

Dear Parents,

I imagine that you have been watching the COVID-19 statistics in Sonoma County with the same growing trepidation as have I. With each passing day the safety of opening our campus to students on August 19th becomes more dubious. Today Governor Newsom announced new guidelines that all but prevent St. Rose from opening to students that soon. This new guidance dictates that a county must be off the watch list for at least 14 days before opening for in-person instruction. Health care professionals indicate that, given the current data, this is highly unlikely for Sonoma County. Members of our school's task-force for re-opening along with the faculty and staff I have connected with today concur with the decision to begin the school year with distance learning. As much as we would all like to have St. Rose students back in the classroom, the health and safety of our students, their families and school personnel must come first.

During the month of June, we made great headway in preparing the campus for a safe return, with classroom modifications, procedures for increased hygiene and cleaning, and the other measures needed to meet the mandated recommendations. That work will continue, even as we now turn our attention to providing an improved distance learning plan with rigorous daily instruction in curricular standards and Catholic doctrine. Although we will still need parental support, there will be less reliance on you to provide instruction and teachers will be connecting with students throughout the day for whole group, small group, and individual lessons. Even though they are on vacation, St. Rose teachers have been engaged in online training and planning for this throughout the summer.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recently stated that policies to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 within schools must be balanced with the known harms to children, adolescents, families, and the community by keeping children at home. As you know the situation with COVID-19 is fluid. Because St. Rose is site-managed it is much easier for us to remain agile. Whenever safe to do so, we can be ready in a flash to bring our students back to campus. That is our fervent intention.

It is important that we gather information from you on how we can improve our distance learning program and meet the individual needs of your child based on his or her home learning situation. Next week I will be spending some quality time with my family and will be back in the office full-time on July 27th. You can expect a new parent survey some time during that week. It is essential that every family submit a survey.

Until then, please join me in prayer for an end to the scourge of COVID-19 and encourage everyone you know to help bend the curve by wearing masks, washing up, and avoiding gatherings.

Thank you again for your patience as we continue to navigate this untenable situation.

Sincerely,

Kathy Ryan

