

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Headline: Amid Projections of Health and Safety Adjustments for all Schools in the Fall, Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of San Francisco Double Down on Being More Than “Just Public Schools with God”

Like all school systems in California, the Department of Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of San Francisco is currently working with all 52 elementary, middle and high schools in San Mateo, San Francisco, and Marin Counties to prepare for a fall return to school that prioritizes whole student development within upcoming health department guidelines.

In anticipation of a variety of models for education that include both in-person and distance learning options, the schools in the Archdiocese of San Francisco have established a renewed partnership that will innovate the student experience both on campus and behind the screen. This partnership with the University of Notre Dame’s Dr. Timothy O’Malley, Director of Education in the McGrath Institute for Church Life, will lead Archdiocesan Catholic schools to the cutting edge of education while maintaining the Catholic identity and community that has been a longstanding hallmark for Catholic school families.

News of this partnership comes not a moment too soon for Catholic school families seeking assurances about what the fall will bring for school children. “As a parent, I made the decision to send my child to Catholic school because I wanted her enveloped in a community that was as committed to raising a kind, compassionate, faith-filled young person and we are as a family.” Challenged by the distance learning model and the absence of in-person contact with teachers and school leadership, “we missed that feeling of being part of such a special community. Our family is thrilled that this partnership will help our schools prioritize that ‘special feeling’ that differentiates Catholic schools from all other schools, regardless of format.” (parent, Archdiocese of San Francisco Catholic K-8 School)

What does this partnership mean for Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of San Francisco? During the course of the 2020-2021 school year the Archdiocese of San Francisco and the McGrath Institute will pursue new possibilities in the development of pedagogies for Catholic education that are theologically and educationally sound. As teachers at Catholic schools consider hybrid approaches to education in the fall, this partnership will allow Catholic school educators to work with the McGrath Institute to propose an incarnate and sacramental pedagogy that will serve as a model not only for the Archdiocese but the Church throughout the world.

“The mission of the McGrath Institute is to educate Catholic leadership by making the theological and educational resources of the University of Notre Dame available to the Church throughout the United States and world. Over the last three years, Catholic Schools in the

Archdiocese of San Francisco and the McGrath Institute have developed a philosophy of Catholic education grounded in the rich intellectual and spiritual treasury of the Church. COVID-19 will not cause us to stop this work.” (Dr. Timothy O’Malley, Director of Education- McGrath Institute).

Families wanting to learn more about specific plans for fall reopening at Archdiocesan Catholic schools are encouraged to contact individual school sites for more information. Updates on the Archdiocesan partnership with Dr. O’Malley and the impact on Catholic schools will be shared regularly by the Department of Catholic Schools on their website, schools.sfarch.org.