



OFFICE OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION
CATHOLIC DIOCESE of JACKSON

April 15, 2020

Dear Catholic School Parents,

First, *thank you*, for your ongoing support of the Catholic school your child(ren) attends. Your support allows us to partner with you in a new way to provide Catholic education to our 3661 students across the Diocese. Please know that we recognize the added burden the Distance Learning has placed upon you as parents. We know that across the Diocese we have families that represent those that are struggling financially due to lay-offs, juggling working from home while supervising your children, and others working in essential businesses and professions that require you to go to work each day facing the coronavirus head-on. We know this “new partnership in education” has added to the stress this pandemic has placed upon us all. Each school has kept learning going forward for their students. I have been pleased to see the daily prayer, faith formation lessons, and Lenten prayer experiences provided to your children. We believe the learning experiences infused with faith formation is what sets Catholic school education apart. Our hope is that during this difficult time, the added prayers and reflections provided to your families through student lessons and social media have been a source of spiritual support for your family.

Since March 13th with the first directive to schools regarding what is now the COVID-19 pandemic, Diocesan Office of Education staff and Catholic School Administrators across the Diocese have met weekly as schools have navigated the new reality of Distance Learning at each of our schools. Our teachers have worked hard to keep learning moving forward for your children. Thank you, teachers. As you know, what began as a 2-day closure to prepare after spring break quickly changed to extend the closure of schools through Friday, April 17. Along the way, we have monitored the announcements of the medical and governmental leadership. It became clear that we would likely not return to school to finish this school year. And, as you know the Governor announced yesterday that public schools would not return to the school building but would continue to provide distance learning. Because Bishop Kopacz and I, in consultation with diocesan and local school administrators, agree that it is in the best interest of our students, your families, our staff, or the community in which you live, *the Diocese of Jackson Catholic School buildings will remain closed for instruction and will continue with distance learning to complete this academic school term.*

In order to bring the school term to a successful end the following schedule will be followed:

- April 15 – May 8 - Daily distance learning instruction continues
- May 11 – May 15 - Students complete and submit assignments and assessments
- May 18 – May 21 - Books, technology, team uniforms, etc. will be collected in a manner determined and communicated by the local School Administrator.
- May 22 - Final report cards issued.

Local school administrators will continue to communicate with you as the school year continues.

Please be assured of the support of Bishop Kopacz, diocesan leadership, and especially the Office of Education staff. We continue to pray for you. May God bless your family during the Easter season,

Sincerely,

Catherine D. Cook, Ed. S
Superintendent of Education