



Diocese of Knoxville Preparing Scholars, Leaders and Saints

805 S. Northshore Drive
Knoxville, Tennessee 37919

Dec. 30, 2020

Dear School Communities:

I hope this Christmas has filled your homes with joy! We are very grateful to all that provided input on the reopening of our schools in January. After prayerful consideration and discussion of this information collected from surveys with faculty members and families, as well as discussions with the medical community including epidemiologists, health department officials, and research hospital doctors, we have determined that a delay in school reopening is warranted. The purpose of this delay is to allow for a week of self-quarantine prior to re-entry to campus. **Our schools will reopen for on-campus learning on Monday, Jan. 11, 2021.** We will continue to follow all safety protocols implemented in the fall for on-campus learning. This change to our return date will not affect our school calendar, including the Easter break or end-of-year dates, since we had built in additional instructional time in the revised calendar. I want to encourage everyone within our community to continue to exercise safety measures to protect your family and our communities from this contagious disease. Our schools will continue to provide options for remote learning for those students who cannot safely return to school for health reasons. We trust each family to make the best decisions about quarantining for their own family and for the safety of our school communities. Be assured, we will continue to monitor the status of each community and the regional areas in the coming days, and we will update our faculty and community if any necessary changes are made to the revised schedule.

There is hope on the horizon with the implementation of the vaccinations. We have been notified that our faculty members will be eligible for the COVID vaccinations at the same time as our public school counterparts. Let us continue to pray for the doctors, nurses, health workers, and volunteers who are serving our communities with strength and love. Let us also continue to pray for all those that are suffering from this pandemic, whether from illness, grief, or anxiety. Finally, in the words of Pope Francis' pandemic prayer let us "pray that God will stretch out His all-powerful hand and free us from this terrible pandemic, so that life can serenely resume its normal course."

As always, should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your school leaders or me.

In Christ,
Sedonna J. Prater, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Catholic Schools
Diocese of Knoxville
sprater@dioknox.org
865-584-3307