Dear Parents and Guardians,

I know that we just put away the Christmas decorations, but it is not too early to think about how you will spend your Lent preparing for Easter. One of our moms, Mrs. Brenda Patrick has found a book entitled Holy Heroes Lenten Adventures. This activity book is full of ideas on how to make the 40 days of Lent a good experience for your family. Coming home today is a flier with more information. You can download the book for free or purchase a copy for $14. She will be taking orders until next Monday, February 13th.

This past Monday we had our annual State of the School Address where we look at where we are and what our plans are for the upcoming school year. Thank you to all who attended. After much prayerful consideration and deliberation, the finance committee recommended and the school board approved a 2.5% increase in tuition for the upcoming school year. This is an increase of $170 per student or 92 cents per school day.

On the parent survey sent out last year, parents indicated that they do not have a good understanding of the budgeting process and how tuition is determined. We spent part of the evening reviewing what makes up the budget and our expenses as well as looking at other sources of income the school receives during the school year. This history of expenses and income along with the predictive cohort enrollment tool we use, help us to determine the new tuition.

Our School Board has fiduciary responsibility to all of the stakeholders. In order to keep the tuition increase down, the board voted to use some retained earnings to help offset the actual expenses to balance next year’s budget. The retained earnings have come from approving fiscally conservative budgets over the past several years.

We also spent part of the meeting looking ahead to the next school year through four different pillars. Catholic Identity, Academic Excellence, Governance and Leadership, and Operational Vitality.

We will enhance our Catholic Identity by continuing with our yearly theme, Masses and prayer services, and other Catholic traditions. We will also take a deeper look at intentional outreach opportunities with follow up to students. We will look for more intentional educational opportunities for faith formation with our parents and staff.

In the area of Academic Excellence, we hope to boost our STEM program by applying for STEM accreditations and designations. We hope to engage all students in more engineering projects and implement the new Science curriculum with fidelity. We will also implement the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) this spring for students in grades 2-8 and will use that information (summative and formative) to direct instruction. Engaging with parents in learning more about Cultural Competence and Equity is definitely a focus.

Under the pillar of Governance and Leadership, the School Board is looking for diversity in representing all populations of the school as well as in addressing the professional gaps in the board. They are also looking at more training and in-service opportunities.

Operational Vitality is making sure we retain and recruit good families for our school as well as highly qualified teachers and staff. We need to make sure we have a strong enrollment and finance plan in place as well as a long and short term plans for the facilities.

In summary, our strategic plan, RSPS 100, is moving our school forward to our 100th anniversary. We feel we are the best value in Catholic Education in Howard County and beyond.

Peace,
Karen Murphy
Principal
Notable Notes

To Our School Families
Our staff would like to thank all who contributed to the lunch last Thursday for Catholic School's Week. All of the food was incredible, the volunteer support was appreciated, and the hand written notes were treasured!

Resurrection Church VBS
Mark your calendars! Vacation Bible School is July 24-28, 2017. Our theme is Maker Fun Factory: Created by God, Built for a Purpose. All children entering Pre-K thru entering 5th grade are invited to join in the fun! Look for more information about participating and/or volunteering in March!

Lost & Found
Please label lunchboxes and outerwear so that items can be returned to students instead of placed in the Lost & Found.

Volunteers Needed
The Scholastic Book Fair is coming up after the Presidents’ Day break. Please consider sharing an hour or two (or three) of your time to help set/clean up, help the students find books, write wish lists, prepare their purchases, and tidy the fair. Please see the Volunteer sign-up in the email sent on Monday or check out the link on the Wed. Fliers & Forms page.

The Cultural Arts Night is not until May but the planning and organizing begins now. We also need support now with mounting and labeling artwork. If you are interested in taking on a leadership role, we need a new event chair (or a team if you want to grab some friends). Chairing an event is a fun way to fulfill volunteer hours. Contact Mrs. Ruppert if interested, mruppert@resstpaul.org.

Volunteers are still needed for Junior Achievement Day on March 3rd, from 9:00-11:00am. Students in grades K-5 will participate in this fun financial literacy program. Please contact Mr. Sokoloff if interested, ksokoloff@resstpaul.org.

Congratulations
Last Saturday, 3 RSPS teams competed in the Egg Drop Challenge at Notre Dame Prep. The eggs survived the 40’ drop for all teams! Special congratulations to our 4th grade team with Meghan A, Katelyn H, Bridget B, and Sophia K who won 2nd place for their design. All teams represented RSPS well and we are very proud of them.

PowerSchool Notice
Parent access to PowerSchool closes for a brief period at the change of every trimester. Please note, access will be turned off again from Feb. 24th to Mar. 9th. The 2nd trimester ends on Mar. 3rd.

2017-2018 Tuition
At Monday evening’s State of the School meeting, the new tuition for next year was given and has been updated on the Tuition & Grant/Aid page of our website (under Admissions). Those interested in applying for tuition aid should see the flyer posted today on the Wed. Fliers & Forms page. The application deadline is Feb. 28th. Current student Re-enrollment information for next year will be provided soon.

IN OUR PRAYERS
For all who are sick and are in need of God’s healing presence. Especially:
Cathy Frederick—Sister of Ms. Frederick (1A)
Harriott Bethke—Grandmother of Sal Bellaire (1A)
John & Helen Collins—Grandparents of Madeleine Frechette (6B)
Michelle Rametta—Cousin of Mrs. Tomko (PKB)
Margaret Kolberg—Friend and colleague of RSPS staff
Kathy Murray—RSPS School Board member
Marilyn Sokoloff—Mother of Mr. Sokoloff

Glimpse in the Classroom
In art class, 4th grade students studied the art works of Louis Comfort Tiffany, then designed a lamp using organic and geometric shapes. Their design had to use symmetry on base & shade. The materials used were transparency films, sharpies, and metallic markers. They are all turning out beautifully.

If you walk into the art room, you will see all the great projects the students are creating. You can also go to Mrs. Ruppert’s website to see what each grade is working on along with pictures and explanations.

Go to the Students tab on the top of our school’s home page and you will find a link to Mrs. Ruppert’s site. Or you can see projects on display throughout the school at Cultural Arts Night...

Mark your calendar for this year's Cultural Arts Night on Thursday, May 18th, 6:00-8:00pm. All students will have multiple art pieces on display and several students will be performing live. It is an awesome (free) event for the entire family.

And finally, congratulations to the wonderfully talented Mrs. Ruppert who is our Teacher of the Year! Every student is an artist at RSPS thanks to Mrs. Ruppert!

News and Notes submissions are due by 10:00 a.m. on Monday, later submissions may need to be printed the following week. Please email all submissions to newsletter@resstpaul.org.