



DIOCESE OF BELLEVILLE

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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Dear Catholic School Parents and Guardians,

Friday afternoon, the St. Clair County Health Department “strongly encouraged schools to consider starting the school year remotely.” In addition, Barb Hohlt, executive director of the St. Clair County Health Department stated Friday, **“we’re not saying schools can’t open. We’re not saying that at all.”** Our schools continue to monitor our unique situations and daily consider the safest and most educationally appropriate option for our students. At this time, we strongly believe that our reopening plans, which provide for full-time in-person learning, is still the best overall option for our schools.

In-person learning is essential for the intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual growth of our students. Our reopening plan maximizes the safety of our students and employees while allowing the resumption of in-person learning. It is therefore our intention to remain committed to our plan to offer five-day, in-person learning in addition to offering a remote, e-learning, option for those families who are unable or uncomfortable returning to school in-person at this time.

In designing our reopening plan, we reviewed guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and the Illinois Department of Public Health as well as input from state health officials, medical professionals and infectious disease experts on our own task forces. We have been told that wearing masks, social distancing, and personal hygiene are key components to reducing risk and potential exposure, and we will be able to accomplish those safety recommendations.

In addition to the safety protocols that have been recommended, our partnership with the Miinehealth tracking system uniquely position our schools to screen and monitor our students. No other schools in our area are utilizing this technology and we are excited about this partnership and the extra layer of safety/monitoring it will offer our schools.

I realize this is a time of anxiety and stress for many because we are living in unknown and uncomfortable times. However, please know that we deeply care about the needs and safety of our students, families and staff and are looking forward to the year to come.

Blessings,

Jonathan Birdsong
Superintendent of Schools
Diocese of Belleville

The Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Belleville are happy to partner with families in the faith, educational and moral formation of their children.