



DIOCESE OF DALLAS

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

November 20, 2020

Dear Parents –

As we head into our Thanksgiving break, I want to again thank you for your time, effort and energy over the past several months as we have returned to in person learning and to give you an update on where we are as a school system.

First and foremost, the data and surveillance of our schools continues to show that we are not seeing classroom transmission of the virus. As of Tuesday, November 17th, we have had 133 cases across all diocesan entities, and in all but one of those cases we have traced the virus to an outside source. The lone exception we are still investigating and will update our policies and procedures if we determine the case is not an outlier.

It is important to note the heroic efforts that our teachers have played in making our schools as safe as they are. They are enforcing and constantly reminding our students of our protocols and ultimately are the most important factor in keeping students safe. I know that every parent in our diocese is very thankful for our teachers, and I would encourage you to continue to tell them as much, especially now around the holidays.

Second, I want to reassure families that we are going to continue to maintain our in person learning protocols despite the current surge in virus cases and barring new information that shows on campus transmission of the virus or failure of our current protocols. As I have mentioned in previous communication, everything that we have designed here at the diocese has assumed that there would be cases within the community and has focused on eliminating any and all on-campus spread. We have overwhelming evidence that our protocols are doing exactly what we thought they would, and we are in frequent communication with the Dallas County Health Department and other officials regarding these facts. We feel confident not only in our ability to keep our students healthy, but also in the legal positions necessary to stay open.

Finally, we are expecting to see more cases within the system as the number of cases increases in the general community. Our success thus far has been dependent on notification from families of illness and the quick work of our contact tracing teams. We are going to preemptively ask for your continued cooperation in this regard; while we all wish quarantines and contact tracing were unnecessary, these processes are allowing us to remain open and avoid complications with the health department and local officials.

Despite what is going on in the world around us, I remain hopeful and grateful as we head into Thanksgiving and the Christmas season. Our faith continues to keep us strong and confident, and we remain committed to forming the Saints and Scholars of our school system. Thank you for trusting us with the care of your students, and know that you all remain in our thoughts and prayers.

Respectfully,

Matthew Vereecke