



## SAIS Enrollment Survey

May 2010

In April 2010, SAIS asked member schools to complete a brief survey to assess enrollment trends. The survey covered issues surrounding student enrollment, including financial aid, tuition costs, faculty numbers, and annual funds as related to the sustainability of independent schools.

Though only 97 of the 338 surveyed schools responded, SAIS is confident that the respondent schools are an adequate representation of member schools based on location, size, and type. No characteristic is obvious in the non-responding schools to assume that the results of this study are biased. However, caution should be taken when extrapolating the results of this survey for a single school comparison. The surveys were administered via the head of school and the 97 responses represented a response rate of 29%.

One theme emerged from the item responses as well as from the open-ended comments: overall, schools maintained enrollments but saw significant increases in non-funded financial aid (defined below). When compared with the previous year, enrollments dropped slightly (overall average 1.14%) in 2009 – 2010 for 48% of the schools surveyed. Projections for the 2010 – 2011 school year anticipate another slight drop (less than 1%) for enrollments, with 49% of the schools projecting a decline.

The operational definition for financial aid was *“Non-funded financial aid is scholarship or financial aid amounts for which tuition was not received via payment by a third party. It represents the amount of aid discounted by the school.”* For the 2009 – 2010 school year, schools increased non-funded financial aid by 20% on average. Additionally, schools reported that they plan to maintain that level of aid for the 2010 – 2011 school year.

Tuition increased by 3% for the 2009 – 2010 school year on average, with 81% of schools surveyed raising tuition. For 2010 – 2011 year, 90% of schools surveyed expect to raise tuition for an overall average of 3.64%.

Surveyed schools reported only a slight drop in projected annual fund gifts for the 2009 – 2010 school year, and overall, annual fund giving is projected to be down .88%

Schools reported only a minor reduction in full-time teaching staff. This reduction represents on average one teacher per school; however, larger schools with more teachers tended to have greater reductions than did smaller schools with fewer teachers.

The results of this survey provide aggregate insight into the enrollment and funding picture for SAIS member schools. However, it does not provide the complete picture of these trends across the region.

Some schools are prospering while others have been impacted more severely based on a number of variables such as the local economy, local low-cost private school competition, and the quality of alternative public schools. Additional analysis of the data will be conducted to determine if correlates can be identified that might make the results more useful for individual schools. However, based on the results of this study it appears that the biggest concern over the next few years will center on how and to what level non-funded financial aid should be used to leverage enrollments and to maximize revenue.

**Enrollments:**

	Average enrollments	Overall % change	Percent with decreased enrollment
08-09	599		
09-10	592	-1.14%	48%
10-11 projected	588	-.82%	49%

**Tuition:**

	Average tuition increase		Percent increasing tuition
09-10	3.00%		81%
10-11 projected	3.64%		90%

**Non-Funded Financial Aid:**

	Average non-funded FA	% change	Percent with increased financial aid
08-09	\$537,942		
09-10	\$647,685	20.40%	88%
10-11 projected	\$639,743	-1.23%	49%

**Annual Fund:**

	Average Annual Fund		Projected change in AF giving
08-09	\$669,156		
09-10 projected	\$663,292		-.88%

**Full-time Faculty:**

	Average full-time faculty		Percent change
08-09	57		
09-10	56		- 1.75%
10-11 projected	56		0.00%

97 schools responded