

Weekly Eagle News – Head of Schools

My Favorite Parents:

I am working with our leadership team to prepare our draft budget for the coming year. This is a necessary step for being able to provide tuition numbers for you prior to the reenrollment period.

This is always a challenge and even more so as we continue to deal with the dual challenges of inflation and a massive RUSD teacher pay increase that has a crossover effect on our own teacher compensation. However, we are committed to doing everything we can to minimize our tuition increase and ensure sufficient financial aid resources to maintain affordability.

Sometimes I am asked whether or why tuition always increases. Here is the quick answer. 75% of our budget goes to teacher and staff compensation. Without a tuition increase, it would be impossible to provide a compensation increase to our teachers. Knowing that our teachers make less than their public school counterparts and knowing the effects that inflation has on household budgets, I have no desire to put our teachers in that position. We are grateful to them as they are on the frontlines of fulfilling the Christ-centered vision of Redlands Christian Schools.

There are many reminders in our region of how poor decisions related to budgeting lead to the demise of Christian schools. Simply put, if you do not charge as much as it costs you to deliver the education, then you will not be viable for long. At one point our eastern Inland Empire was dotted with independent Christian schools. One by one, nearly every one has closed.

What I love about Redlands Christian is that we remain a great value for our tuition costs. This is perhaps a brave statement in that the chief competitor is “free” to parents – though, in truth, their “costs” are higher both in the dollars per student (cost in taxes) and the social costs. At the end of the day, though, this is a fundamentally different education than what one gets there. The four primary elements of our mission statement (“Christ-centered”, “excellence in Christian education”, “partnering with [parents]” and “partnering with the church”) simply are not part of that education.

Compared to our faith-based competitors, we are in a unique position of being able to offer robust educational electives at all levels, a full complement of athletic programs, opportunities for AP and dual credit courses, newer and safe campuses, Spanish Immersion, special education, expanded STEM offerings and much more while still having the personal relationships that make for a powerful learning environment. We are WASC accredited and have successfully completed the institutional review through CESA, something that only three Christian schools in CA have accomplished.

One change that we are instituting in our cost structure is a deposit fee for being part of the Spanish Immersion program in grades 1-5. The \$250 deposit fee per year is collected for grades 1 through 5, but is then credited towards 6th grade re-enrollment. The reason for this fee is to encourage families who are part of the program to continue in the program to at least middle school. When a student moves from Spanish to English in those grades, they are taking a spot an incoming new student to the school would want in the English classroom and it is nearly impossible to fill the spot on the Spanish side.

Enjoy your week!

Brian