



## DIOCESE OF OAKLAND

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### DEPARTMENT OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

July 23, 2020

Dear Catholic School Communities in the Diocese of Oakland,

I pray this communication finds you and your loved ones safe and well. I continue to hold your children, our principals, faculties, staff, and each of you in my prayers. I hope you have been able to find some peace and rest during these summer days, amidst the ongoing pandemic challenges. It's hard to believe it is almost August, and I write to share some updates related to the opening of our new school year.

Last Friday Governor Gavin Newsom provided new guidelines for the reopening of schools in California for the 2020-2021 school year. All schools (private or public) located within a county on the state monitoring watch list will need to start in distance learning this August. The county must be off the watch list for 14 consecutive days in order for a school to start on-campus learning. Both Alameda and Contra Costa Counties are currently on this watch list. Additionally, further health and safety guidelines have been adopted in order to return to on-campus instruction. Given this information, all diocesan schools will begin the new school year with distance learning.

While our strong desire is to be back in our school buildings when it is safe to do so, we knew that distance learning was a possible instructional model for the upcoming school year and so our schools had already begun planning for this platform of delivering quality instruction prior to Governor Newsom's announcement. Each of our schools is thoughtfully refining and expanding their Distance Learning Plan to ensure continuity of learning and achievement for all students. Our tenacious school leaders are leveraging effective strategies from last spring's Long-Term Dismissal and will be implementing new practices in collaboration with our dedicated teachers to strengthen their Distance Learning Plans. Additionally, our schools will be focusing on the social-emotional support for our students, teachers and parents, with a special emphasis on your needs during distance learning.

The commitment and intentional process each of our schools has undertaken to thoroughly explore and define our response to this pandemic speaks to the leadership, collaboration, and strength of our Catholic school system. It also speaks to our love for our mission and our love for your family. We look forward to the start of a new school year with great hope and intentional planning in preparation for the time when we are approved and ready to safely welcome students and families back on-campus. It will take our collective efforts to bend the curve on cases, allowing our counties to come off the watch list. I know we are all committed to this, as the safety and well-being of all our school communities is our priority, and our ultimate goal is to be on-campus with our students.

One of the greatest strengths of Catholic school education has always been our community of faith in partnership with our parents. This fundamentally sets us apart from other schools. Whether we are on-site or in distance learning, our commitment to educating the whole child - spiritually, academically, social-emotionally - remains. While our platform for learning has changed for the start of our new school year, our commitment to providing a quality, Catholic education for our students has never been stronger!

Thank you for your continued trust and partnership as we navigate through this unprecedented time. I remain confident in our collective capacity to lead the mission of Catholic education for the students and families in the Diocese of Oakland. May we continue to pray together as one Diocesan family for all of those affected by this pandemic. And may we each find strength, comfort, and hope in our partnership and planning for a positive start to our new school year.

*“Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm,  
for God can be trusted to keep His promise.” - Hebrews 10:23*

*Christ’s peace and joy surround you,*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathleen M. Radecke". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kathleen Radecke  
Superintendent