



Letter to Pastors and Principals of Catholic Schools

July 30, 2020

Dear Pastors and Principals,

I am ever so grateful to you for all the rigorous preparations you are making for the re-opening of our Schools next month. I fully realize the demands, tensions and issues that face you.

I need to apologize to you for information regarding re-opening of our schools that may have been sent to you by the Catholic Schools Office prior to July 1, 2020. That material was neither reviewed nor approved by me. I regret the confusion that has emanated from its dissemination. Operative guidelines are those distributed since July 1st.

Safety has always been my number one priority since our school openings were announced. Other concerns need to be sublimated to this top priority.

In practical terms safety requires:

- Face masks to be worn by all
- Six- foot social distancing between individuals
 - It is asked that every effort be made to achieve this expectation. If after best effort it falls short, the schools office and facilities office will work with the schools for the best outcome.
- Temperature taking when entering the building
- Frequent sanitizing

It is reported that many of our schools have arrived at these standards. I am impressed by the remaining schools which are moving forward dedicated to this goal.

Achieving these expectations may necessitate re-purposing of space and utilization of imagination. In some cases, it may eventuate in the establishment of a “wait” list. Wouldn’t such create a positive reputation for our schools?

I applaud Dr. Michael Boyle for the admirable beginning in his service as Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese. He enjoys my unwavering support.

Removing the blinders and looking down the road, won't our Catholic Schools benefit from a successful re-opening at this time characterized by safety? Your leadership and positive example are key factors in such an outcome.

My prayers and heartfelt best wishes are with you.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

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Most Reverend Richard E. Pates
Apostolic Administrator
Diocese of Joliet

cc: Most Reverend Ronald Hicks