



Catholic Diocese of Saginaw

8/5/20

Dear Catholic School Community,

Please see the brief update below regarding a diocese wide, online learning option.

In mid-July, a survey was conducted to gauge the level of interest in a diocese wide online learning option for the 2020-21 school year. In late July, a follow up communication was shared with those who responded to that survey to obtain more specific information. Based on that information, at this time, there is not sufficient interest to develop a sustainable online program at the diocesan level. Only one grade level (k-12) demonstrated the ability to meet the minimal number of students (15) needed to move to the next stage of planning. Families interested in a virtual/at home learning model are encouraged to communicate with their principal. We are open to exploring various options that may allow your child to continue his/her Catholic education.

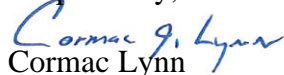
If the demand for a standalone online learning program increases significantly over the coming weeks, I am very open to revisiting this approach. I would also consider a delayed start (mid/late September) of an online program.

If we were to move forward with a diocese wide program:

1. Participating students would remain enrolled at their current Catholic school.
2. Tuition for the online program would be the same as in-person instruction at your current school. Labor costs are a large part of a school's budget. Tuition revenue only covers a portion of the operating costs. The online "school" would not have the same level of financial support from parishes and/or fundraising opportunities to make up the difference between revenue and expenses.
3. Teachers in the online program may be current teachers in the diocese or non-affiliated educators that would become a part of the Office of Catholic Schools staff.
4. Based on potential staffing of an online program and the variation in curriculum/textbooks across our diocese, it is unlikely the online school will be able to offer the exact same curriculum as your local Catholic school. As is the case in our schools currently, instruction in an online setting would be centered on the educational standards and benchmarks issued by the Michigan Department of Education. (Excluding religion/theology classes.)
5. Participation in extracurricular activities is possible but would require further discussion with the school of record.

I will continue to communicate with and support our principals regarding online instruction at the individual school level during any phase of the MI Safe Start Plan. (Phase 3 or lower, no in-person instruction, learning to continue virtually. Phase 4 or higher, in-person instruction.) We are taking appropriate action to ensure that we are prepared should virtual instruction be necessary as the result of local, and/or regional health conditions. Administrators and teachers across the diocese are working diligently to prepare our schools to welcome our students back for in-person instruction.

Respectfully,


Cormac Lynn

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