



Spread The Word Article

MAESA MATTERS Newsletter Feb. 2018

Affordability and access are major concerns for independent and Episcopal schools these days. The Enrollment Management Association's recent 2017 Parent Survey Report noted that "affordability must be front and center in both our everyday admission work and our long-term strategic enrollment efforts."

The question of affordability touches many families who want what independent schools have to offer, but feel like they would neither be able to afford the full tuition nor qualify for financial aid. Additionally, rising tuition across independent schools has made this option even less accessible to families with high economic need.

In looking to create appreciable breadth in our socio-economic diversity, [Grace Episcopal Day School](#) realized that we had to undertake a bold revision of our already-robust financial aid program. In line with our founders' belief (in 1960) that an excellent and moral education could and should be accessible to everyone, we settled on a tuition model that we believe will increase *both* affordability and access: **Variable Tuition**. Rather than offer financial aid packages to families, we will offer a range of tuitions. Our ideal is that each family's tuition -- a figure that represents the portion of the full cost of a Grace education that a family is required to pay -- be in line with what that family can afford to contribute.

This shift from "financial aid" to "Variable Tuition" is more than semantic. It reflects our school's foundational commitment to building a diverse student body and an inclusive school community. We achieve that goal when all enrolled families know that they are making an *equitable* contribution to their child's education -- which will make all families *equal* contributors to school life. In the words of another school that has been using this model in California for many years and consistent with our own mission, we want our enrolled families to feel like "homeowners" rather than "welcomed guests." To learn more, visit our [website](#).