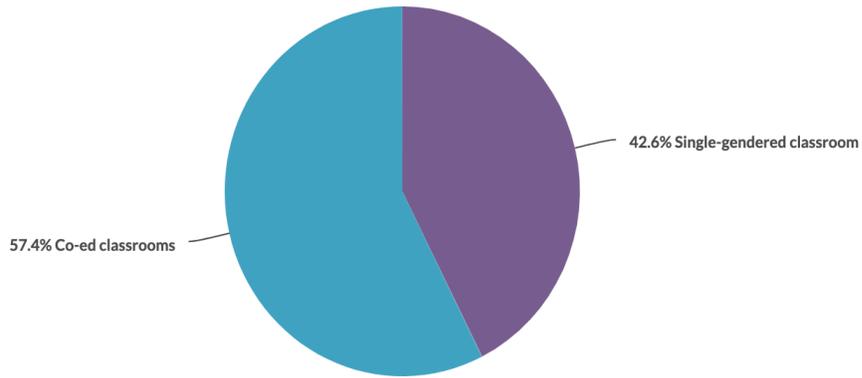


Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	67.7%	313
No	32.3%	149
		Totals: 462



Second Student Survey Results Cont.

5. If Riordan were to accept girls, which situation would you prefer?



Value	Percent	Responses
Single-gendered classroom	42.6%	197
Co-ed classrooms	57.4%	265
		Totals: 462

6. Rank, in order of importance from 1 (Most Important) to 6 (Least Important), what led you to decide to attend Riordan.

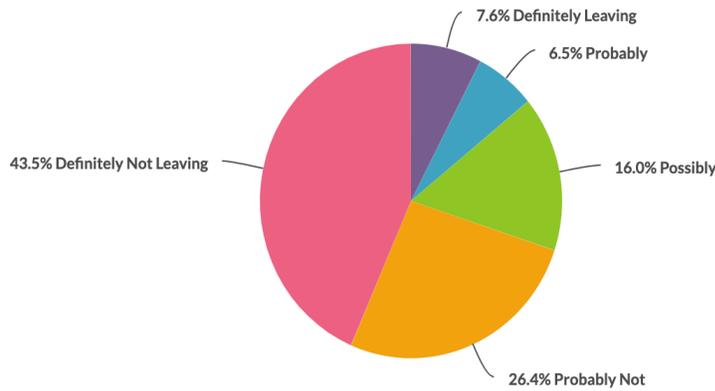
Item	Overall Rank	Rank Distribution	Score	No. of Rankings
Academics	1		2,022	458
Athletics	2		1,680	458
Activities	3		1,611	457
Financial Aid	4		1,541	458
All-Boys	5		1,529	458
Catholic Marianist Identity	6		1,233	457

Lowest Rank      Highest Rank



Second Student Survey Results Cont.

7. If Riordan does go co-ed, how likely would you be to leave and go to another school?



Value		Percent	Responses
Definitely Leaving		7.6%	35
Probably		6.5%	30
Possibly		16.0%	74
Probably Not		26.4%	122
Definitely Not Leaving		43.5%	201

Totals: 462



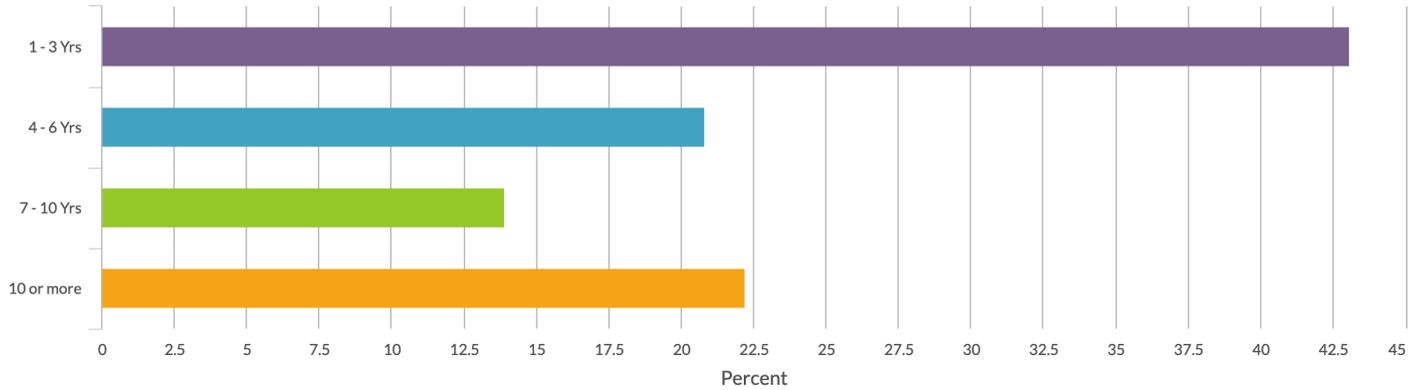
**Faculty/Staff Survey Results:**

- 72 total responses (46 faculty and 26 staff)
- 40.3% in favor of accepting girls for the 2020–21 school year, 20.8% neutral, 38.9% opposed
- 90.3% support the idea of adding a co-educational model to Riordan’s 5 Year Strategic Plan
- 53.5% think going co-ed would change Riordan’s culture for the better
- 21.1% think Riordan’s culture would stay the same, 25.4% think it would change for the worse

**Response Counts**



**2. How many years have you worked at Riordan?**



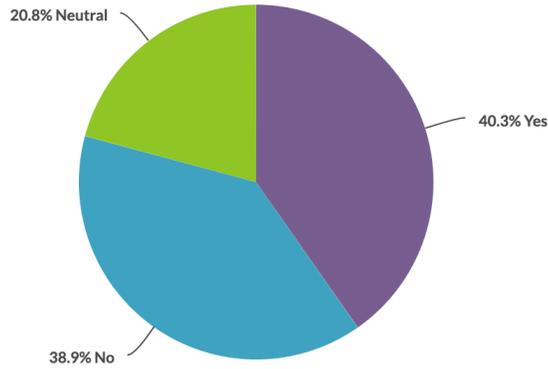
Value	Percent	Responses
1 - 3 Yrs	43.1%	31
4 - 6 Yrs	20.8%	15
7 - 10 Yrs	13.9%	10
10 or more	22.2%	16

**Totals: 72**



Faculty/Staff Survey Results Cont.

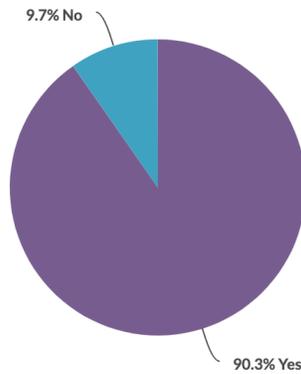
4. Are you in favor of accepting girls at Archbishop Riordan High School for the 2020-21 academic year?



Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	40.3%	29
No	38.9%	28
Neutral	20.8%	15

Totals: 72

5. Do you support the idea of adding a co-educational model to Riordan's 5 Year Strategic Plan?



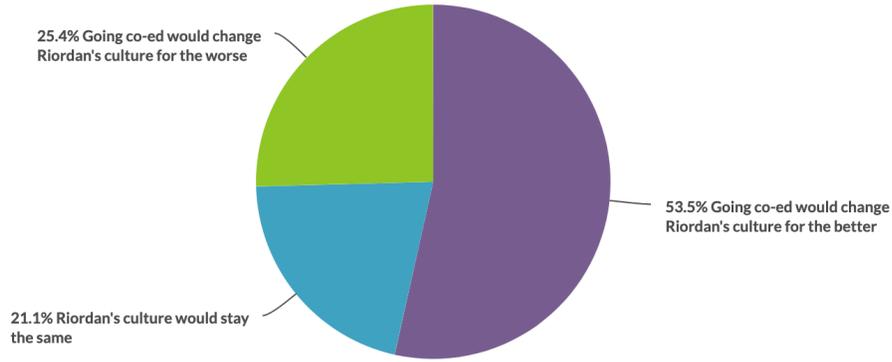
Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	90.3%	65
No	9.7%	7

Totals: 72



Faculty/Staff Survey Results Cont.

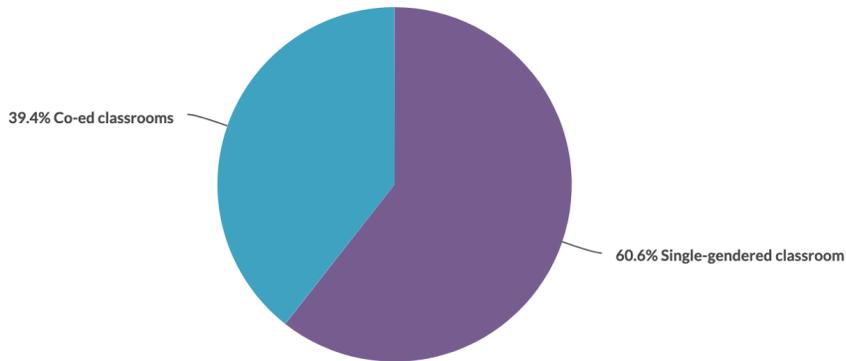
6. Which statement do you agree with the most?



Value	Percent	Responses
Going co-ed would change Riordan's culture for the better	53.5%	38
Riordan's culture would stay the same	21.1%	15
Going co-ed would change Riordan's culture for the worse	25.4%	18

Totals: 71

7. If Riordan were to accept girls, which situation would you prefer?



Value	Percent	Responses
Single-gendered classroom	60.6%	43
Co-ed classrooms	39.4%	28

Totals: 71



## Archbishop Riordan High School Community Report

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### V. Summary

Mercy High School of San Francisco's announcement of closure prompted an accelerated conversation about the possibility of opening enrollment up to girls of all grade levels. The decision to accept girls for next year was not a unilateral decision, and there was considerable support for the possibility. I firmly believe that this decision will help strengthen the legacy of Riordan High School in the City of San Francisco and beyond for many decades to come. I understand that this decision has caused some of our community members frustration, confusion, and uncertainty, but that it was ultimately a decision that preserves and expands Catholic school access in the Southern part of the City of San Francisco. I appreciate the incredible work that went into gathering sufficient information to make the decision.

The primary factors that led to the decision were national and local enrollment trends, the potential to offer an excellent education to displaced Catholic school students, and the foundational principles of the Characteristics of Marianist Education that call upon Marianist schools to educate in the family spirit and for adaptation and change.

At your service,  
Andrew Currier, President



### Open House

- Riordan will host an Open House for Mercy students and incoming freshman girls on Thursday, February 3
- 450 students and family members have signed up to attend the Open House

### Applications

- Over 250 Mercy students, incoming freshmen, and transfers from other schools have applied to Riordan for next school year

### Information Sessions

- Principal Reardon will host Q+A sessions for students at lunchtime for the next four Wednesdays (February 5, 12, 19, 26)
- President Currier will host informational sessions for parents beginning Wednesday, February 5 at 5:00 pm in the Library

### Transition Team

- Principal Reardon has assembled a team to begin working on aspects of the shift in operations
- A Transition Team page on the website will also list the team members and their roles