



September 17, 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As many of you are aware, Executive Order 2021-23 was released and takes effect September 16, 2021.

This Executive Order allows the return of face-to-face instruction as early as Monday, September 20, 2021. The Governor stipulated that schools may reopen on Monday, if they feel that they have adequately addressed the requirements of DPHSS in regards to the adoption and approval of a SFCS Mitigation and Reopening Plan, COVID-19 Protocols, and Testing Plan.

With the recent increase in COVID-19 positive test results and with an abundance of caution, Mr. Quitugua and I would like to extend the distance-learning alternative for one more week, as we monitor these cases and prepare our documents for submission. We pray for your understanding and support of this difficult decision. SFCS has been developing its mitigation and reopening plan, as well as our COVID-19 Protocols, but please note that DPHSS has implemented a compliance checklist, which we are ensuring our adherence to each of the items on the checklist. The COVID-19 Protocols are being revised, and a new document will be shared with parents and guardians prior to the potential resumption of face-to-face learning on Monday, September 27, 2021.

More importantly, one of the items on the DPHSS Compliance checklist is the SFCS Testing Plan. This plan is proving the most challenging. Mr. Quitugua and I would like to provide the highlights of this plan. In April of 2021, we were invited to participate in one of DPHSS' grants that include schools; the Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) Funding. It is critical to inform you that the Testing Plan has several components that parents and guardians need to be made aware of. Just recently, two of our employees have been certified to administer, read, and report the COVID-19 BinaxNow Test. We hope to have more personnel certified within the next few weeks.

Our decision to participate was made knowing that this grant program would allow us to better assist and provide opportunities to our students, employees and school community to undergo the BinaxNOW testing, which provides results within 15 minutes. Upon the return of our students, the testing plan will focus on the potential COVID-19 positive cases that may occur on campus. Note that individuals including our students may

have symptoms that present as asymptomatic. In line with the requirements of our testing plan, a consent to test will be provided to parents and guardians. This document will be kept on file and only be used if and when your child/children exhibit COVID-19 symptoms. Parents and guardians who return a signed consent form will be called prior to any test administration on campus. In addition, to alleviate any anxiety, parents and guardians may also be present during testing to support their child.

As parents and guardians, you do not have to sign the consent form, but know that in meeting the Executive Order NO. 2021-23, page 3, paragraph 5:

*WHEREAS, as encouraged by the federal government and in coordination with the DPHSS, it is important that the GDOE, private, and charter schools develop screening and testing strategies to identify and isolate positive cases on school campuses to minimize further disruption to in-person instruction and keep students in classrooms; and...*

SFCS must also be responsible for ensuring that we meet the screening and testing strategies which may identify a positive student, and allow SFCS to move directly into Contact Tracing as soon as possible. This provides another layer of precautionary measures.

SFCS is aware that some of our parents and guardians will not want to provide consent. We respect your decision, but we are also held to ensuring that we meet the screening and testing strategies which may identify a positive student. It is this immediate identification which will enable SFCS to move directly into the Contact Tracing protocols. In the case when a child falls ill while on campus, displaying any of the symptoms associated with the COVID-19 virus, and parent or guardian does not consent to in-school testing, SFCS will require that the parent or guardian obtain a medical clearance document from their health provider allowing the child to return to campus. Should you decide to get your child tested with their primary physician and they test positive with the virus, it is incumbent upon the parent or guardian to inform SFCS as soon as possible, again, to ensure the Contact Tracing protocols. A child who tests positive must provide SFCS with a clearance document either from DPHSS or their primary health provider to return to school.

As we determined that SFCS would not return to face-to-face instruction on Monday, September 20, 2021, we recognize that we have only been utilizing the distance learning alternative for two weeks; and the additional week of September 20-24 should not significantly impact their progress. Again, we thank our parents and guardians for their support and commitment towards their child or children's attendance and participation in our online classes.

During these uncertain times, we would like to assure parents and guardians that SFCS keeps the health, welfare, and safety of our students, employees, and school community first and foremost. We ask that you

continue to keep vigilante in your safety practices- wash your hands/sanitize, wear your masks properly, practice social distancing, and if possible, refrain from activities that may put your families at risk. As an added layer of protection, we highly encourage our school community (ages 12 and up) to avail of the vaccination. God Bless to you all.

Motus Spiritu,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lisa A. Baza-Cruz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L".

Dr. Lisa Baza-Cruz, Principal

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Anthony A. Quitugua". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A".

Mr. Anthony A. Quitugua, Vice Principal