

The turnout at the [State of the School Meeting on March 9th](#) was outstanding. The feedback provided in the survey was thoughtful and well-rounded, and we appreciate the effort to continue to partner with us so together we can reach the goals outlined in the [Strategic Plan](#) and enable success for all SJF students. We wanted to follow up to share a few highlights and commitments based on the feedback plus to answer the most common questions submitted in the survey. If we missed a question that you would like answered, please email us at sjfsab@gmail.com. Thanks again for your engagement! - School Advisory Board

Survey Highlights – Strengths and Opportunities: 53 Responses

- **Strategic Plan Communications:** State of the School Presentation and the transparency it provided was appreciated broadly. Please note that we are committed to continuing with sharing this level of detail annually. In the future, to allow for more discussion and to better address topics of interest, we will aim to split it into two sessions and spend more time on academic excellence and supporting data.
- **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE:** The investments in the curricular resources, particularly in reading, social and emotional learning (SEL), and 1:1 technology expansion, are noticed and making a big impact. Next priorities are widely agreed upon including:
 - Ensuring Science and Math curriculum are meeting and exceeding standards
 - Establishing more consistency in curriculum and grading to support a culture of collaboration and ensure students are set up for success as they grow
 - Engaging families in different ways such as curriculum nights to experience first-hand the value of an SJF education
- **Faith in Action:** Accolades expressed to our school leaders for continuing to lead meaningful Sacramental ceremonies and school prayer services even if by live stream this year. There is a strong desire among many to tighten the connection across the church, parish and school. Many good ideas shared and appreciation for some efforts underway like better communication in the parish newsletter and service led by the school. Overall, sentiment shared in the survey helps us conclude that every effort counts by each of us in our homes, on our blocks, in the school, across our community and other communities and at Mass.
- **Safe and Welcoming Environment:** Parents and community members acknowledged the improvements made related to creating Safe/secure environment for kids of course most notably in area of Health and Safety protocol related to COVID (WOW!!). With the hope that school events return soon, the area of opportunity exists to formalize and expand the impact of the welcoming efforts with the help of Block Captains, new family buddies across the parish and school.
- **Finances, Fundraising & Facilities:** Supportive response to the call to action around working together as a parish and school with focused and frequent fundraisers. Positive feedback on the level of transparency shared to understand what's needed to maintain competitive tuition while reaching the school's goals. The facilities committee has since met to help the school estimate pricing and prioritize building decisions such as A/C, bathroom improvements and landscaping and other campus enhancements. You can expect to hear updates regularly.

Academics

1. How are curriculum reviews conducted?
 - Constantly reviewing curriculum and making improvements and large-scale changes as needed (*i.e.*, new school-wide reading program). For us, given the experienced faculty, it

starts at the classroom level. We encourage our teachers to use the common prep times each week to discuss assessment and curriculum among other things.

- We have a faculty leadership team focused on areas like this to improve consistency. This year, our goals related to this shifted because of COVID. It's not an excuse but a reality and we look so forward to use this leadership team and all of our amazing teachers to reach our academic goals and drive change where it is needed. In the future, we will look to this team to help partner across the school in faculty meetings and help each other continuously improve.
 - Lastly, we seek external perspectives to learn from. We feel based on how quickly education is changing, we are better together. We benchmark and utilize feedback from council schools, high schools, board members in education roles, etc.
 - Looking for biggest impact, hence why reading program was completed first. Math is next major priority; updates will be provided when available.
2. Can you share more academic data to help parents understand how students are developing?
- We are committed to transparency on academic progress but candidly still figuring out the best ways to regularly show this progress b/c of COVID's impact on the availability of standardized testing data. It is definitely something we are actively reviewing and will report out on as soon as possible. Some specific goals we have include:
 - Additional I-Ready tools/data so we can (1) partner together with parents for all to better understand where each child stands and (2) measure progress of SJF students overall, where we are excelling and where we need additional focus. By the end of this school year, parents will receive 2nd individual student progress report.
 - Additional general academic progress reports for parents are being worked on for the 2021-2022 school year.
3. Can you share more about iReady and how parents can use the tool to support our children and teachers?
- iReady is an online assessment tool that measures individual students' progress along several math and reading dimensions according to state and national standards.
 - *i-Ready* is a comprehensive assessment and instruction program that empowers educators with the resources they need to help all students succeed. By connecting Diagnostic data and Personalized Instruction, *i-Ready* reduces complexity, saves educators time, and makes **differentiated instruction** achievable in every classroom. *i-Ready*:
 - Provides user-friendly dashboards and clear reports with actionable data that give teachers a foundational understanding of students' strengths and areas of need
 - Enables educators to confidently determine each student's on-grade level proficiency based on state and national standards
 - Delivers online lessons that provide tailored instruction and practice for each student to accelerate growth
 - Supports teachers with **in-the-moment resources** for remediation and reteaching at individualized, small group, and whole class levels of instruction

- SJF introduced iReady this year with support from the Arch to address two needs: (1) COVID has interrupted ASPIRE testing, and we didn't want to go another year without some standardized assessment and (2) a core goal of our strategic planning related to academics is to increase the data available to teachers to continue to implement more personalized learning models in our classrooms.
- SJF plans to and is already using data from iReady to inform instruction and assist teachers in addressing students' individual needs, but our main goal for this year is to primarily establish base line performance for individuals and grade levels via the age level plus 2 diagnostic tests. That is on track.
- Next year, we expect to use the results to set specific achievement goals based on SJF's results and the results of our peer schools.
- While iReady data is informative and useful, it is by no means a perfect assessment; what is attractive about it to the faculty and staff is that the assessment is ongoing and not just available 1x per year like ASPIRE. However, ASPIRE data is more fulsome and is more readily benchmarked. Over time, it will be good to return to having both sets of academic progress data available to us and you.
- Importantly, whatever the assessment, we encourage parents not to overly focus on any one score but more on progress over time. Especially during a pandemic, so many factors influence a student's performance. Our focus is on monitoring and communicating progress, so we can work together to ensure that there are no barriers between students and their potential.

Finances, Fundraising and Facilities

1. How much of school revenue is paid to the Archdiocese? What does it cover?
 - The school "pays" the Archdiocese for certain services, namely the management and administration of our insurance coverage and faculty and staff benefits programs, our educational accreditation, and certain Arch-required curriculum and software licenses.
 - For the 2020-21 school year, we are estimating that the total non-insurance portion of those payments will be ~\$25k, or <1% of total revenue.
 - They are categorized as administrative expenses within the budget. The leadership team and school board seek to transparently identify and cover these expenses via the \$50 per student Archdiocesan fee charged on book day.
 - The insurance payments, which are almost all property & casualty coverages, total ~\$75k and are included in our building and maintenance expenses.
2. The Manna earnings requirement is high - how was it set? Can I see my earnings progress somewhere?
 - Manna is the school's only regular fundraiser. Its success over the years has generated a "rainy day fund" for the school that has been tapped at different points in time to complete emergency repairs without needing to tap school families and parishioners and still provides an operational cushion in the form of long-term savings that we use for tuition assistance and to make up operating budget shortfalls.

- The Manna requirement was introduced last year because family participation in the program had materially decreased to the point where the program was reaching a point where it was close to no longer covering its own costs, and the leadership team and the school board still believe it is one of the best ways to raise money for the school because it provides earnings directly from our everyday expenses.
 - The \$300 per family requirement was set to balance our desired Manna fundraising goal of ~\$100,000 for the school's budget and what was deemed an admittedly stretch but not unreasonable estimate of annual family spending on "easy" Manna categories such as weekly groceries, local takeout, and gas.
 - We recognize the use of Manna can sometimes feel like a burden and requires a certain level of commitment to change purchasing behaviors. We have worked diligently with the Manna team to make its use as easy as possible for all with more options via the RaiseRight app, sending Manna home through school to avoid needing to be available at certain pick-up times, etc. We are hopeful these changes continue to make Manna a viable fundraising opportunity for the school as the alternative is a need to further raise tuition rates or fundraise more directly in another manner.
 - The school board has committed to work with the Manna team to provide 2-3 earnings reports to school families per year, so you can track your progress especially if you use the Raise Right App or Shopwithscrip site often. See [Under Manna Resources](#) how to do pull reports. You can also always e-mail the Manna team at sjfmanna@gmail.com for more timely earnings details.
4. Can families pre-pay tuition through the summer months?
- All school payments are now made via the FACTS tuition management program.
 - FACTS' default setting is to fund tuition in 10 equal installments from August-May.
 - There are options to pre-pay tuition in less installments, but unfortunately not a current option to have a 12 month installment plan.

School Advisory Board

1. Are school board members compensated and what is the time commitment?
 - School board members do not receive any compensation or discounted tuition, etc. Serving on the board is a completely voluntary position.
 - We aim to bring together a diverse group of professionals interested and willing to dedicate time to complement the skillset of the school leadership in a collaborative and supportive way.
 - The position is typically a 3-year term.
 - The minimum time commitment is about 2-3 hours per month including a monthly meeting and follow-up committee work but can be more based on specific committee needs, etc. For the executive committee, the time commitment is higher, typically at least 5-10 hours per month.
2. What are the next steps to get involved in the board?
 - The School Advisory board application for the 2021-2022 school year will be shared in Mrs. Nash's notes in the next couple weeks.
 - To learn more, feel free to review our [objectives](#) and [purpose statement](#) on the school's web site.