



# ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE DEPARTMENT OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS PLANNING AHEAD TASK FORCE UPDATE

July 16, 2020

The *Planning Ahead Task Force* for Catholic Schools has been working diligently to develop a comprehensive plan to ensure the safe return of our faculty and staff on August 24th and our students on August 31<sup>st</sup> for instruction five days per week. The Task Force is receiving technical assistance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to inform our plans to SAFELY return to in-person instruction for the start of the 2020-2021 school year.

Although most school facilities will be able to accommodate all students for five day, in-person instruction while safely social distancing; some schools, due to their size, will incorporate a “blend” of in-person and remote learning that maximizes in-person instruction. Families who do not feel comfortable returning their child(ren) to in-person instruction will be able to have their child(ren) participate remotely from home. Detailed reopening procedures will be finalized and shared by July 24<sup>th</sup>.

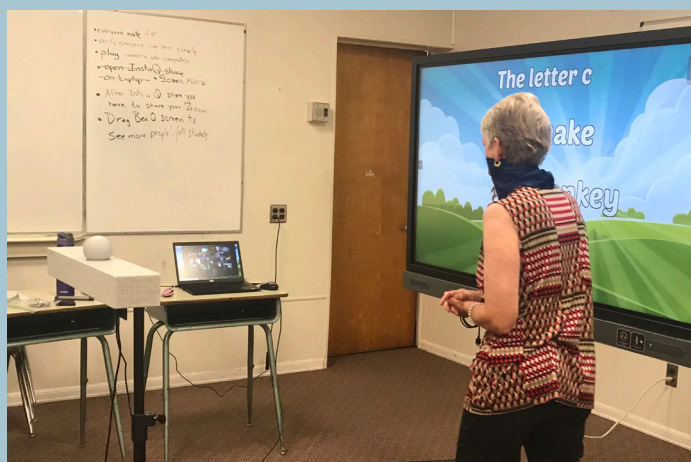
Please take a moment to review the updates below from the *Planning Ahead Task Force* Subcommittees.

## CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY

Over 1000 AMX Acendo Vibe camera/sound bar units have been purchased for Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

This technology will enable educators to present synchronous instruction to students learning at home and in the classroom. We are setting up the equipment and training faculty on proper use. The training sessions involve mock classes with teachers providing synchronous instruction to participants at home and in the classroom to ensure that faculty are able to “test drive” this new method.

A training module has also been developed to assist teachers in setting-up and deploying the camera/sound bar unit in a variety of classroom settings.



## CURRICULUM, PEDAGOGY, AND STUDENT SUPPORT

The Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Student Support Committee is finalizing instructional plans for the 2020-2021 academic year to maximize and prioritize in-person instruction while adhering to CDC guidelines. The committee has developed plans for three modes of learning (in-person, hybrid, and remote), along with recommended instructional minutes for each mode. All schools will receive an instructional minute outline for each grade and subject for each learning mode, which will be used to develop instructional schedules to meet the needs of all school communities.

A professional development plan for teachers has also been created and paired with instructional requirements for each learning mode. Teachers in the Archdiocese of Baltimore will be prepared to engage some or all students in synchronous learning should remote learning be necessary at any point in the academic year. Structures to support the social, emotional, and mental well-being of students, faculty, staff, and families have also been established.



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## **SOCIAL DISTANCING, FACILITIES, AND OPERATIONS**

The Social Distancing, School Facilities and Operations Committee, in conjunction with the COVID - 19 Response Committee, has developed comprehensive guidance for preparing school facilities to welcome students and staff back to campus. The document and checklist have been distributed to all schools. Team members are visiting each campus over the summer to assist school staff with the implementation of the recommendations outlined in the guidance document. These visits include a walk-through of school facilities, providing input and resources to principals as they prepare to meet the needs of their school communities and modify their campus for optimal social distancing.



## **COVID-19 RESPONSE**

The COVID-19 Response Committee has developed guidance for schools to help limit the spread of illness within school facilities. Current guidelines suggest all schools establish an isolation area where students and staff experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 can be separated from the rest of the school population. All Catholic schools will be using this guidance to establish an isolation area for the start of the new school year.

The COVID-19 Response Committee has also established actions for schools to improve their overall health operations. All school health suites are being evaluated and modified (if necessary) to ensure healthy students needing medication dispensing or other non-illness related treatment, will be cared for without exposure to potential infection. Future guidance will be issued on daily wellness screening for students and staff, and the use of personal protective equipment (PPE).



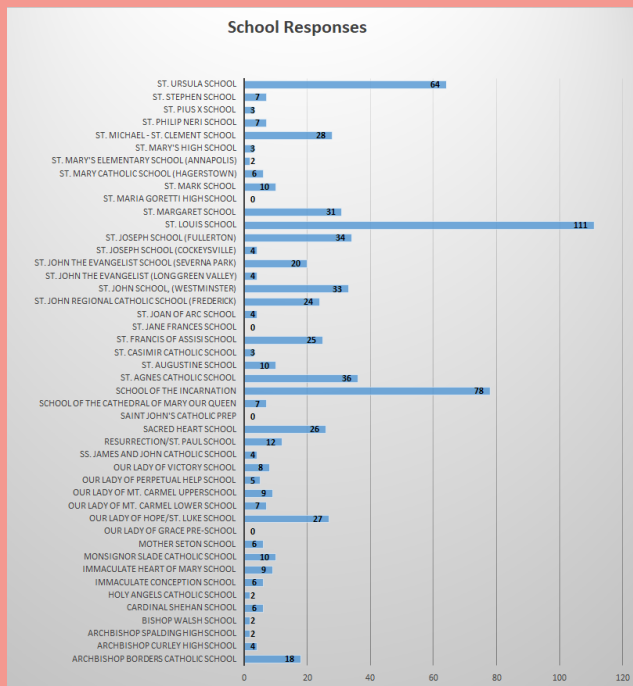
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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

The Emerging Opportunities Committee has identified strategies to highlight the value and quality of Catholic education, especially the ability of our school communities to continue providing a high quality academic experience in the midst of an evolving educational climate. Our commitment to the spiritual, social, and emotional needs of our students remains central to our mission and will continue to be the driving force behind our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We look forward to highlighting the many ways our teachers, staff, students, and families display an extraordinary level of commitment to learning and spiritual formation. No matter the challenges that lie ahead, our school communities will continue to “Rise Above.”

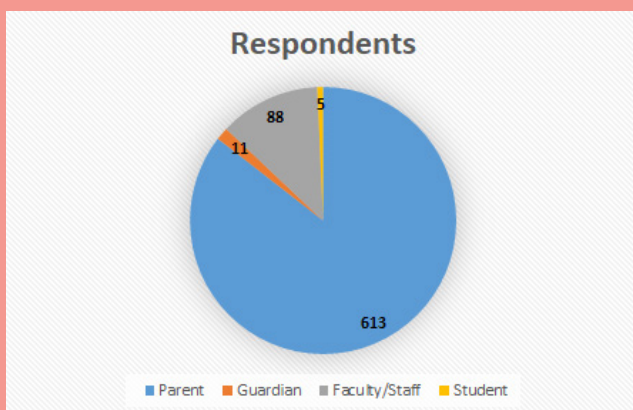
## PLANNING AHEAD TASK FORCE FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS FEEDBACK

Thank you for your feedback. We have received over 700 responses to date representing 42 Catholic schools. The breakdown of the responses by school and respondent type are below.



The Planning Ahead Task Force has reviewed all comments and is using this valuable feedback to aid in the development of our reopening plan. Schools' themes included:

- Do not align with public school decisions
- Parents favor in-person instruction
- Concerns about student mental health if unable to attend in person
- Ensure plenty of hand sanitizer is available
- Distance learning should be available for families as an option
- Distance learning needs to include regular schedules and synchronous instruction
- Questions about the ability of students to wear masks, with opinions on both sides
- Questions about how to manage social distancing for younger students, particularly Pre-K



Please click on the link below to share your thoughts and/or concerns with the Planning Ahead Task Force.

[https://survey.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3r4CKRYeBlrGVgx](https://survey.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3r4CKRYeBlrGVgx)