

Dear Academy Families and Staff,

I would like to take a little of your time to discuss some improvements to the School fee process designed to save our families time and money for next year.

School fees are not new to public education in Colorado. State law authorizes schools to charge fees and the same law requires our Board to review and approve the fees we charge. We work hard at The Academy to keep fees as low as possible because we recognize they can create a financial burden on our families. Also, we spend funds raised through fees ONLY on the items they are charged for. This too is required by law. There were very few changes to the amounts being charged for fees. The actual fee schedule will be published separately. The Board did discuss and approve a number of process changes designed to help our families and those changes are what I would like to talk about here.

At the beginning of this year, elementary parents (K-6) were charged a \$90 student fee for expendable materials, supplies, technology and science. Then, each grade level published a "supply list" that included additional items for each student to bring to class. Those supply lists included a number of items that were "community supplies" or "unlabeled" and intended for use by all students in the class. The average cost of all items on the supply lists totaled over \$90. We found that a large number of the items on the supply lists could be purchased by the school through our various purchasing contracts for a substantial savings over the cost of the items to parents at retail stores out in town.

New for next year:

1. The grade level supply lists will be SIGNIFICANTLY reduced. The school has identified approximately \$62 worth of items that can be purchased by the school for about \$30. So, instead of a \$90 fee and a supply list that runs an additional \$90, the Elementary fee will be \$120 and the school will provide most of the items from the supply list. I am working with the Teachers to change the supply lists so they will only include grade level or class specific items and provide a significant savings to families for next year. ALL other common supplies will be provided by the school. Actual fee list will be available in the next few days along with a detailed list of what the school will provide instead of asking parents to purchase.
2. We have tried to make it easier to pay fees. Online payment will be easier this year. Also, the school will be releasing an app for smart phones that will allow families to pay fees, pay for lunches and pay for the After School Care program right from your phone. The app is scheduled for release in June. More information will be available at that time.
3. We recognize that fees can be a burden on families at the beginning of the year. So, we have developed a process that will allow families to set up payments through the online payment software (monthly or quarterly) etc.
4. Application for the Federal School Lunch program will be available online after July 15<sup>th</sup> and proof of eligibility to the program will provide assistance to our fee waiver process. The Application will also be available on line and will be accessible through the school's new phone app as well.

School Fees have become an unfortunate part of public education. All schools charge them. I just wanted to take a few minutes to tell you about what we are doing in an effort to make it easier on our families – to save you time and money - while we work to provide your children the best education possible.

Sincerely,

David Floodeen, Chief Finance and Operations Officer