



8100 Arctic Blvd. Anchorage, AK 99518
(907) 522-3636 ALSalaska.org

February 1, 2024

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 Anchor Community,

As we build resilience at Anchor Lutheran School through collective efforts, I extend heartfelt thanks to our students, parents, staff, and faculty for your steadfast commitment. This academic year, our focus has been on enhancing our programs to prepare students for a dynamic world. I'm grateful for the contributions from our faculty, staff, and parents, crucial to our school's growth and benefitting our entire community. The growth of our school and the continual improvement of our programs are reliant on this shared commitment and collaboration among all our stakeholders. Each winter, the Anchor administration collaborates with the Lutheran School Association of Anchorage Board to set the budget parameters for the upcoming academic year. The Anchor budget is a tangible reflection of our mission, vision, and strategic objectives. Despite the challenges posed by high inflation, economic uncertainties, and global crises, which have undoubtedly affected many, we remain dedicated to providing high-quality, face-to-face education at competitive fees, positioning us as Anchorage's leading private Christian school. Looking forward, we're excited to implement key initiatives for the 2024-25 school year.

Our Present: Guided by our mission, we've navigated challenges like high inflation and economic uncertainty by focusing on community, having a continued commitment to face-to-face educational opportunities, and ensuring excellence in learning. This includes a dedication to creating personalized learning plans for each student through a Universal Design for Learning, led by Sandi Goerisch, our Student Support Coordinator. With the help of parent and community involvement, we aim to support every student individually. For the 2024/25 school year, we're expanding our high school and middle school programs, introducing new after-school activities and sports (including aquatics), appointing a lower school Director of Christian Education, and adding a second Grade 1 classroom. We'll also enhance STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Maths) learning opportunities across all grades to prepare our students for future economic uncertainties. Additionally, our focus remains on developing perpetually needed skills in communication, self-management, thinking, research, and collaboration for every student and teacher.

Our Future: The success of our Grow with Anchor capital campaign has been a tremendous blessing, reflecting the wide-ranging support, resilience, and commitment of our community. Our goal is to establish an inclusive Christian school for early childhood through high school students, equipped with purpose-built facilities that cater to the needs of our forward-thinking students, families, and community. To date, we have secured \$3.2 million in commitments and received pre-approval from the Lutheran Church Extension Fund for the remaining construction costs. This funding will enable us to add 15 new classrooms which include a black box theatre, art

center, design shop, and a gymnasium. Construction is set to commence in May 2024 and is anticipated to be completed by 2026. We are in active collaboration with Criterion General Contracting to guarantee a learning environment that is safe and conducive to education. Our focus is on minimizing disruptions while continually provide face-to-face learning across all grade levels and programs during construction.

Tuition 24/25 School Year: Anchor Lutheran School, a 501(c)(3) non-profit, is primarily tuition-driven, accounting for 90% of its funding. Despite competitive salaries elsewhere, we attract top teachers thanks to our strong academic performance, community focus, and inclusive Christian environment, complemented by solid expansions in both facilities and programs. Our affordable tuition, set below that of many for-profit and non-profit schools, includes more benefits than most other institutions, part of our 'Dare to Compare' challenge. The remaining 10% of our operating costs are covered by donors, sponsors, and grants. Regarding inflation, we've been mindful of recent trends: the Social Security COLA was 8.7% in 2023 and 5.9% in 2022, while our tuition increases, were slightly lower, at 5% and 7% respectively. Predictions suggest a 3% COLA increase next year. We also consider the CPI for the western half of the country. Navigating the challenge of spreading out inflation costs over several years, while ensuring our teachers and staff receive cost of living increases, has been demanding, yet we've managed to do so for the benefit of our families. **Tuition is not increasing to pay for our facility expansion. Early tuition (February 1 through March 31) is set at \$10,250 for the 24/25 school year. We understand that some families and companies are feeling the financial impact as well. It is not the intention to increase tuition and create a financial barrier for any family to enroll their child(ren) at Anchor. Our commitment to our students extends through our tuition assistance program or through a petition to our finance committee.**

Re-enrollment, Faculty-Student Ratios, Seat-Guarantees, and Early Payment Discount: Looking ahead to the 2024-25 school year, we face several challenges such as rising costs, potential enrollment impacts due to financial hardships, increasing prices of educational resources, and the need for high-quality staff. Over 70% of our budget is dedicated to salaries, wages, benefits, and taxes, emphasizing our commitment to providing exceptional support for each student through skilled and caring teachers and staff. Given the high demand for our programs, we cannot assure a spot for every child. We also offer assistance to families exploring other schooling options, ensuring a smooth transition. This detailed letter aims to maintain transparency and inform you about our decision-making process. We're grateful for each family in our Christ-centered community and cherish the opportunity to educate your children.

In Christ,



Matthew Baxter, PhD
Director
Anchor Lutheran School
8100 Arctic Blvd, Anchorage AK 99518
(907) 522-3636
ALSalaska.org