

To: Teachers Acock, Brinson, Gogl, Guest, Hammond, Hilbert, Leahy, Shields, Sutlick, Williams and Wood

C/o Miss Brenda Shields, Faculty Representative to the Board
CC: Principal John Lesko

May 13, 2019

Dear Teachers:

I am writing on behalf of the board in response to your letter of March 28, 2019 regarding the need for a full-time administrator on site at both Assumption and DeSales. I would like to begin by thanking you for your hard work on behalf of our schools, and for your willingness to engage constructively with the board on matters of planning which are essential for the continued health and well-being of our schools. We appreciate the opportunity to hear your concerns, respond to them, and work together towards the best solution currently possible.

As you know, the schools have experienced decreased enrollment over the past fifteen years which make for a challenging financial environment. We hope that with your help and that of the entire Walla Walla Catholic community, that enrollment situation will reverse in the upcoming years. For the moment, though, we are a school of approximately 260 students, with income from tuition of approximately \$1,650,000. Our employee expenses alone, however, for next year are projected at approximately \$2,500,000. We are extremely fortunate to have extra resources available from the endowment, parish support, and major fundraisers; nonetheless, the school has run at a deficit more than once in the past five years and only through the grace of God and the generosity of recent bequests have we been able to balance the budget for next year. I attach a copy of next year's budget for your consideration. The addition of another full-time administrator, without cutting current staff members, would add at least \$100,000 to the annual budget, which at this point in time, with current enrollment, would be fiscally irresponsible.

In addition, as you know, we are the midst of a masterplanning process which we hope will result in the consolidation of campuses in accordance with the recently developed strategic plan. The move to one campus would obviously go far towards alleviating the concerns you have expressed. Until we have finished the masterplanning process and are confident what direction our physical plant will take, any consideration of structural administrative changes would be premature.

Most importantly, after discussion with the principal, the faculty representative, and the outgoing and incoming presidents, the board is confident that the concerns you have listed can be ameliorated within the existing administrative structure, given the cooperation of all parties involved. We have discussed with the administration immediate measures that can be and already have been taken, as well as evaluation and rectification of existing organizational deficiencies to be implemented over the next year. Both the principal and incoming president, Father Seidel, have committed to increased personal presence at Assumption and to working

on the areas you have identified. We welcome the Assumption faculty's participation in that process, and encourage you to bring to them ideas for affordable, sustainable solutions which would help improve the existing structure. We understand that having only one principal of two schools is unusual in the history of the Walla Walla Catholic Schools, but it is by no means unprecedented in other small private schools and rural educational districts, and has been successful elsewhere. We are confident that, with commitment, it can succeed here as well.

Sincerely,

The Walla Walla Catholic School Board

Signed by Claire Valente, Board Chair, on their behalf

Attached: Provisional 2019-20 budget