



May 8, 2020

Good afternoon,

Trust you and your family are in good health. We'd be remiss if we didn't say how much all of you are truly missed. Classrooms remain empty, the corridors quiet, the café eerily silent and the athletic fields closed. This is not what we ever envisioned especially for this time of year. We look forward to the day when your youthful enthusiasm returns and breathes life back onto our St. Paul campus. It can't come soon enough!

DISTANCE LEARNING PHASE III

We remain most grateful to the students and faculty for your patience, flexibility and commitment to our distance learning process. We acknowledge that this has not been easy for anyone. We said from the very beginning that this pandemic would test our character and it has. It has required each of us to dig deep within ourselves to remain engaged and motivated through these challenging times. We are proud to say, for the most part, you are passing that test.

With Governor Lamont's announcement on Tuesday, May 5 closing Connecticut K-12 schools until the end of the academic year, we have decided to transition our distance learning plan to Phase III beginning this Monday, May 11.

Phase I, initiated on March 13, focused on transitioning and engaging St. Paul students and faculty members online utilizing the Zoom app, thereby creating an educational experience that was as "normal" as possible given the unprecedented circumstances we faced. We recognized that it was not the same as in-person learning but that it did provide the desired opportunity for effective classmate and teacher interaction. We believe, that together, we successfully accomplished this initial objective. Phase I lasted until April 9, the end of the Third Marking Period.

When we returned from spring vacation on April 20, we begin Phase II. With the Governor's updated announcement that Connecticut schools would remain closed until at least May 20, we evaluated Phase I and began implementing Phase II with a modified class schedule in anticipation that it would provide

the needed teaching and learning flexibility recognizing five-day weeks with more frequent and creative assessments as we began the Fourth Marking Period.

As the external environment continued to change the last two months so has our academic model to successfully meet and sustain our educational objectives through the end of the school year. While some schools have moved to a pass/fail option, St. Paul is committed to making sure that we deliver on our vision of being a truly great Catholic high school. This means maintaining the highest possible standards for academic excellence while acknowledging the challenging times that we are living through. This distance learning experience was not out of choice, but necessity. Hopefully, you agree that the St. Paul faculty has continued to deliver on our academic promise to our students and families.

In creating the Phase III schedule, one of the central components is providing increased flexibility to complete assignments, papers and projects while assuring sufficient online contact time for teachers to cover the course content necessary to provide a solid foundation in preparation for college or courses students will be taking next year at St. Paul. Since moving to distance learning, some of the things that cause normal interruption to the daily academic schedule have ceased (i.e. class/school assemblies, field trips, retreats). This has allowed teachers to get ahead of where they would normally be in the curriculum at this time of year.

Based upon our students' commitment and performance the last eight weeks, as well as consideration of other relevant factors, we've decided that further changes to the academic schedule would be prudent at this time.

In Phase III, students and teachers remain in school five days a week. However, the class schedule will alternate between Day 1 and Day 2. For example, next week Day 1 will be Monday (5/11), Wednesday (5/13) and Friday (5/15). Day 2 will be Tuesday (5/12) and Thursday (5/14). The following week, Day 1 will be Tuesday (5/19) and Thursday (5/21) and Day 2 will be Monday (5/18), Wednesday (5/20) and Friday (5/22).

DAY 1

9:00 – 9:40 AM	A Period
10:00 – 10:40 AM	B Period
11:00 – 11:40 AM	C Period
12:00 – 12:40 PM	D Period

DAY 2

9:00 – 9:40 AM	E Period
10:00 – 10:40 AM	F Period
11:00 – 11:40 AM	G Period
12:00 – 12:40 PM	H Period

Due to COVID-19, AP Exams were rescheduled by the College Board to Monday, May 11 through Friday, May 22. Nearly 30% of our sophomore, junior and senior students are involved in taking AP exams. Our AP students have continued to progress through the curriculum of their respective courses in this new environment and we are confident that the hard work the students and AP teachers have labored through over the past nine months will bear great fruit in the results of the AP exams they will be taking

over the next two weeks. AP students will be waived of attending class or making up missed work on the scheduled day of their AP exam.

There's nothing normal about this pandemic. The Governor's plan to begin reopening Connecticut on May 20 will result in many parents leaving home to return to the workplace. We are sensitive to and sympathetic that every family's situation provides its own life challenges. In some cases, our students will be called upon to help care for younger siblings. Trying to strike a reasonable balance between home and school responsibilities for our students also dictates a more flexible educational schedule at this time.

To be clear though, the expectation of our students remains the same as it has from the first day of transitioning to distance learning. Students are required to prepare and make sure they are logged into their Zoom class meetings on time and keep up with the assigned work. There are some students that need to recommit themselves to their academic responsibilities. While understanding that everyone is coping with this pandemic and managing their educational responsibilities differently, there is a correlation why you might be struggling if you are not attending classes consistently and getting your work done. That is no different than in-person learning.

Where special or personal circumstances dictate, students should inform Mr. Cooper or their school counselor, Mrs. Mancini or Mrs. Glynn. Also, please do not hesitate to reach out to your teachers if you need extra help or support. They are all here to serve you and your family.

Next week, we will share decisions that are being finalized at the archdiocesan and local level with respect to acknowledging the accomplishments of the Class of 2020 including their graduation celebration plans and bringing closure to the academic year for all grades.

In closing, on behalf of the administration and faculty we want to extend a sincere **THANK YOU** to your parents/guardians for being supportive educational partners throughout this process. We truly value the sacrifices they make and the encouragement they have shared. We are in this together and together, **WE CAN DO THIS!**

Stay well ... enjoy your weekend.

Cary M. Dupont '72
President/Chief Administrator

James J. Cooper
Dean of Academic Life