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February 1, 2023

STATE OF ANCHOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL

The Anchor Mission is to provide a Christ-centered community focused on the growth of the whole child by partnering with families to provide an inclusive environment where children flourish academically, spiritually, socially, and emotionally.

Dear Families,

As we sustainably develop our growing our programs at Anchor Lutheran School, I wanted to reach out to thank all of our students, parents, staff and faculty for your commitment, support and resilience! Since the beginning of the 2023 school year our clear focus has been to make sure we continue to grow our programs in a responsible and innovative way. Anchor is a very diverse community and we understand that the challenges each student, parent, and faculty face varies considerably. I am thankful for the commitment and professionalism shown by our outstanding faculty team, administrative staff, teacher assistants, and parents who continue to support our programs for the benefit of our families, students and ministry. Our expansion and enhancements of our programs depends on this level of commitment and support between all stakeholders. Each Winter, the Anchor administration, Lutheran School Association of Anchorage Board and Finance Department review budget parameters for the next school year. The Anchor budget is a fiscal expression of our mission, vision and strategic plan. While the uncertainty brought on by high inflation, uncertain economic conditions and global crisis has definitely brought about hardship for most, we are committed to providing face-to-face access of a very high value education at fees that are most competitive amongst top private Christian schools. To this extent, I would like to share some considerations that have been included in plans for the 2023-24 school year.

Our Present: Community, Opportunity, Excellence: Throughout this time, we have let our mission guide our decisions in how we respond to threats such as high inflation, extreme weather events and economic uncertainty. Simply put, we have focused on keeping our community informed and safe; continued to provide face-to-face access to the opportunities we intend for our students; and ensured students can pursue excellence in learning. We prioritize staff and faculty efforts towards diagnosing, evaluating and tailoring targeted learning plans for each individual student through a Universal Design for Learning approach. Sandi Goerisch our Student Support Coordinator will continue to enhance and coordinate this approach to teaching and learning. We will continue to involve parent and community volunteers to help with the individualized levels of support we intend for all of our students. Recently the Lutheran School Association of Anchorage applied for grant funding to support the addition of a behavioral health specialist and build a program tailored to supporting trauma related issues. For 2023/24 school year we will be expanding our Chinese language and culture program. We will separate our Grade 4 and Grade 5 class as it will no longer be combined. We will embed more opportunities for students in all grade levels to use their inquiry skills to build on and leverage the foundations of innovation in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) related fields so our students are prepared to meet the uncertainties of the economy of the future. Lastly, every student and teacher

will continue to focus on the skills within the five pillars of learning: communication, self-management, thinking, research and collaboration.

Summer Extension Program: All grade levels from Early Childhood through High School are eligible this year for our Summer Extension Program. Our program will offer experiential learning experiences and enrichment beyond a traditional classroom environment. Events, activities, design challenges, and field trips will be included as part of our program. Lunch will also be provided. Enroll today to save a seat for your child.

Our Future: Community, Opportunity, Excellence: As mentioned, we continue to let our mission guide our decisions as we move forward into the future. Regular giving, capital campaign contributions and the Anchor Ministry Auction are all ways to support the needs of our school. Our Grow with Anchor capital campaign has been a blessing and has shown broad support, resilience and dedication of our community to create an inclusive Christian school early childhood through high school with purpose built facilities that meet the need of our future ready students, families and community. Anchor is in the action phase in partnership with our associate churches and Lutheran Church Extension Fund to not only address the needs of the facilities but sustainable grow our programs and offerings. Construction has already begun with the replacement of our existing siding and roof not impacted by a second story build. We have had over \$850,000 in commitments towards our expansion and have been pre approved for a \$2.25 million dollar loan. Look for opportunities to serve on our design committees for our second story build in the coming months. This year our high school was at capacity for most of the 22/23 school year. Next year we will double our capacity to serve even a larger number of students and families. To find out more information on the value of an Anchor diploma please review the attach “Anchor: Path to Graduation” document.

Tuition 22-23 School Year: Anchor is a registered 501-3(c) non-profit school that is 90% tuition driven. Over the years, we have successfully attracted top quality teachers even though other schools and districts may have higher salaries to offer. The simple reason is that we have an excellent reputation for being a great community-centered school with strong academic performance, professionally satisfied teachers, and an inclusive Christian environment that is complemented by adequate facilities and the immediate prospect of a purpose-built expansion as a second story build to our current facilities. However, while teachers are paid well and the school is well resourced, we do not profit on the children’s education. For this reason, the tuition at Anchor is set well below for-profit schools and even other reputable non-profits in Anchorage and beyond. Having worked in private education now for 13 years, Anchor covers many expenses that other schools require additional payment. I call this the ‘Dare to Compare’ challenge. Have a look at other schools in Anchorage and cities of similar size in America. It will be hard to find one that has lower tuition, or that includes so much within the tuition itself. The remaining 10% of operating cost comes from donors, sponsors and grants. Additionally, as we plan for next year's budget, inflation remains a challenge for everyone. The Social Security Administration estimates predict an 8.7% cost-of-living increase for the coming year, and the Consumer Price Index for the West Coast is also rising. To address this, we are raising salaries of our teachers to meet the costs of inflation to retain the great teachers we have and also attract educated and experienced teachers that will add value to our growing community. However, tuition is not increasing to pay for our facility expansion. Much of this was considered when tuition for 2023-24 was set in January 2023 for the re-enrollment process.

Increases in tuition cover rising inflation in education; continued enhancements to salary and compensation packages to ensure we are still competitive with other schools and increased costs for educational resources, associations, and professional development. We understand that some families and companies are feeling the

financial impact as well. **Our commitment to our families extends through our tuition assistance program (TADS) or through a petition to our finance committee.** Please send all inquiries through our Finance Office. It is very important that our administration and faculty are most focused on student learning.

Re-enrollment, Faculty-Student Ratios, Seat-Guarantees and Early Payment Discount: As we looked to the 2023-24 school year and the already encumbered costs; the potential for enrollment to be impacted due to financial hardships; the continuous inflation in educational resources; the need for high-quality faculty and staff we need to make sure our plans to staff for each class are established soon. Salary compensation & benefits and income tax make up over 70% of our operating budget. We intend to offer very high levels of support for each student and thus will make sure that the skills and care from our most valued employees, our teachers, are not wasted. **Due to a high level of interest in all of our program, we cannot guarantee a spot for your child. We strongly advise all current families to complete the re-enrollment process as soon as possible to guarantee a spot.** The school will not hold a seat for current students unless this process and payment is completed. As a level of support and courtesy, Anchor has extended the early payment and registration discount of about 6% to April 1 deadline. Should you have any difficulty making this payment, or any questions at all, please contact the Finance Office.

We will be supportive of families who seek alternative schooling options and help them transition well. **I know this is a rather lengthy letter, but we wanted to be transparent and informative as to how our decisions have been made and will guide us into the future.** I am thankful for each family we have and the opportunity to share our Christ-centered community with you and your children.

Re-enrollment/Enrollment Process

To Re-enroll, follow these three simple steps:

1. Review the 2023/2024 Tuition & Fee Schedule.
2. Complete and sign both sides of the last page (2023/2024 Financial Agreement).
3. Submit the signed Financial Agreement. This year we are offering an early registration discount.

A \$250 per child Early Registration Fee will last February 1 until April 1, 2023. April 2 registration fee will be \$350. For your convenience, all fees will be charged to your account (unless you submit payment with this paperwork). Remember, **your account must be current** in order to re-enroll.

In Christ,



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