



Department of Catholic Schools

December 29, 2020

Dear School Families-

I hope that you all had a very blessed Christmas and that you were able to be with close family members. Christmas is a time of hope, peace, and love.

I am filled with hope for this coming year, 2021. Our students have seen a variety of options for learning since September including, being on campus, limited in-person instruction, and comprehensive distance learning. We know that on campus, in-person instruction is the best option for students to build relationships and to learn. We have been working towards this end since last March.

We have worked with the ODE, the OHA, and the governor's office following metrics and safety guidelines in order to safely instruct our students. We have continued the conversations to extend time on campus to best meet the needs of our students and families. Our teachers are working hard to meet the needs of their students. This will be best accomplished when we can all be back on campus. Thus, we are optimistic about the latest information coming from the governor's office for schools.

On December 23rd Governor Kate Brown sent a letter to the Director of the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) and the Director of the Oregon Health Authority (OHA). She spoke to opening schools for students following the specific safety guidelines that we have been following and the safety protocols that we have put into place at our school sites. New health metrics for return to school were put into effect in October. "Effective January 1, 2021, Oregon's COVID-19 Health Metrics for Returning to In-Person Instruction will become advisory rather than mandatory."

The Department of Catholic Schools is encouraging all schools to work together with their COVID safety committees to make sure that safety protocols and guidelines are in place so that they can bring students back to campus in a timely fashion. Each school will be making local decisions in line with the Ready Schools Safe Learners Guidance.

Please know that the mission of Catholic schools is always at the forefront of decision making, including the health and safety of our students and staff. Please be patient and supportive as we navigate the positive options that now lie ahead. We are blessed with this opportunity to again return to the classroom and educate our students in an environment of our Catholic faith.

Merry Christmas. May the peace of Christ guide you through the new year.

Jeannie Ray-Timoney

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