



THE WEEKLY

Warrior

THE PRESIDENT'S NEWSLETTER

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Happy New Year and Welcome to Semester II

I would like to take this opportunity to wish our JPIL school community a belated Happy New Year and welcome staff, students, and families back for the start of the 2nd Semester. It's been a long break and I believe most, particularly parents, are looking forward to the return of the rhythm and routine of the school year.

For the most part, student schedules do not change from one semester to the next, with the exception of those taking semester courses. While there are not a lot of these, some students will experience a slight change in schedule. Students should review their schedules before next week. Monday, January 8 will be a Blue Day.

I would like to welcome new faculty members Mr. Lucas Schatzle (8th grade science/chemistry) and Mr. Victor Ney (music/band). We are excited to see the contributions they will bring to our school. We would also like to welcome five new students and their families to JPIL. Joining us on January 8th will be Micah (7th) and Seth (9th) Cano coming from Holy Trinity Classical Christian School, Stephanie Mora (6th) from River Ridge Academy, Elizabeth Smith (8th) from St. Francis Catholic School, and Savannah Hardy (10th) from Beaufort High School. Please make our new students and families feel part of the JPIL family they are so excited to join. This brings our total enrollment to 369, a net growth of 8 from the start of the school year. There are two additional applications in process which could bring us to 370+.

Enrollment growth brings the reminder of the need for all current students to reenroll for next year. The deadline for **reenrollment is March 1**, however the deadline for **tuition assistance is January 15**. With enrollment expected to reach capacity next year, it is critical that all current students be mindful of these deadlines. Any family applying for aid after January 15 will be placed on a wait list. While every current student is guaranteed a spot, after March 1 we open enrollment to all until the school is filled. We thank the 30% of students who have already reenrolled for next year. Don't delay, reenroll today!

Introducing the Educational Scholarship Trust Fund

After many years of legislative debate, the state of South Carolina has finally put forth a school voucher program that will allow families to use state funds towards private education, including at faith-based schools. This landmark legislation will open the door to educational choice for thousands of students who would not ever have considered the possibility of attending a Catholic school. JP II will likely experience an increase in enrollment as a result, and some of our current families with children in multiple schools stand to benefit.

On May 5, 2023, Governor Henry McMaster signed the Education Scholarship Trust Fund Act into law. This new ESA program—modeled after similar programs around the country—allows qualifying South Carolina parents to apply for a scholarship worth \$6,000. These scholarships may be used to create a customized, flexible education for their child, as outlined below.

To be eligible, students must:

- Be a resident of South Carolina; AND
- Have attended a South Carolina public school during the previous school year, OR have not yet attained the age of five on or before September 1 of the previous school year but have attained the age of five on or before September 1 of the current school year, OR have received a scholarship the previous school year; AND
- Have a household income as follows:
 - School Year 2024-2025 – does not exceed 200% of the federal poverty guidelines.
 - School Year 2025-2026 – does not exceed 300% of the federal poverty guidelines.
 - School year 2026-2027 and subsequent school years – does not exceed 400% of the federal poverty guidelines.

Students currently enrolled in a public charter school, home school students (as defined in Sections 59-65-40 [Option 1], 59-65-45 [Option 2], 59-65-47 [Option 3]), and students participating in the Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children's Fund program (as defined in Section 12-6-3790) **are not eligible** for this scholarship program.

While students currently enrolled at JP II or one of our other Catholic partner schools **are not eligible**, some of our families who also have a child enrolled in public school are eligible. Any family who applies for JP II tuition assistance for a student coming from a public school will be asked to also apply for the ESTF. Those funds should be applied first before JP II aid is considered. It is then possible for a student to be awarded more than \$6,000 when combined with JP II aid.

Scholarships will first be available for the 2024-2025 school year. The law requires that the scholarship application process open no earlier than January 15, 2024, and close no later than March 15, 2024. For more information on this program, as well as how to apply, please click on the link below.

<https://www.classwallet.com/programs/southcarolinaestf/#ed-providers>

Campus Expansion and Capital Campaign Update

Phase I of our Campus Expansion Masterplan continues to move forward. Just before Christmas break, we receive word that DHEC's Office of Coastal Resource Management (OCRM) had issued preliminary approval to move forward with the remainder of Phase I (new parking lot, maintenance building, and athletic fields), as well as Phase II (the Innovation Center). This allows us to move to the next step of obtaining approvals from Jasper County. Expect to see construction taking place on the parking lot and second athletic field this spring. The Innovation Center, depending on the success of the capital campaign, will hopefully be following shortly thereafter. Some important questions to be considered are as follows.

Why do we need two new athletic fields?

The simple answer is to replace the loss of the current multipurpose field (new parking lot) and the practice field (Innovation Center). The other consideration is those two current fields were woefully inadequate to support an athletic program the size and caliber of JPII's. The new soccer field, located just beyond the baseball field, is nearing completion and will be ready in February. The field is regulation sized and features a beautiful sod playing surface. It will be totally enclosed by a 4' fence. New bleachers, a scoreboard, player benches, and goals are on site and ready to be installed. JPII will soon have one of the finest soccer fields around. We are also installing bleachers and a scoreboard for the baseball field as well. The second field, to be located at the site of the future stadium (Phase III), should be underway soon and be ready by next August. This field will serve as a practice field for football in the fall, a second soccer field in the spring, and allow JPII to continue to grow its program to include lacrosse. We are also studying the possibility of an on-site cross-country course for next fall.

What is the status of Phase II?

We are in the final design stages of the Innovation Center, and we expect construction documents to be ready by February. Depending on the success of permitting and the capital campaign (see below), we could begin pre-construction preparation as early as this spring. The building continues to be priced in the \$26,000,000 range, with one more round of pricing to go. We do not expect any major change, plus or minus, at this point. We are currently studying the possibility of adding the capability of offering a grab-n-go food service program to our cafeteria (Commons), perhaps as early as next year. This would replace the kitchen addition in the original plan, saving considerable cost, and accelerating the possibility of students purchasing lunch at school. This design is in the early stages and expect more information in the February update.

How is the Capital Campaign progressing?

Phases I and II will require a significant capital investment in the range of \$30,000,000. While this figure may seem staggering to some, it is the cost of construction now and we expect the price will only increase as the years go by. The school, at 400 students, will be at capacity next year. Furthermore, the facilities available must match the program being offered. You cannot have a STEAM school without more science and art classrooms and a state-of-the-art makerspace. So now is the time.

Financing the project will require a combination of philanthropic giving and borrowing. The more donated means the less that needs to be borrowed. Without an alumni base to rely on, JPII is faced with the task of

support from our community and parent base, both current and alumni. Again, the task may seem daunting, but the alternative is not an option. We thank everyone who has invested in the project to date, but our goal is to triple the \$4.2 million raised so far over the course of 2024. We need every donation, no matter how small or large, to make this vision become our future. If you have not invested yet, please consider what you might be able to do over the next two years. In November, all of you should have received an invitation to participate along with a pledge card. Help us get to the finish line and put a shovel in the ground.

Thank you for your enrollment and investment in JPPI. It is our students and families that remain at the heart of what we do, and for that we are extremely blessed.

In His Purpose,



President

