



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK

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MR. MICHAEL J. DEEGAN, SUPERINTENDENT

May 21, 2020

Dear Catholic Schools Community,

One of the hallmarks of this beguiling public health crisis has been the uncertainty of it all. On a seemingly daily basis we have been asked to adjust for what feels like an ever-changing list of rules, guidelines and orders, many of which vary from state to state and even town to town. Deadlines and expiration dates have been extended along with closures and restrictions. Uncertainty and inconsistency invariably leads to speculation, and at the forefront of recent COVID-related speculation has been the question of when school buildings will open again. That question is always followed with, “What will it look like?”

In the first days of the COVID-19 crisis, my office established our Health and Safety Task Force. Guided by the advice and direction of government officials and health experts, we have been proactive and thorough in establishing policies to protect the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff.

While there is no time frame established for the reopening of any school buildings in New York State, we know that when they do, we will be practicing physical distancing, enhanced personal and institutional cleaning and sanitizing protocols, revised pick up and drop off logistics among many other practices. With nearly 200 schools from Staten Island to the Catskills, we believe we cannot plan too much or too far in advance for an undertaking of this magnitude.

In keeping with our culture of being proactive, thorough and pragmatic, I am gratified to inform you that we have created the **Catholic Schools Reopening Advisory Council**. This Council has begun the initial planning stage of reopening our school buildings. In addition to continued contact with federal, state and local officials, we have determined the best way forward for *our* schools is to bring together a new task force; a panel of experts in the fields of education, public health, risk management, security, logistics, architecture and engineering.

We have gathered the very best because that is what you deserve. We know our schools represent the finest traditions in education anywhere. We have outstanding principals, dedicated teachers and the hardest-working, most successful students anywhere. When you come together again under your respective roofs, we are resolved that you will do so safely in order that you may enjoy all the things you miss right now; the sights and sounds, the faces, clamor and laughter one can only find in a school.

The members of the Catholic Schools Reopening Advisory Council include:

- **Maureen McElduff**, Coordinator of the Catholic Schools Reopening Advisory Council
- **Frank Napolitano**, Director of Risk Management and Insurance Service - ADNY
- **Kevin Quinn**, Operations Manager of Catholic Mutual Group
- **Michael J. Coppotelli**, Associate Superintendent of Student Services and Public Policy; Mayor’s COVID-19 Education Sector Advisory Council
- **Mary Jane Daley**, Regional Superintendent of Dutchess, Northern Westchester & Putnam
- **John Riley**, Regional Superintendent of Northwest and South Bronx
- **Steven Pallonetti**, Director of Child Nutrition – ADNY

- **Amy Rodriguez**, Principal of Immaculate Conception School, Bronx
- **Maureen Noonan**, Head of School Blessed Sacrament School, Manhattan
- **Joanne Walsh**, Associate Superintendent of Early Childhood Education - ADNY
- **Jane Schwedfeger**, Director of Property Management - ADNY
- **Dr. Walid Michelen**, Chief Medical Officer of Arch Care
- **Dean Jackson** – Senior Operations Manager, Service Master
- **Paul R Checco**, AIA – PC Studio Architects, PLLC
- **Rolando Kraeher** – Kraeher Architects

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael J. Deegan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Mr. Michael J. Deegan
Superintendent of Schools
Archdiocese of New York