



DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT

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OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

April 9, 2020

Dear Parents,

I hope that this letter finds you and your family healthy and safe. Today, as we begin our commemoration of the Lord's Passion and prepare to celebrate His Resurrection, we remember in a special way all those who have been afflicted by Covid-19 and those that are working tirelessly to care for them.

I write today to announce that, in keeping with Governor Lamont's announcement, we will continue our distance learning program with the plan of returning to our school buildings on May 20, 2020. While we hold onto hope that we will be able to return then and share the closing weeks of the school year together, we continue to plan for the possibility that we may finish out the year remotely. As we continue in this alternative teaching/learning model, I again wish to express my deep gratitude for the teachers and school leaders who have worked so hard to ensure that quality education continues in our schools.

I also need to express my gratitude to the members of our diocesan team who have been working to implement this model. Around March 1st, I asked our Personalized Learning Team, led by Alan Barnicle and Stacy Clements, to start putting together a plan just in case we had to close school buildings for a short period of time. Within a week they created guidelines, resources and templates, and as the reality of the situation became clearer, we had each school submit their plan for distance learning. On March 16th our schools were able to transition almost all of the over 7000 students to a distance learning program – an amazing feat! Since then, the team has been meeting every day via zoom with groups of teachers and administrators and continues to facilitate the sharing of best practices, materials and resources. Additionally, they, along with our instructional coaches and our teacher leaders, have led over 100 professional development sessions and provide a virtual help desk for teachers and parents. As a result, our distance learning program gets better every day. As I have shared in previous letters, the most updated information can be found on a dedicated page on our website:
<https://www.dioceseofbridgeportcatholicschools.com/coronavirus-updates/>.

Finally, I again want to express that we recognize the financial stress some families may be experiencing and we encourage you to work with your school principal should you need an extension on making tuition payments. In the meantime, we have suspended late fees charged through FACTS. Also, as we are in the height of new enrollment season, I encourage you to continue sharing pictures and positive messages on social media and ask that you share the good news about Catholic schools with friends and relatives. Even though our buildings are closed, school administrators are still working and would love to talk with potential new families.

As we look forward to the promise and hope of the Easter season, let us continue praying for our friends, our families and our school communities that all of us may truly experience the joy given to us by the risen Christ.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "St. F. Ch", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Steven F. Cheeseman
Superintendent of Schools