

DIOCESE OF ALLENTOWN
SECRETARIAT FOR EVANGELIZATION, EDUCATION & FORMATION
Office of the Superintendent | 1425 Mountain Drive North | Bethlehem PA 18015 | (610) 866-0581

August 16, 2021

Dear Diocesan Educational Community,

As we look forward to the 2021-22 school year, I wanted to share our Diocesan plans to open our schools in just a couple of weeks. We continue to review guidance and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH), and the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). Decisions regarding the plan for the upcoming school year are very challenging and take into account the health and safety of students and staff along with the academic development and well-being of our students. As with our plans for the previous school year, keeping our schools safe and open remains our primary goal.

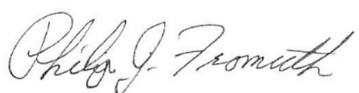
All of our schools will offer full, five-day, in-person instruction. Face coverings are highly recommended for students and staff in our schools as a mitigation measure against COVID-19, but are not mandated at this time. This is our current plan as we continue to strive to return our schools to more of a typical school experience for our students. However, given that we remain in a global pandemic, if the situation changes and compromises our ability to keep our schools both safe and open, we will review and revise our mitigation strategies.

Regarding face coverings, please note that we cannot control what government entities may require, such as when our students ride public school buses. Also, we may not be in control of mask requirements when students receive support services or participate in athletic activities involving other schools. Virtual education for the 2021-22 school year will be offered only in specific COVID-19 related situations such as quarantine or situations involving a long-term serious medical situation.

Keeping schools open and safe remains a priority for the upcoming 2021-22 school year, and COVID-19 mitigation strategies remain critical to protect students, school staff, and families. Since the pandemic's beginning, we have learned so much and we have seen that schools can conduct in-person learning safely when mitigation strategies are in place. Other COVID-19 mitigation measures will remain in place such as social distancing, increased cleaning and disinfecting, hand washing and respiratory etiquette, quarantine protocols when needed, isolation areas and contact tracing. Each of our schools will have a Health and Safety Plan that will be very similar to the plan from last school year with one of the exceptions being the fact that face coverings are recommended but not mandatory.

We remain committed to providing our students with a safe, faith-filled and academically sound experience and we pray for a successful 2021-22 school year. Thank you for your ongoing support of our schools, of our efforts this academic year, and of Catholic education in our diocese.

May God bless you and your family.



Dr. Philip J. Fromuth
Superintendent of Catholic Education