



March 15, 2020

Dear Administrators,

With the COVID-19 changing daily routines, our schools need to quickly adjust our operations. As Governor Walz has just announced, all schools in Minnesota will be closed beginning on Wednesday, March 18 through Friday, March 27.

As some Catholic Schools in the DOW-R have already closed beginning tomorrow, I encourage all of you to decide what is best for your students and staff in regarding your closing day (Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday). Please keep in mind the decisions of the public-school districts are necessitating the closure of Catholic schools in their boundaries largely due to transportation issues. Catholic school principals and pastors are encouraged to follow their district plan. If additional staff planning is required, staff members are allowed to report to school during student school closure. Once the planning process is complete, I would recommend staff to stay home and remain social distancing.

If you have not already done so, distant learning must be planned and executed in order to continue learning opportunities for all of our students. A school planning document is posted on the MDE website if you need a template to follow. Many of our small rural schools are preparing packets to be sent home with students for our primary grades and E-Learning for our intermediate and high school students. Please plan accordingly and appropriately for your students.

We encourage hourly workers to be incorporated into the distance learning plan to provide an income for them. Again, your pastor and board will be a support for you in those decision-making matters.

Child care should be ongoing to health, emergency workers, law enforcement, fire fighters, etc. but no employee should put themselves at risk in order to provide these services. Again, you know the best appropriate measures for your staff and students of health care and emergency workers.

We realize this is highly disruptive for families, students, and teachers as they themselves also try to come to grips with this national emergency. We need to do what we can to act in a clear and predictable manner with families when approaching school closure.

I would suggest you continue to review the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the MDE website for future updates. I will also be in communication with you concerning any additional information as we work through this pandemic.

One last item that needs to be addressed is the cancelation of the Specials curriculum training tomorrow at St. Augustine Church. At this time, we will reschedule at a later date.



Diocese of Winona-Rochester

Office of Catholic Schools
Marsha Stenzel, Superintendent

Please know our approach will not be perfect, but we will follow the public health officials and our trust in the help of God. Be assured of prayers and unity, as we face this difficulty together.

All schools need to be closed by Wednesday, March 18.

Mary our mother, we seek your help and protection.

My prayers for our students, staff, and families.

Marsha Stenzel