



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

222 North Seventeenth Street • Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-1299

Phone: 215- 587-3585 Fax: 215- 587-2414 E-mail: amclaughlin@archphila.org

Dear Parents and Staff of our Catholic Elementary Schools,

I am writing to update you on the progress of plans to open our schools this fall. As I mentioned earlier, a task force has been formed and has started meeting. The task force is officially called the **Catholic Schools Onward, Best Practices and New Opportunities as We Move Forward** (CSO) - we refer to it as CSO for short. The CSO is made up of about 30 people, with each person bringing a specific expertise or representing a particular stakeholder group within our schools. Some of these groups include principals, nurses, business members, teachers, religious, parents, board members, and central administration.

Prior to our first meeting, each member was provided the guidance from the State of PA regarding school reopening expectations, guidance from the CDC, and plans from schools that have already reopened. It is our plan to take the guidance provided and support each school with specific and practical procedures to start school in a safe manner. To accomplish this, the task force is organized into a number of different subcommittees that have already begun to tackle the role of developing the specific practices that our schools will use. We are currently looking at procedures to communicate this process to our stakeholders on a regular basis.

The Subcommittees include:

Playbooks

This subcommittee will provide specific guidance on procedures in the case of a student, staff, or family member contracting COVID-19.

Building Operations

This subcommittee will develop guidance regarding daily cleaning procedures, procedures for monitoring the daily health of the students and staff, how to safely travel around the building and other procedures such as lunch and recess.

Classroom Operations

Similar to building operations, this subcommittee will examine everything that takes place within the classroom. This will include such things as building cohorts to reduce unnecessary exposure to others, seating arrangements, the use of recording lessons, strategies for personal materials, and how to eliminate the need for shared materials.

Virtual Learning

This subcommittee examines how we can enhance the virtual learning process and how it may be utilized.

Mental Health

This subcommittee examines the process to reintegrate students back into the building. Most students have not been in groups, such as a classroom, in many months. Some have been isolated. This subcommittee is looking at procedures to help reintegrate our students into the new normal.

Other

Additionally, there are subcommittees looking at procedures for Procurement of PPEs and other supplies, communications regarding this process, procedures specific to our Pre-K programs as well as, after school activities and CARES.

Catholic Identity

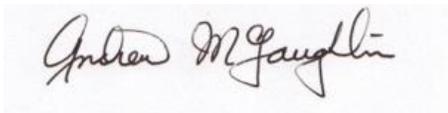
As you are aware, is the purpose of our schools and we want to make sure through everything we do, it remains at the forefront of our mission. It is easy to focus on all of the guidance and procedures and we want to make sure that our Catholic Identity is at the forefront of all we do.

Please know that we will continue to research, read, consult, and plan as we move towards discovering new opportunities to provide a Gospel-centered education for your child this Fall. It is our goal to have a website established so you can view these documents as they are developed. When we provide you this link when the website is up and running, It is our goal to have it functional by 6/26/20.

Lord, may you bless the world, give health to our bodies and comfort our hearts. You ask us not to be afraid. Yet our faith is weak and we are fearful. But you, Lord, will not leave us at the mercy of the storm. Tell us again: "Do not be afraid" (Mt 28:5). And we, together with Peter, "cast all our anxieties onto you, for you care about us" (1 Pet 5:7).

-Pope Francis

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew M. McLaughlin". The signature is written in a cursive style and is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

Andrew M McLaughlin, Ed.D.

Secretary for Elementary Education