



DIOCESE of SACRAMENTO
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

**A Letter to the Catholic School Community Regarding our Learning Objectives:
Faith, Community, and Growth**

March 23, 2020

Dear Catholic School Community:

I am writing to offer you an update on Distance Learning and tell you about our objectives for your students going forward: **faith, community, and growth**. These past days have been a whirlwind for all of us; it was just two weeks ago that I got word from the Governor's office that things could change quickly, and the Catholic schools of the state led in our response by moving to Distance Learning in the space of a week. In doing so, we ensured your students a connection to a familiar and loving environment - their school - in an uncertain world.

As civic leaders call on us to do our part to slow the growth of COVID-19 by staying home and practicing social distancing, we now know that Distance Learning is something that we will have to live with for the immediate future. As you know, each of our schools has carefully crafted student learning objectives, and as circumstances change, so must our objectives.

1. Faith

As a ministry of the Church, we share the same objective as all Church ministries: helping those to whom we minister gain a deeper relationship with Jesus. Jesus' commandments are simple - love God, love our neighbor as ourselves - and we return to His teaching in everything we do for your students. Jesus also teaches us something profound in times of uncertainty: **Be Not Afraid**.

Following His lead, we want to help you and your students to be not afraid as we confront this challenge together. Things are scary right now, and we know that people turn to God for comfort in times like these. Although we are teachers and administrators by profession, we are ministers by vocation, and we approach our relationships with you from that perspective.

Mass is being broadcast from our Pastoral Center daily, and we encourage you to join us in viewing:
<https://www.scd.org/coronavirus/livestream-mass>

2. Community

The school is not the building, the school is the people - and one of the biggest successes of this move to Distance Learning is that we remain in community. In the words of one school parent who wrote to me last week, "my son had a Zoom meeting at 10:30 today with his classmates, and his face lit up when he was able to see his peers." Beyond academic progress, we want to ensure continuity of community for our students.



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We are social beings, and social distancing is a lonely road. We will be there for you as we work together to build community amidst the bigger challenge we face together. To this end, expect us to create more opportunities for both you and your students to network with the school and peers.

3. Growth

Academic progress is important to us. To date, most public school districts have only been able to offer optional coursework that doesn't move the student forward academically, or worse, haven't been able to meet at all. While some public school districts may face things like mandatory summer school or an extended school year to make up for lost time, we are moving students forward in Distance Learning mode.

Our objective is for our students to continue to learn as a class, progressing to their next grade level on time without summer school. We understand that we can't teach everything in this new environment the way we would if we were in a traditional classroom, and that's OK. Our priority is keeping students fully on track in core subject areas. We will support our teachers with professional development tied to Distance Learning, and we will adjust our expectations as we learn what is doable, both for us and for you. Please expect us to reach out to you frequently. Be forthright with us in how we are doing. Tell us how we can support you as our partners in this new way of educating our students.

This Week

Your student's teacher will reach out to you, if he or she hasn't already, to check in on your child and to ask about how this past week has gone for you. For religion this coming week, we will offer lessons that encourage you to pray together at home. As you balance your own workload and support of your students' learning, we will work with you in identifying which assignments are mandatory, which are optional, and which are supplemental. More than anything, we want this time of social distancing from others to be an opportunity for you to connect as a family in gratitude for this day and the chance to be together.

We were planning to spend next year meaningfully discerning about a deeper relationship with Jesus, centered around five themes that matter very much to us as Catholic educators: Simplicity, Consistency, Hospitality, Servant Leadership, and Growth Mindset. In His infinite wisdom, God has called us to be mindful of all this now, so please expect to hear more from me in the coming days and weeks as we partner with you in continuing to raise resilient, joyful, faith-filled kids.

I am grateful for you entrusting your students to our care. We serve them in His name.

Peace,

Lincoln Snyder
Superintendent and Executive Director of Schools
The Diocese of Sacramento