



Diocese of Knoxville Catholic Schools: Preparing Scholars, Leaders, & Saints

December 21, 2020

805 S. Northshore Drive
Knoxville, TN 37919

Dear Catholic School communities:

I hope this note finds each of you healthy and enjoying the glorious preparations of Advent! While our teachers and students have been away from campus for the last three weeks, the school leaders and I have been actively monitoring the community spread of COVID-19 within our regions. We are confident that you are also aware that the community numbers in all of the key areas are at a critical level across the entire state. Our decisions about school opening for on-campus learning have not been based solely on community spread. It is our belief that students need to be in school and that learning is best achieved through face-to-face instruction on campus. However, we must be prudent in our decision-making about ensuring the healthiest environment possible during this pandemic. Therefore, we will continue to monitor this situation and its impact on our school communities. The school leaders and I will gather the most current and relevant data to discuss how this information could potentially affect our re-opening plan in a meeting on December 29, 2020. In order to allow families to prepare for child-care or make other schedule adjustments, any decisions that will change the re-entry start dates will be communicated to you by December 30, 2020.

Please understand that at this time, our plan is for teachers to return on January 4th with the students returning to campus on January 5, 2021. In order to adhere to this plan, we are asking every family to continue to exercise great caution during their Christmas celebratory activities. With Christmas this week, there is not sufficient time for community spread numbers to level-off before another potential surge. If anyone in your family has been at risk to exposure or is feeling unwell, please communicate this to your school principal or president, as we will be using this information to determine the best course of action regarding the opening of schools in January.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at sprater@dioknox.org with any concerns. Our school families and communities will continue to be in our prayers this Advent season! Be assured of our prayers for the gift of faith, the blessing of hope, and the peace of His abiding love at Christmas and always!

In Christ,

Sedonna J. Prater

Sedonna J. Prater, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Catholic Schools
Diocese of Knoxville