



July 29, 2021

Dear Catholic School Parents/Guardians,

As we prepare to reopen schools in August, we face the unfolding realities of yet another wave of COVID-19. While this presents a number of challenges, it also provides us an opportunity to continue to grow in our faith. Last year, our dedicated Catholic school leaders and educators did an AMAZING job of pivoting to new ways of teaching while seamlessly integrating COVID mitigation measures. Our students and families were EXCEPTIONAL while experiencing new ways of learning and operating. I am proud of the creativity and flexibility exhibited by all. As a result, we were able to maintain robust faith formation and high-quality academic programs.

Armed with information and guidance from local and national experts, the Department of Catholic Education and Faith Formation continues to work with school leaders to refine plans for individual school communities. Please note that each school has to plan for their particular community based on many factors (i.e. population, facilities, stakeholder feedback, resources, etc.). Each school will share finalized plans with parents and other stakeholders prior to the first day of school.

I encourage everyone who is eligible to consider receiving the vaccine, but recognize that this is a matter of conscience. As with any medical decision, I encourage parents and families to speak with their healthcare providers to make the best decisions for their families' health and well-being.

As we begin the 2021-2022 academic year in our school buildings, we will remain vigilant and prepared. Using the lessons learned from last year and the most current data and guidance, we stand ready to shift based on possible scenarios and directives from state and local authorities. The situation before us is evolving and changing. I appreciate your patience and flexibility as we navigate the path forward.

During this uncertain time, we must rely on our faith. As members of the Catholic school community we are called to respond to adversity with faith and love. In Corinthians 16:13-14, St. Paul reminds us, "Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love." Our Catholic school community will plan and prepare; we will stand firm, courageous and strong in our faith, and we will do so with love.

Sincerely in Christ,

Dr. RaeNell B. Houston
Superintendent of Catholic Schools
Executive Director, Department of Catholic Education and Faith Formation