



DIOCESE OF PATERSON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

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June 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians (PreK-12),

In a few days, our school year will conclude and summer vacation will be upon us. Our school communities have truly earned this time of respite. We have lived a challenging 16 months. To say they were difficult times with very few answers to guide us is an understatement. Our schools did not just survive, they have thrived, thanks to the untiring dedication and commitment to ensure that all our students received a high-quality, faith-filled education in a healthy and secure learning environment.

Our teachers have taught their students in class and online simultaneously for nearly the entire school year. This type of teaching requires an enormous amount of preparation and an elevated focus all day, every day. Our teachers were successful because they deeply believe that they are called to a vocation to teach as Jesus did – to serve all students by meeting their needs. Our principals have led their schools as servant-leaders – modeling, encouraging, and inspiring everyone to do and be the best they can be. I want to thank you especially, our parents/guardians, for your partnership and for entrusting your children into our care.

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Paterson have offered face-to-face learning on a full-day schedule, for the majority of our schools, since the first day of the academic year. Parents (at that time) had the option of remote learning for their students. Our schools were successful in both types of learning because we are committed to our mission and values of a Catholic education.

While this type of learning served a much needed purpose for our schools, it was undertaken as an emergency solution to the crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic. It has empowered us to strategize for long-term changes in technology practices and pedagogy. However, with the availability of COVID-19 vaccines for ages 12 and over, the risk of transmission from children to adult has been greatly reduced.

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Paterson have successfully mitigated the spread of COVID-19 in schools for this school year. Student in-person engagement and collaboration with their peers is essential for them to grow in the dynamic environment of the classroom while affording the teachers the ready facility to more easily assess their needs and adapt instruction accordingly. While our teachers have accomplished outstanding instruction/learning, inviting remote learners

into the classroom, all students benefit from being a part of the full learning community in the classroom. We do not plan to provide a full-time remote learning option that includes teachers providing instruction simultaneously for in-class and online.

To that end, all students enrolled for the 2021-2022 school year are expected to attend school in person next year. All schools will continue to implement measures to minimize the spread of COVID-19 that are appropriate at the time school begins. We will continue to partner with local health agencies to monitor the COVID-19 situation and adhere to requirements that are in effect at that time.

Wishing you and all of your loved ones a blessed time of rest and joy this summer, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary D. Baier". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Mary D. Baier
Superintendent of Schools