



August 6, 2020

Dear St. Catherine Families,

Yesterday afternoon, Governor Inslee held a press conference outlining new guidelines for reopening schools in the fall, which are based on the August 5th framework published by the Washington State Department of Health. That framework can be found here:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/DecisionTree-K12schools.pdf>

In this document, the health department included a 'Decision Tree' that outlines specific criteria which delineates areas into three different COVID activity levels: high, moderate, or low risk. All counties in the state are categorized into these three levels based on their current number of reported cases, which is updated daily. The current King County data can be found here:

<https://kingcounty.gov/depts/health/covid-19/data/key-indicators.aspx>

According to this data, King County is currently in the high risk category. As such, the state health department has indicated they *“Strongly recommend distance learning with the option for limited in-person learning in small groups, or cohorts, of students for the highest need students, such as students with disabilities, students living homeless, those farthest from educational justice, and younger learners.”*

Today the Office for Catholic Schools released the attached letter from our Superintendent, Kristin Dixon. The letter explains that all schools in the Archdiocese will be required to follow the recommendations outlined by their respective counties. To be clear, this is a mandate for all Catholic schools. In short, it means that St. Catherine will need to begin the school year remotely. I know there will be many questions around this announcement. Please know that I too have many questions and am seeking clarity to provide you more information. However, I felt it was important to get this out to you as soon as possible. Initial communications have indicated that preschools will be allowed to remain open. Along with many other questions, principals have also asked the Office for Catholic Schools to obtain clarification from the health department with regards to the “limited in-person learning in small groups” clause in the above statement.



In full honesty, I am heartbroken to share this news. I recognize the tremendous challenges this will pose for working families, not to mention the social emotional implications for our students. It's not how we envisioned beginning the new school year. However, I have complete confidence in our ability to provide a robust and engaging remote learning program for our students. We are in the midst of making important revisions to the plan and will be sharing more details in the next week. In addition, we will regularly monitor the health data so that we can continue planning for reopening the school as soon as we are able. More than ever, the teachers, staff, and I are resolute in leading our school through these difficult times. I know that our entire community will come together to provide care and encouragement for one another. Thank you for your continued prayers and support. I will be in touch soon.

Peace & blessings to all,

Pam Schwartz