

May 2020

Dear SJA families,

As we near the end of our virtual semester at Saint Joseph Academy, we are proud of all that our students and teachers have been able to accomplish. In these past months, we have seen first-hand how our community has risen up together to support one another and how appreciative we are of our family's never-ending encouragement and support. We have seen this in the phone calls home to parents by our teachers and the tender moments of community during Zoom classes, all reasons why we believe SJA provides the best educational opportunities in the region.

In the coming days and weeks, the school will be providing several important updates as we plan our way through the other end of this pandemic, including graduation, end-of-year events, and summer activities.

Beyond the celebrations and events, we are focused wholeheartedly on resuming our in-person teaching and learning in August. The plan is to open campus and welcome students, faculty and staff back at the start of the fall semester by August 17th. This plan will be executed by adhering to protocols and procedures informed by public health experts to ensure the safety of the entire Saint Joseph Academy community. We are in close contact with local, state and national public health officials to stay on top of the most up-to-date information. If the virus lingers longer than we anticipate, we are prepared to delay the start of in-person classes for our Fall 2020 semester should it be necessary. A later start date would still enable us to offer a full array of courses for the semester by deploying an alternative class schedule and using hybrid courses that blend in-person and online delivery.

In reaching the decision to resume in-person classes on campus, SJA administration were guided by two main principles: the safety of all students, faculty, staff and their families; and an ongoing commitment to offering an unsurpassed education that nurtures the mind, body and spirit.

As we adapt to the new normal brought on by COVID-19, we will do everything we can to provide our community with a safe learning and working environment. SJA will monitor developments and alter plans should a serious outbreak occur or should school closing be mandated. To accommodate a return to remote instruction in the event of an outbreak of the virus, SJA faculty will be asked to prepare courses in a manner that will allow for a smooth transition to distance learning should SJA be forced to begin on-campus activities later in the fall or end it earlier than scheduled.

As we eye the future, Saint Joseph Academy is collaborating with our partner schools throughout the city, Diocese, and Marist Brother school network to work toward solutions. Our

school is fortunate to have alumni serving in numerous city, county, state, and national leadership positions which provides us timely access to recommendations and updates.

In any scenario, there are several initiatives underway to ensure the safety of our community. These include:

- providing personal protective equipment for use during gatherings on campus, including classes, assemblies, and gatherings of multiple people;
- sanitizing all rooms on a regular basis;
- installing additional sanitizers throughout campus for easy access and frequent use;
- rearranging spacing in our classrooms, common areas, and conference rooms to provide the space for safe distancing which includes smaller class sizes and reducing the student-to-teacher ratio;
- updating pedagogical methods to take advantage of hybrid courses that integrate online components into in-person courses;
- developing alternative course scheduling to increase spacing on campus;
- providing personal counseling and advising to navigate campus life and to address any needs that arise including anxiety, stress, curricular issues, and spiritual development; and
- careful enforcement of all safety protocols across campus, not only throughout the school day but during afterschool activities including athletics and clubs.

I want to thank you for your continued commitment to each other and to our Saint Joseph Academy community. We cannot wait to be back together on campus as soon as it is safe and permissible. May God continue to bless you and your loved ones as we pray for the sick and suffering around the world.

Blessings,
SJA Administration