



ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER

May 29, 2020

Prot. N. AB 2020-0276 A

Dear Members of the Archdiocese of Denver Catholic School Community,

We have arrived at the end of an academic year that has been anything but typical. We know the past two and a half months have been a time of great anxiety and stress for many families as we have found our communities, our lives, and our families impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Our communities have experienced the unexpected loss of friends and family due to COVID-19. Others have experienced the impact of the pandemic on the economy which has resulted in record job loss and financial insecurity. And everyone has had to adjust to a disrupted way of life as we all made sacrifices for the greater common good.

Despite the praiseworthy efforts of our schools to carry out distance learning, we recognize that nothing can fully replace the goodness, beauty, and educational experience of being physically together as a community. Learning and formation is best accomplished when it comes through direct encounter with one another. While technology is a tool that allows us to remain connected and has facilitated our learning during this pandemic, it cannot emulate the richness of an in-person classroom experience.

As such, today we are announcing that our schools will open to in-school learning for the 2020-21 school year. The education and formation of your children is of the utmost importance and to the extent that it is legal and safe, we will carry out in-person instruction with increased health protocols and processes to ensure that our schools are going above and beyond to protect the health of every member of our Catholic school community, especially our most high-risk members.

We recognize that there may be some families who may not feel comfortable sending their children to school for any in-school learning experiences in any configuration this upcoming year. Please know we understand that some family situations may have greater cause for concern than others. As such, the Archdiocese of Denver is developing a virtual distance-learning option where interested families will still be able to receive instruction for children in core content areas while remaining connected to their local school community. More information will be available by the end of June.

We know a lot more about COVID-19 than we did months ago. The capabilities of health officials and health care providers to test and track the virus have greatly improved and health experts have a better understanding of how to best mitigate the spread of this coronavirus.

To assist us in continuing to ensure the well-being of our students, faculty, and staff, we have assembled a team of health advisors composed of school leaders, nurse practitioners, doctors, and a virologist. They have begun to work with our staff to identify the best health measures and policies for our schools. In the coming weeks we will continue to work with our health advisors, local and state officials, and local school leaders in preparation for the 2020-21 school year. Once the archdiocesan health measures and policies are finalized, your local school will communicate to let you know their specific plans. **We are confident our schools' health protocols and processes will keep our school environments as healthy and as safe as possible for all members of our communities.**

As we continue planning for the reopening of our schools, we need your feedback and perspective. We would invite you to share your thoughts with us via a survey. Your response will assist our planning and help us to ensure that we consider the needs of our community as we reopen in the safest possible manner. The survey can be accessed by going to www.denvercatholicschools.com.

In these challenging times we thank the Lord for the ways our Catholic community has come together to assist one another and be present for each other, through prayer, through the generous giving of time, talent, and treasure, and through connectivity and outreach to members of our parish and school communities. These have all been signs of our Lord's love and goodness.

We are also profoundly grateful for the efforts of our Catholic school pastors, principals, teachers, and staff who have given unselfishly to make the most of this situation and have sought to do everything possible to provide a strong Catholic education and formation for students at a time where the entire educational standard changed overnight. The speed with which our local schools were able to mobilize and deploy distance learning is a credit to the dedication of our school teams and highlights the nimbleness and flexibility we have in our Catholic schools.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without the incredible efforts made by our parents to play an even bigger role in their children's education. While balancing your own work, caring for your families, and other day-to-day responsibilities, you have stepped up to make sure we had a productive finish to the school year. Thank you for continuing to partner with our Catholic schools to support the education and formation of your children.

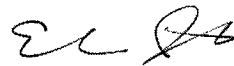
Throughout this pandemic, the Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools have sought to ensure that the response, planning, and decision making of our community during this pandemic has been prudent, balanced, and measured by continuing to surround ourselves with the best possible information and guidance. Our Catholic Schools are a critical part of the educational ecosystem and fabric of our state, and we remain committed to working in a spirit of cooperation with our local and state officials when possible as we all seek to advance the common good of our communities.

Let us continue to entrust our Catholic educational ministry and our efforts to our blessed Mother, the Immaculate Conception, whom we ask to continue to watch over and intercede for us.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Rev. Samuel J. Aquila, S.T.L.
Archbishop of Denver



Mr. Elias J. Moo
Superintendent of Catholic Schools