



DIOCESE OF CAMDEN
Office of Catholic Schools

July 1, 2020

Dear Catholic School Parents,

Activity at Catholic schools across South Jersey related to planning for the 2020-2021 school year accelerated last week based on new information received from two important sources.

First, we are extremely grateful for the 3,404 complete survey responses that parents of South Jersey Catholic school students submitted. We learned that 77% of parents found that the remote learning experience for their children was adequate or excellent, with 84% reporting that their child's school did as well as or better than other schools. Looking forward to next year, parents shared that they prefer in-person learning options, with 83% indicating some concerns about the quality of the overall experience if their school needs to implement remote learning in a temporary, emergency situation again. In addition, 67% are concerned about their child contracting COVID-19, with 17% preferring a fully remote option for their children.

Second, we received guidance from the NJ Department of Education on priorities for re-opening schools for 2020-2021. Using both the survey results and the DOE guidelines, the Catholic Schools Office is taking the following actions:

1. Working with each principal to determine which social distancing options allowable within the NJ guidelines provide the maximum protection of student and faculty health while offering daily onsite instruction for the largest number of students possible.
2. Ensuring that all schools establish – or continue to work with – local task forces of teachers, parents, and others to assist in the planning for 2020-2021. These groups are charged with keeping parents at each school up to date with progress on planning for the school year and verifying that local concerns are heard and addressed.
3. Establishing a) health and safety protocols for schools that meet or exceed guidelines and b) consistent expectations for instruction and assessment to ensure a strong learning experience if schools need to implement temporary remote learning during the year.
4. Exploring full-time remote learning options for students with health concerns.

I appreciate your continuing support of your school's principal and your patience with the planning process as we work to ensure that your children have the high quality Catholic school education that they deserve and you expect.

Sincerely in Christ,

Dr. William A. Watson
Superintendent of Schools