

Dear Family of Faith,

Over the past eight months our parish engaged in a thorough, data-driven, and highly participative process to clarify the mission of our parish school and strengthen the positioning of our school for years to come.

The strategic mission clarification process addresses all levels of schooling at St. Benedict Preparatory School – from reflecting on the grade structure we offer, to creating a bold, vibrant, and differentiated plan for each level of schooling that we support. We appreciate the time and effort our community has given to support this process by participating in focus groups and online surveys.

This is the beginning of the communication of the decisions made through the strategic plan process.

#### Early Childhood – 8th Grade Program

Our parish education mission will be focused on providing a world-class, Catholic education in a vibrant and faith-filled community for early childhood - grade 8. We will continue our dedication to providing an excellent academic foundation and experience that is enlivened and distinguished by our commitment to a strong Catholic identity, service, and faith development. We will continue to provide an inclusive environment. There will be technology supported differentiation of instruction and assessment with a focus on academic rigor for all students. In addition, we will concentrate on developing the skills of critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication.

Grades 6-8 will continue as a distinctive middle school program, focused on the unique needs of the young adolescent learner, with a diverse range of classes and extracurricular activities. Our parish has been blessed with a unique campus and we will look for ways to leverage “the Block” as valued programs are not only continued, but further developed and expanded. We will continue our offerings such as advanced math, Agora, foreign language, fine and performing arts, and build exciting programs around integrated STEM, formal leadership training, our beloved house system, and a distinct high school prep program.

We plan to share more information on the mission of our early childhood – grade 8 school in March/April and will begin implementing these enrichments for the 2017-2018 school year.

#### High School Program Grades 9-12

Through this process, we have also come to acknowledge the data and financial realities of our parish high school ministry. The results of these findings are that our high school program is no longer financially sustainable due to market trends, demographic shifts, and declining enrollment. The financial challenges and declining enrollment make it impossible to sustain the superior four-year college preparatory academic experience that our bright and deserving high school students seek.

Therefore, our parish school will begin to phase out our ministry of high school education. Our parish will not be admitting a freshman class for the 2017-2018 school year. Over the next two years, we will be transitioning to an early childhood - grade 8 school. St. Benedict Preparatory High School will graduate our last senior class in June 2019. This decision, while difficult, is final.

#### High School Program Conclusion Plan:

We will be providing transfer assistance to another Catholic high school for the accepted, incoming freshman applicants and rising sophomore class. Given the relatively small student population at these grade levels, we realize that offering an excellent and extensive college preparatory program through their high school graduation is not realistic. We are committed to partnering with these students and their families as they find a new school. A transition team has been established to answer questions and provide personalized recommendations to these high school students.

Our parish community will remain committed to our rising junior and senior classes and will continue the academic program here so that they may graduate from St. Benedict Preparatory School. We will continue to offer a quality academic program that prepares students for college entrance, and we will continue to help all students to identify and achieve success in entering the colleges or universities of their choice. We are also committed to continuing the Protégé and Agora programs. We know that this can only be financially viable if the majority of rising juniors and rising seniors return. We expect to have their intent to return forms by March 21st and then have a definitive answer about our commitment to these students by March 27th.

The decision to phase out our high school ministry impacts not only you as an alumnus, but our entire St. Benedict Parish and Preparatory School community. We know this news does not come easy. We also know that our alum are proud graduates of SBPS and our hope is that you will continue to hold us close to your hearts. We ask for your prayers during this difficult time of transition.

From the first graduating class in 1954 until today, we are grateful to God for each parishioner, family, student, faculty member and alumnus who have enriched St. Benedict Parish and Preparatory School with their faith, gifts and talents.

Fr. Jason Malave

Ms. Rachel Gemo

Pastor

Head of Parish School