



ST. PAUL PARISH SCHOOL

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Dear St. Paul Families,

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey regarding our return to school in September. I appreciate your willingness to share your thoughts, concerns, and questions with us. Currently, 160 families have completed the survey.

Survey results indicated that 83% of families want to return to in-person learning, while 16% said they will be enrolling their students in our online program. Some families are still undecided. Overwhelmingly, a key concern for everyone is the safety and health of our students, staff, and families. There is also a great desire to get the students back into the classroom for in-person learning, socialization, more normalcy to their lives, and routines.

In planning for the coming school year, and developing our Return to School Plan, it was important for us to offer parents a choice of in-person learning or a Distant and Digital Learning (DDL) model. We also want to be prepared for a transition to DDL for all students if mandated by the Governor and as outlined by the Oregon Department of Education (ODE). With the school closure that took place last spring, students, staff, and families had to quickly jump into a new mode of learning. For all of us, these were uncharted waters. I was extremely impressed with the job that was done by all in the spring, but now we have the opportunity to design and implement a more focused and robust student learning plan.

During the summer months, assistant principal, Mrs. Hughes, and teacher, Mrs. Silva, participated in multiple trainings on developing comprehensive online programs. Staff have and will continue to participate in a variety of Professional Development learning opportunities in this area. Yesterday, Mrs. Hughes emailed you a survey. We thank you in advance for sharing your perspective s as we work toward the completion of the DDL Plan. It is our goal to have this to you by August 28.

Survey links for the previously mentioned surveys can be found here along with the closing date of each survey:

**Return to School Survey will close Wednesday, August 19**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2HZN3QK>

**Distance and Digital Learning Survey will close Friday, August 21**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JXJ3QGY>

In early August, the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) added “Community Health Metrics” to the *Ready Schools, Safe Learners* operational blueprint guidelines. This section identifies guidelines for when schools can be in-person or must move to comprehensive distance learning. There are three levels of metrics to guide the decision-making process. These metrics are based on the current status of COVID-19 in our state, county, and St. Paul community.

Additionally, the metrics outline different guidelines and requirements based on the age of the child. Guidance for students receiving in-person instruction is divided into three age categories, with expectations given by the respective state-governing agency. If we were in school today, the following learning plan would be in place:

- **Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten** – In-person learning at all times (This is based on guidelines established by the Early Learning Division. The requirement is for our county to be in Phase I or 2.)
- **Kindergarten through third grade** – In-person learning (Per ODE guidelines: Metrics for this age group are met, as county metrics have been less than 30/100,000 and test positivity rate has stayed below 5% over a three-week period)
- **Fourth grade through eighth grade** - Distance Learning (Per ODE Guidelines: Metrics have not been met for this age group based on a three-week period because the county has been above 10/100,000 but below 5% test positivity rate. The state has been above 5% test positivity rate. Essential workers would be allowed to have their children on campus throughout the day per the Emergency Child Care License)

County metrics released today for the previous week are as follows: County: 1.1% test positivity rate and 10/100,000 case rate; State: 5.4% test positivity rate. The good news for us, as projected, the county numbers have dropped in the past week. However, we still need to see the numbers decline at the state level to 5% or below.

I’ve attached a flow chart that explains the metrics. Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten students follow the guidelines established by the Early Learning Division and do not follow these metrics. The metrics are released each Tuesday and can be found at this website: <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/DISEASESCONDITIONS/DISEASESAZ/Emerging%20Respiratory%20Infections/Weekly-County-Metrics.pdf>

This week marks the beginning of the three-week period prior to the start of school when the metrics must be met. The students that are most at question in regard to returning to in-person learning are our students in grades four through eight. In working with administration at the Archdiocese, O’Hara Catholic School and Marist Catholic High School, we will continue to monitor these numbers closely and will make a decision next Tuesday regarding the plan for students in

these grades. Below is a statement from the Superintendent of Catholic Schools regarding the expectation we've been given in following guidelines established by ODE:

*Dear Catholic School Families,*

*Know that the Department of Catholic Schools is supporting all of our schools as we navigate these uncertain times. We are committed to living the mission of Catholic education while keeping students, faculty, and staff healthy and safe. We will be monitoring the situation closely. We have been and will remain in dialogue with the Oregon Department of Education (ODE), Oregon Health Authority, and the Oregon Federation of Independent Schools (OFIS). After prayer and consultation with the Archbishop and these entities, we will be following guidance set forth by the Oregon Health Authority and ODE. Our ultimate goal is to get students back in our buildings so that we can continue the good work of our mission in person. We will continue to dialogue with the ODE and the governor's office as we hear of other developments in school districts across the state and will update our communities as we receive more information.*

*Christ's Peace,  
Jeannie Ray-Timoney, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Catholic Schools  
Archdiocese of Portland, Oregon*

As was evident in parent and staff surveys, and for Fr. David and me as well, what is most important to all of us is the health and safety of our students, staff, and families, while at the same time providing them with the best learning environment possible. In working to develop the plan for re-opening, I know that the procedures and policies we will put in place strive to do this. I've attached a link to the St. Paul Parish School Return to School Plan that was submitted to the Archdiocese, ODE, and Lane County Public Health. You can find it by clicking here: <https://saintpaul-school.org/2020-21-return-to-school-plan>. I want to reiterate that this plan has not been finalized and will be fluid based on the needs of our students and staff, and the guidelines established by the Archdiocese and ODE.

In closing today, I want to thank you for your endless support. In reading through the surveys, I greatly appreciated the words of encouragement and appreciation for the staff and all the work that has been done over the summer months to work towards providing the best Catholic education for our students. I know that there are no simple answers for all the questions that we have or may encounter in the coming months, but may we continue to trust in the Holy Spirit for guidance and wisdom.

In Christ's Peace,

Kelli Braud