



ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER

OFFICE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Dear Members of the Archdiocese of Denver Catholic School Community,

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

At the conclusion of this past academic year, Archbishop Aquila and I shared with you that, barring any state or local orders that would otherwise restrict our plans, our Catholic schools were fully committed to reopening to in-school learning for the 2020-21 academic year. We now stand at the doorstep of the beginning of another academic year and as you have already heard from your local schools, with the support of various professional advisors and through continued dialogue with a variety of medical professionals and state/local health officials, our Catholic schools remain fully committed to returning to in-school learning. Yet, we know many of you may be feeling a little anxious about what this next academic year will look like.

The Office of Catholic Schools (OCS), school leaders, and our OCS Health Taskforce members have been working diligently this entire summer in preparation, in consultation with our professional advisors and health officials, for a return to in-school learning. We have learned so much over the past several months about this pandemic and our advisors have provided us with incredibly valuable information which we used to guide decision making and offer guidance to our schools for the return to in-school learning.

Over the summer we entered into a partnership with Centura Health who has advised and supported our efforts to return to in-school learning. Members of the OCS Health Taskforce have been meeting regularly over the past two months with an advisory team from Centura that includes physicians, infectious disease specialist, environmental health and protection specialist, and behavioral health professionals. Their counsel has been invaluable, and we are grateful for their community partnership.

We have also been in communication with Governor Polis, his staff, representatives of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), while schools have been in communication with various local health officials. We continue to track the guidance from CDC, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and other professional organizations. These groups have all expressed that they believe, as we do, that the benefits of in-school learning greatly outweigh the risks associated with returning during this time.

We believe that through the collaborative process we have put in place, we have developed a strong framework and plan that is consistent with the guidance that has been given to us through the various agencies and addresses the most critical and essential systems and processes needed to carry out the safest possible return to in-school learning during this time of pandemic. We also know our schools are set up to be successful with returning to in-school learning. We're small, community-based schools. As such, we're nimbler environments, which allow us greater freedoms and flexibilities that other schools may not have.



The Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools is an investment in the future of our children and our Catholic faith.

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As Catholic schools we also believe in the primacy of parents in the education and formation of their children. Over 80% of our families have said that they are anxious to have their children back in-school this year. We are grateful that we find ourselves able to return to school for in-person learning. Yet we also know that others do not feel ready to have their children returning to in-school learning. As such, we are happy to be able to offer options for families for both in-school and distance learning.

Therefore, we invite you to visit <https://denvercatholicschools.com/parents/> to learn more about the framework and guidance we have given to assist our Catholic schools to prepare for in-school learning during this time. You'll find some video resources as well that we hope will assist you in your family in understanding how our community is preparing and responding.

As you know, the pandemic response and the guidance from state and local health officials, and our advisors, continues to be dynamic and will be subject to change and adjustments as we continue to navigate this pandemic. Our page will be updated continually to ensure you have the most up-to-date information throughout this year. Your individual schools will also continue to communicate their school-specific plans with you. If you have questions about your local school's response and plans, please contact your school leadership directly.

We truly value the freedom of conscience of every person and family and fully support our families and employees in discerning what is best for you and your family during these times. We cannot guarantee an immune, disease/sickness free environment, not now or in any moment, even outside of a pandemic. However, we can guarantee that we will do everything we possibly can, to the best of our ability, to put in place high standards of care and promote the health and well-being of our community. Nevertheless, if you discern our setup and configuration for our schools this fall is not best for you or your family, we respect and support that decision. Know you will be welcome in our Catholic school community when you are ready to return.

We are truly looking forward to having our students back in school with our teachers and staff, as we know that the formation and education of your children is best accomplished through community and human encounter. As we move forward, let us do so with faith in our Lord, Jesus, trusting that he is in control and will give us the graces we need to see through this moment. We can do hard things because He will be with us!

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

May the Lord continue to bless and keep you and your family, now and always.

Your servant in Christ,

Elias J. Moo
Superintendent
Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools



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