



DIOCESE OF HARRISBURG – Office of Catholic Schools

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June 23, 2020

Dear Parents in our Diocese of Harrisburg Catholic Schools:

Our entire community should be very proud of our Catholic schools. Despite time limitations, a change in paradigm and a uniquely difficult time in our state and country, our schools stopped in-person instruction on March 13 and began distance learning on March 16. Our teachers are faith-filled professionals who give of themselves sacrificially for God, for their schools and for their students. I pray you will join me in thanking our teachers for their outstanding work, and I wish to thank you for your patience and your commitment to Catholic education.

We fully expect to resume school in person in all Catholic schools in the Diocese of Harrisburg in August. To that end, I have been working with a School Reopening Task Force consisting of four of our school principals (Sr. Danielle Truex, Sacred Heart School, Lancaster; Crystal Noel, St. Teresa of Calcutta, McSherrystown; Jodi Reagan, St. Catherine Laboure, Harrisburg; John Cominsky, Trinity High School, Camp Hill) and Dr. Keri Donaldson and Dr. Eric Hillson, both of whom have real expertise in epidemiology, as we prepare guidelines to share with all schools. Our guidelines, written in compliance with the Pennsylvania Department of Education's June 3, 2020 preliminary guidance for schools, should be approved by the Diocesan Board of Education and Catholic Mutual before July 1. Each school will then make a Health and Safety Plan which follows the Diocesan guidelines. As part of these guidelines, we are asking each school to partner with its local board of health.

In planning, our Task Force is using "Leading with Hope" from The Greeley Center for Catholic Education - a template designed for Catholic schools that addresses five domains: Logistics and Planning; Creating and Maintaining Community; Curriculum and Instruction; Promoting Catholic Identity; and Technology Support. While we expect to return to school in person in August, we are also simultaneously planning lessons for distance learning in the event that should be needed for a limited period of time.

Our families will have a variety of needs and circumstances. Please know that our schools stand ready to work closely with you. We will be able to offer distance learning for those students for whom that is the best option.

Thank you for your support of our Catholic schools. Have a blessed summer and be assured of my prayers for you. We are eager to see you in August!

Daniel Breen
Secretary for Education and Superintendent of Catholic Schools
Diocese of Harrisburg