

OUR  
*Next Step*  
**FORWARD**  
*A Campaign for Aquinas Catholic Schools*

# *Frequently Asked Questions*

## **WHY DO WE NEED A CAPITAL CAMPAIGN NOW?**

Currently, the Aquinas Catholic School (ACS) System is blessed with committed families, excellent faculty and staff, and stable enrollment. A campaign is needed for three reasons. First, to create scholarships, so that families of all income levels can be assured access to a high quality Catholic Education. Second, to insure that our students and faculty have the proper technology to enhance the learning experience. Finally, to create a fund, which will address ongoing building maintenance and long-term planning.

## **WHAT ARE WE RAISING MONEY FOR?**

We have three main goals: (1) build a \$3 million empowerment fund to attract new families to ACS elementary schools through endowed scholarships; (2) apply \$600,000 to monitor building activity and ensure safe access to ACS Schools, move Aquinas High School (AHS) Building administrative offices to the first floor and build up our wireless infrastructure; (3) raise \$2 million to inject into ACS Foundation reserves for facility repairs, to improve schoolwide operations and to ensure high quality Catholic education remains affordable and accessible to all in the Coulee Region Area.

## **WASN'T ADDRESSING EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION THE TOP PRIORITY OF THE PLANNING STUDY?**

Yes. Participants in the planning study strongly supported improving employee compensation. The single greatest ACS budget expense is employee salaries. Recognizing that employee compensation is important to our supporters, but realizing that a three-year capital campaign cannot provide a long-term solution for this item, we plan to use the empowerment fund portion of the campaign to address employee salaries. Promoting the empowerment fund will increase ACS enrollment, which will put ACS in a position of making a meaningful, long-term impact on improved compensation.

## **ARE WE HAVING A CAPITAL CAMPAIGN BECAUSE THE ACS SYSTEM IS IN FINANCIAL TROUBLE?**

No. ACS is currently debt free, our enrollment is stable and we are operating with a balanced budget. Backed by the overwhelmingly positive results of a five-week planning study completed in the Spring of 2016, ACS leadership believes this is the right time to raise money to invest in goals which will have a significant impact on the long-term viability, sustainability and growth of the ACS System.

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## DON'T THE KIFFE FUNDS PROVIDE FAMILIES THE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE THEY NEED?

Kiffe funds provide assistance for high school tuition, but are not available prior to ninth grade. While there are some existing elementary school scholarships, funds raised by this campaign will increase our ability to support primary school families who cannot afford an ACS education for their children.

## WHAT IF DONORS WANT TO MAKE A DIRECT IMPACT ON A PARTICULAR GOAL, LIKE SCHOOL SECURITY, EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION OR BOOKS? CAN DONORS SPECIFY HOW THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS WILL BE APPLIED?

Yes, donors can direct the funds that they donate toward a specific goal.

## WHY SHOULD WE INVEST IN UPGRADING OUR BUILDINGS IF THE LONG-TERM FUTURE USE OF THESE FACILITIES IS UNCERTAIN?

Every effort will be made to use the proceeds of this capital campaign to continue to deliver the highest quality of service to the children of our current ACS families and to make wise capital improvements that align with the long-term strategic vision of the Aquinas Catholic Schools.

## WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MONEY RAISED IN THE LAST CAPITAL CAMPAIGN?

After a three-year wage freeze, funds from the Legacy Campaign made it possible for ACS to immediately provide a 4.3% salary increase to employees, followed by 2% increases in the last three years. Additionally, Legacy funds were applied to facility improvements like the high school theater renovation and the AHS boiler improvement project. Investment returns from the Legacy Campaign continue to support the school and are a key component to the ACS budget. However, monies from the Legacy Campaign were never intended to be used for scholarships or technology, which are the primary goals for the new campaign.



AQUINAS CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

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