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July 17, 2020

Dear Catholic School Families, Faculty, and Friends,

I hope this letter finds your family well and safe. I'm writing to follow up on our dialogue about how we intend to continue serving our students with an eye on how to welcome them back to school this fall.

The question shared by all is whether we can safely return to in-person learning at the end of the summer. As you may be aware, Governor Gretchen Whitmer recently announced that she expects schools across Michigan will be permitted to reopen for in-person learning this fall, largely thanks to the mitigation efforts by millions of Michigan citizens. Per the governor's [Executive Order MI 2020-142](#), all public and nonpublic schools in the State of Michigan that are in operation during **Phase 4** and **Phase 5** of the [MI Safe Start Plan](#) may open their buildings to students, as long as they create and adhere to COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plans. Our region of Michigan (Region 1) is currently in **Phase 4** and we are hopeful this trend will continue into the new academic year.

With the governor's announcement and our progress into **Phase 4**, we are ready to share our plans to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of all in our reopened Catholic school communities. The [Archdiocese of Detroit COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan](#) establishes the requirements that schools will implement to meet the Governor's [MI Safe Schools 2020-21 Return to School Roadmap](#). Our plan describes the policies and procedures that

Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Detroit will follow when our region is designated as being in **Phase 4**, **Phase 5** and/or **Phase 6** of the MI Safe Start Plan.

It must be acknowledged that the pandemic is not over and that its course remains largely unpredictable. It is possible that state officials could at one point determine that a region or regions have shifted back into **Phase 3** or below, necessitating further school closures locally, regionally, or statewide. While we pray fervently that this does not occur, we must prudently prepare for this contingency. The [**Recommendations for Distance Learning**](#) guidance was created with reference to best practices, extensive research, and parent feedback provided in our End-of-Year Parent Survey. The Archdiocese will ask schools to reference these recommendations for distance learning if state officials re-classify our region into **Phase 3** or below at any point before or during the upcoming academic school year, or if localized conditions prompt individual school closures.

As shared with you in May, we proactively assembled a Return to School Task Force to develop plans for a safe return to in-person school operations while also giving thought to the development of prudent contingency plans. We are thankful to members of the task force, which included physicians, government officials, educators, school pastors, and parents. Their efforts helped produce these thoughtful, deliberate, and manageable plans that will assist all our schools.

With the positive impact that mitigation efforts have had on our statewide and metropolitan area over the last several months, we hope that these trends continue so we may welcome students back to our schools this fall. No matter where the pandemic leads us, you may rest assured that we are prepared to deliver the excellent education, fulfilling spiritual formation, and engaging community you expect from Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Detroit.

Sincerely,

Kevin D. Kijewski, J.D.
Superintendent of Catholic Schools

[**Read the Archdiocese of Detroit COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan**](#)

[Read the Recommendations for Distance Learning](#)

UNLEASH THE GOSPEL

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