



## **TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

Thank you for your interest in Saint Thomas Aquinas Regional Catholic High School. Applications for Tuition Assistance for the 2017-2018 school year will be accepted from February 20, 2017 until March 10, 2017.

### **PHILOSOPHY**

Saint Thomas Aquinas Regional Catholic High School is committed to enrolling students from diverse economic, ethnic, racial, and social backgrounds. The school attempts to select the most qualified students for admission based on each applicant's academic abilities, personal qualities, and potential to contribute to the life of the school community. STA strives to make such admissions selections independent of a family's ability to meet the full cost of a Catholic education. As part of that commitment, the school has established a program of Tuition Assistance for families who would otherwise be unable to consider STA. The school's philosophy regarding Tuition Assistance is that it be based on financial need. As such, the financial aid program enables the school to attract well-qualified students who represent the socioeconomic, cultural, and ethnic diversity of the local community.

It is difficult to predict whether a family will qualify for Tuition Assistance since individual circumstances vary so widely, and the overall demand varies from year to year. The following information may help you decide whether or not to apply for Tuition Assistance.

Intended as a supplement to family resources, awards are made to families whose ability to pay school costs are extremely limited and to those that may need only a minor subsidy to meet tuition requirements. Because there is more need than there are school funds available, the Committee will take into account all reasonable means of spreading the available funds among the most qualified recipients.

Tuition assistance at STA serves a two-fold purpose:

1. To provide deserving students the opportunity of a high quality, Catholic education that otherwise might be unobtainable for them, and
2. To provide the school with a well-qualified student body reflecting a broad social and economic mix of the surrounding region.

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Thus, it is essential that ability to pay the full tuition not be the deciding factor in determining whether or not a promising young person may attend the school.

### **SELECTION PROCESS**

Registered students qualifying on the basis of financial need outnumber those the school can afford to assist. Therefore, St. Thomas Aquinas does not fully fund 100% of a student's tuition. Each family will need to contribute a portion of the cost of educating their child. Decisions must be made to determine the allocation of available funds. The final distribution among applicants demonstrating such need and completing the application process within the time frame allotted will be based on an evaluation that considers the following:

1. Is the applicant a practicing Catholic?
2. The student's Disciplinary record;
3. The student's Academic record;
4. Is the student presently enrolled at STA?
5. Does the student have a sibling enrolled at STA?
6. Is the student transferring from another Catholic school?

All decisions of STA's Tuition Assistance Committee, as approved by the school's Principal, shall be final subject only to the appeal process set forth below. Everyone interested in attending STA, without the full financial means for doing so, is encouraged to apply for Tuition Assistance regardless of whether they meet all, some, or none of the criteria set forth above.

### **RENEWALS**

Tuition Assistance is granted on an annual basis only. Receipt of assistance for one school year does not necessarily mean assistance will be awarded in successive years. Thus, applications with current information must be made each year need can be demonstrated.

### **LATE APPLICATIONS**

Those missing the initial deadline are still encouraged to apply for Tuition Assistance. Late applications may be considered based on a timeline set by the Tuition Assistance Committee so long as funds remain available after initial gifts are allocated.

### **COMPUTATION**

Saint Thomas Aquinas Regional Catholic High School subscribes to the services of FACTS for allocating funds to families applying for Tuition Assistance. During the application process, families seeking assistance provide financial and other relevant confidential information to FACTS. In turn, FACTS provides STA with a financial analysis based on the information gathered. The FACTS reports provide a basis for the STA Tuition Assistance Committee to make decisions on the assistance granted to applicants.

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**EXTERNAL RESOURCES**

All financial support, including funds that may be available beyond the parents' own income and assets, should be reported as part of the application process. This includes resources that might be expected from grandparents or other relatives, family trusts, church funds, direct scholarship grants, etc. The Committee welcomes parents' explanations for these potential sources of assistance, and all relevant details should be included in the information provided to FACTS.

**DIVIDED FAMILIES**

We believe any responsibility for educational costs that the school may accept must come after the obligation of the student's parents. In most cases, the Tuition Assistance Committee will make an award only after considering the resources of both parents. Therefore, each parental household must complete the full application process. If either parent remarries, the resources of the step-parent must also be considered, bearing in mind the obligations of the step-parent to his or her own natural children. If any parent or step-parent, custodial or non-custodial, refuses to provide the required financial information, the application may not be processed.

**EMPLOYMENT**

If a parent or step-parent does not work and there are no pre-school children at home, income will be computed for the non-working spouse at the rate of minimum wage and full-time employment. An exception may be made if the parent is ill or is caring for a child, grandchild, or grandparent that is disabled or critically ill. Consideration may also be given if the parent is home-schooling other children in the family, or one non-working parent is attending school. Please communicate these exceptions when completing the FACTS application.

**CHILDREN NOT LIVING WITH PARENTS**

Children living with grandparents or others will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If the parents are still living, the parents must complete the FACTS Tuition Assistance application. If someone other than a parent has custody, the individual or individuals having custody must complete the FACTS application as well. Proof of custody will be required.

**APPEALS**

Families who determine they will be unable to meet the financial expectations outlined in the tuition assistance award agreement may request a second review of their application by contacting the school's Principal within ten (10) days of receiving notice of said Tuition Assistance award. The granting of any reconsideration will be at the sole discretion of the Committee. The ability to grant reconsideration or increase the initial award after reconsideration may be limited by the remaining funds available for distribution.

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## **IMPORTANT**

- Awards are made as a reduction to tuition only. Parents are therefore responsible for all other fees including - but not limited to - enrollment, lunch, books, technology, extra-curricular activities, and transportation. Personal appointments may be scheduled for situations requesting any consideration of exceptions to this policy.
- Your request for financial assistance and any awards granted will be considered confidential information.
- Should discrepancies be found in the information given to FACTS and/or STA, the Committee reserves the right to revoke any financial aid award.
- The school reserves the right to request additional financial information at any time.

## **APPLICATION PROCEDURE**

To apply for Tuition Assistance, please complete the application online at:

1. Complete and submit your 2017-2018 Registration Form, with the \$350 Registration Fee. Only those families who have completed the registration process and submitted the Registration Fee are eligible for financial assistance consideration.
2. Visit the FACTS secure website. <https://online.factsmgmt.com/signin/43XLL>. Click on the “Create a FACTS Account” button. Follow the instructions to create an account and complete the online Financial Aid application. The deadline for completing the application and submitting all the required documentation is **March 10, 2017** in order to be considered for assistance.
3. Submit your Federal Form 1040 Income Tax Return, W-2 forms and supporting documentation for non-taxable income to FACTS. You can upload your documents directly to FACTS by scanning them and uploading to your account or fax them to 866-315-9264. Draft or Preview Copy tax documents cannot be accepted.
4. Pay the Thirty Dollar (\$30) application fee when you submit your application to FACTS for processing.
5. The school will mail award notification letters to families after April 15, 2017. Therefore, you may need to apply for a loan with Gulf Coast for the full amount. That amount will then be adjusted down based on the amount of aid that is awarded.

***St. Thomas Aquinas Regional Catholic High School does not fully fund 100% of a student’s tuition. Each family will need to contribute a portion of the cost of educating their child.***

***St. Thomas Aquinas Regional Catholic High School’s admissions policy for qualified students is administered without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national and ethnic origin or disability.***

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