

# Office of Catholic Schools

## Diocese of San Bernardino



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November 2, 2020

Dear Families, School Staff and Teachers,

A few weeks ago, we asked you to complete a survey to collect your thoughts on returning to in-person instruction. We received thousands of responses which informed us of your desire to return to school. Based on those responses and in concurrence with Bishop Alberto Rojas, we are asking our principals to apply for a reopening waiver as it applies to K-5th grade. The process does take time and the Office of Catholic Schools (OCS) will work diligently with our principals to accomplish this task as quickly as possible. Once a waiver is obtained, OCS and our principals will decide on an appropriate reopening date, according to individual school locations.

Results of survey responses:

- 79% of teachers and 71% of parents would be very comfortable or comfortable returning to school with the additional safety and health measures outlined in the school's reopening plan.
- 67% of teachers and 64% of parents would be very comfortable or comfortable returning to in-person instruction after there has been a positive COVID-19 test result and the individual, class or school has completed the quarantine period.
- Based on current circumstances with schools reopening, 68% of parents said yes to returning to in-person instruction with safety measures in place, 21% would prefer to stay with Catholic Online Synchronous Learning (COSL), 9% of parents were unsure, and 2% were not returning to the school.
- For parents considering not returning, responses indicated reconsideration based on public health experts determining when it is safe to return (40%), availability of vaccines (22%), waiting until the 2021-2022 school year (20%), no reported cases in school (14%), and dissatisfaction with other schooling options (4%).
- 68% of teachers/staff responded that the most important focus for Catholic schools in the Diocese of San Bernardino should be making schools safe for students and staff to return to in-person instruction with 23% indicating that the diocese should focus on making COSL as good as possible.
- 68% of teachers/staff responded that they would feel safe returning to in-person instruction if the school's reopening plans are in place, 21% were unsure, while 11% said no.
- When asked about concern for their health and contracting COVID-19, 52% of teachers/staff said they were concerned, 31% were neutral and 17% were unconcerned. But when asked about the health of those they lived with, 65% expressed concern, 21% were neutral, while 14% were unconcerned.

The data indicates that although there is still concern, health and safety measures are in place in which parents and school personnel are comfortable returning to school. OCS and the individual schools have worked very hard to create approved reopening plans that comply with guidance from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), the Department of Public Health for both Riverside and San Bernardino counties, and the San Bernardino Office of Emergency Collaborative. The goal has always been to create a safe environment for students and school staff, and for a process to reopen schools for in-person instruction. We have done that, and now, ask our schools to apply for a waiver.

Because schools are in a position to apply for waivers, our school communities need to work together, in order for schools to stay open once we return to in-person instruction. The individual school guidelines are in place to safeguard students and personnel while they are on campus. It will be up to each school community, to continue these safeguards outside of campus to ensure these safeguards and minimize exposure. We ask that all work together in:

- Wearing a mask when social distancing cannot be achieved or out in public.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Ensuring hygiene practices of hand washing and use of hand sanitizer.
- Avoiding large crowds and unnecessary or non-essential travel.
- Avoiding gathering with individuals outside of your household, especially indoors.

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This time has been challenging for all of us. While the definition of what we consider “normal” evolves, the responsibility to provide a safe, quality and faith-filled Catholic school education has not. We will continue to be here for you and our students. Let us respond to these extraordinary times with patience, love, and the certainty of knowing that God has placed Himself into the midst of us. Let us support one another and provide our best for His children.

Peace and Blessings,

*Dr. Samuel Torres*

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