



July 23, 2020

Dear Families of the Archdiocese of San Francisco,

Over the last few months, the schools of the Archdiocese of San Francisco have been working tirelessly on their plans for reopening school in August. I am so proud and humbled by the fantastic work of our school leaders and their communities as they navigate the various health guidelines and ordinances required to provide our students and staff with as healthy a school environment as possible. As we speak, the Reopening Schools Task Force that I put together in May is reviewing each school's reopening plans. I will be giving final approval of all plans in the next two weeks, or as they are submitted. We are ready to welcome your students back to school.

As with all things with this virus, Governor Newsom's announcement last Friday, and the subsequent document ***COVID-19 and Reopening In-Person Learning Framework for K-12 Schools in California, 2020-2021 School Year***, announcing new statewide mandates for all public and private schools in California caught us off guard. In this document, the Governor states "that schools and school districts may reopen for in-person instruction at any time if they are located in a local health jurisdiction (LHJ) that has not been on the county monitoring list within the prior 14 days." At this time, two of our three counties, San Francisco and Marin, are on the California COVID-19 Watch List, with San Mateo County remaining off the list. This directive from the Governor is mandatory at this time.

In response to these new mandates, and to give our schools and teachers time for proper planning, I would like to announce that all Archdiocesan elementary schools in Marin and San Francisco counties will begin the school year with a Distance Learning program. This Distance Learning program will continue through Thursday, September 3, hoping that these two counties will be off the California COVID-19 Watch List, allowing us to return to in-person instruction according to each school's approved Reopening Plans. Since San Mateo is not currently on the California COVID-19 Watch List, all elementary schools in San Mateo County will reopen with in-person instruction following their approved Reopening Plans, on their first scheduled day of school. San Mateo County schools will be required to move to a Distance Learning program if San Mateo is placed on the California COVID-19 Watch List between now and the first day of school.

Worth noting is that the new Reopening Framework document does contain a footnote that states that a waiver may be granted by the local health officer for elementary schools to open for in-person instruction. Currently, there is not a process in place at our three county health departments for applying for this waiver. Once a process is available, and if it is deemed appropriate to do so, I will be applying for this waiver option. A waiver would give us another opportunity for our Marin and San Francisco schools to resume in-person instruction in September.

Last spring, the schools of the Archdiocese of San Francisco provided a robust and rigorous Distance Learning program to the over 23,000 students in our Archdiocesan schools. If your child is required to be in a Distance Learning environment due to COVID-19 health restrictions and mandates, you will not find a better Distance Learning program in either of our three counties. Over the summer, our teachers and school leaders have further honed their Distance



Learning teaching skills through online courses and workshops.

Although our teachers are well versed in using Distance Learning, for them it is a second-best approach. They prefer to be in the classroom, interacting with your child or children. They want to run their classes in the traditional way, because they know that is best for your children. And as soon as this is an option for all our teachers, they will be in the classroom with your children.

You can rest assured that your tuition dollars provide your child with an education that is robustly Catholic and academically excellent, in an environment where your child is loved and treasured. We thank you for partnering with us through the 20/21 school year as we educate our students to change the world, by contributing to the Kingdom on earth, with their ultimate goal being entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Lyons'.

Pamela Lyons
Superintendent of Schools