

DIOCESE OF DALLAS

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

October 14, 2020

Dear Parents,

Now that we are approaching two months of in person learning for many of our schools, I felt that it was important to give you an update of how our protocols and procedures have been working within the diocese. Since we began tracking COVID-19 lab confirmed cases in August, we have had just under 60 cases that have affected our school population. At this point, we are able to confidently state that **none of these cases has led to any kind of classroom transmission**. All cases have been traced to outside sources, and our protocols are ensuring that our schools are not contributing to the spread of the virus.

While we are pleased we can make that statement, we realize that could change at any moment. We are in this for the long-term safety and protection of the health of our school communities. I want to take a moment to thank you all for the trust and compliance that you have acted with thus far during our reopening plans, and to ensure that you have up to date information.

To date, many of our schools have had no cases of any kind. We are including with this communication an executive summary of the current diocesan picture broken down by elementary schools and high schools, and for context, the total percentage of positive cases remains approximately less than $\frac{1}{4}$ of 1% of our on-campus learners.

We have been able to keep the students safe for a number of reasons – mainly our procedures have worked largely because they were built on the assumption that we would and will continue to have people contract the virus, and we therefore must ensure those experiencing illness cannot spread it. We've been able to do that through three main avenues: first, our universal masking protocols and increased sanitation and hand washing have ensured that even when students are contagious, they are not spreading the virus to their classmates. Second, we currently have a network of over 100 contact tracers trained through John Hopkins University that do due diligence every time we have a lab confirmed case, allowing us to avoid campus shutdowns and transmission. Third, and most importantly, we have all of you and your students who are following protocols and requests so that we can continue our mission and keep one another safe.

It is important to note that COVID-19 is still actively spreading within the community, and we are seeing an increase in cases as related to social gatherings. We would ask that you remain vigilant as you go about your necessary activities; while we are confident in our procedures, contact tracing and quarantines are disruptive and we are trying to avoid them whenever possible. To that end, the most important things you can do are to socially distance, wear a mask and frequently wash your hands.

Going forward, we will be providing your principals with an updated dashboard weekly; they will be the best people to retrieve information from because of how quickly things occur, and you will continue to get direct communication from your school in the event there is a positive case that affects you or your child.

We want to thank you all again for your dedication and trust during this time, and ask for your continued prayers for all of those who are affected by the pandemic.

Respectfully,

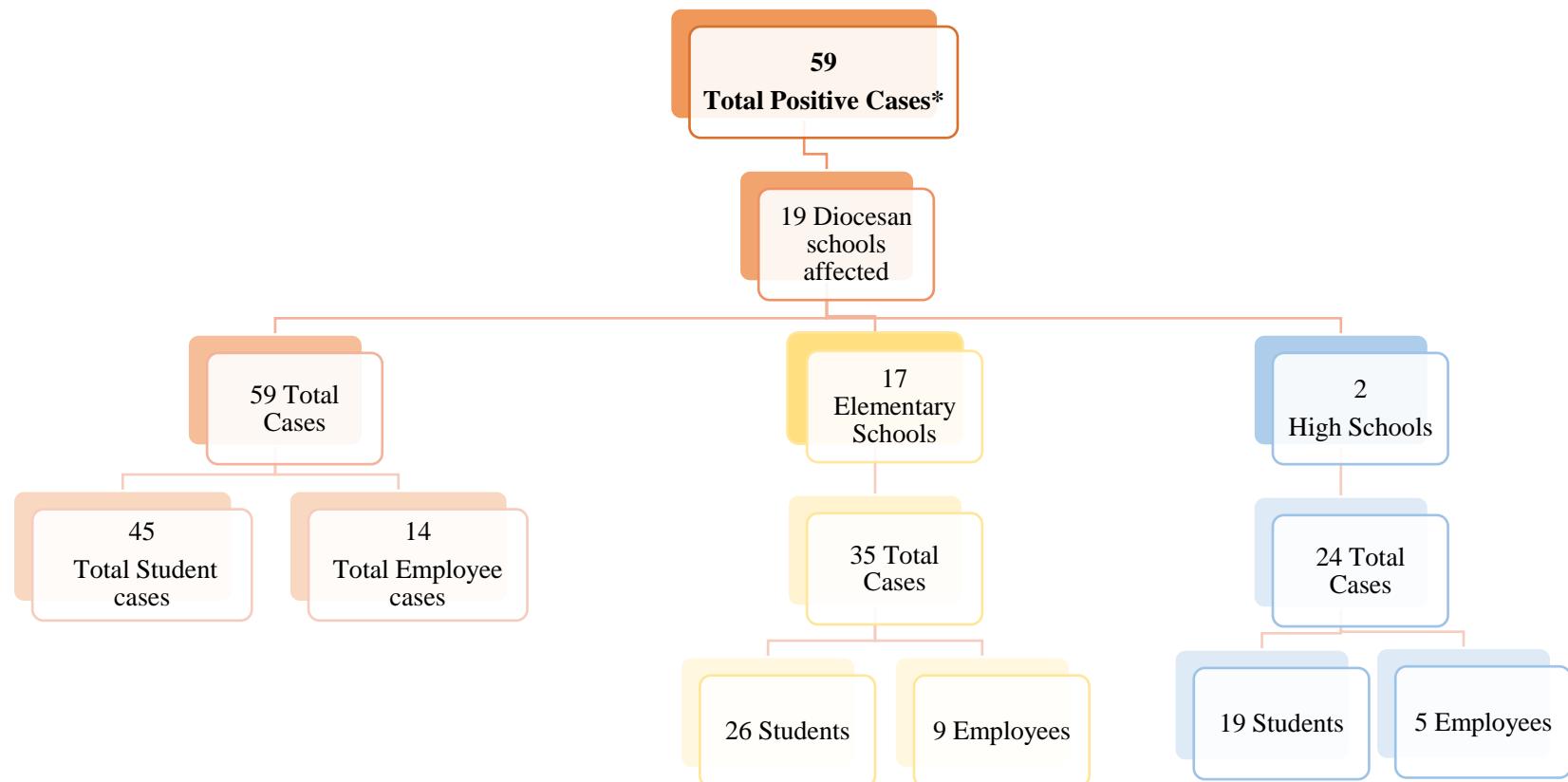
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew Vereecke". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Matthew" on the top line and "Vereecke" on the bottom line.

Matthew Vereecke
Superintendent

COVID-19 DASHBOARD

DIOCESAN SCHOOLS

Figure 1. COVID-19 POSITIVE CASES: GRAND TOTALS [8/1/20 – 10/12/20]



*A positive case is defined as a person with a laboratory confirmed case for COVID-19.