



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE DIOCESE OF SPRINGFIELD

65 ELLIOT STREET
P.O. Box 1730
SPRINGFIELD, MA 01102-1730
TELEPHONE: 413.452.0830 FACSIMILE: 413.452.0555



June 9, 2020

Dear Parents,

May God's peace be with you.

We are writing this to you today to let you know what we have been planning for the 2020-2021 academic school year, including guidance and support regarding tuition. We want to express how grateful we are to each of you for the support, commitment, belief, and sacrifices you make to send your children to our Catholic schools. We know that you choose to send your child/children to us because you value the education they receive; may God reward you!

The Catholic Schools Office has been collaborating with other Catholic School Offices around the country and in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to create a framework for instruction for the 2020-2021 academic year, based on the imminent changes to school-life at the beginning of next year. More specifically, the superintendents of the Catholic schools in Massachusetts have been coordinating our response based on the directives and recommendations that are coming from the State. These directives and recommendations have been evolving and changing. We feel, therefore, it is most prudent to wait until we receive formal guidance and directives to build these frameworks into a reopening plan.

It is our intention for the upcoming school year to do the following:

- Continue to assure the very highest quality Catholic education for each of our families;
- Physically, not just virtually, open all of our schools in a safe and responsible manner while increasing the flexibility of our schools to provide a blended education when necessary;
- Develop a plan to reasonably address our school safety and sanitization practices in light of the State guidance to address this current pandemic;
- Increase access to financial assistance to those families in need.

The economic situation of our schools, our parishes, and our families has, in many cases, changed drastically since we have last been in our school buildings. Because tuition does not cover the cost-to-educate a student in our schools, we have always relied on a combination of parish and diocesan subsidies, fundraising, and generous benefactors to provide a Catholic education to our families. The pandemic has limited these additional financing sources for our schools. At the same time, we know that some of our families have lost their jobs and some lost their businesses. In keeping with our Pathways to Faith initiatives and in response to the economic impact of the pandemic, we have taken steps to make a Catholic education more accessible and affordable to our families who are struggling at this time. The process of making changes to how we distribute tuition assistance for the current year has taken considerable time. We do appreciate your patience as we made these changes.

Before the pandemic, we were already looking for ways to maximize the financial assistance we could give to families who applied for aid at our schools. We know that by changing the formula for tuition assistance, more families will benefit from the great gift of a Catholic education. We are making the following commitment to you:

- Families who have a financial need, regardless of their faith backgrounds, will be encouraged to apply for financial assistance through FACTS Grant and Aid Assessment.

Parents

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- Using FACTS Grant and Aid Assessment, if there is a financial need, each school will determine what a family can afford for a Catholic education and create a tuition agreement for that family taking into account the assistance from the Diocese of Springfield.
- Families who may demonstrate a greater need should consult with the principals or pastors of their schools to determine an acceptable payment plan.

As a community of faith, we will continue to pray for your family. We are committed to our mission of educating in the Faith. If we work together, we can ensure that our Catholic schools continue to partner with you in the education of your children.

God bless you and your family.

In Christ through Mary,
Daniel R. Baillargeon, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools
Diocese of Springfield