



# Sister Thea Bowman Catholic School

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August 12, 2020

Dear Families of Sister Thea Bowman Catholic School,

Due to the rising cases of COVID among total population, and especially young people, in the St Louis and MetroEast since Mid-July, our staff felt it was very important that we consider our challenges and our options again. Although we had our ReOpen plan with a Hybrid approach (in-person and remote options), we needed to address the COVID spikes in the zip codes where our families and staff reside.

Specifically, the St Clair County Health Department has discussed a recommendation for St Clair County Schools to open with Remote Learning. Based on demographics, access to healthcare, and underlying health conditions, which all have led to a higher COVID infection and death rate for Black Americans, we feel that the hybrid plan as provided earlier this month would be too risky for students, staff, and families.

A change is very difficult, especially because we know in-person learning is the best academic option. However, we have to weigh the two often conflicting goals:

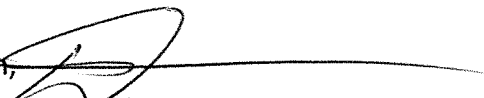
- 1) Provide the best possible education to our students under the parameters and limitations put on our school by the current COVID situation.
- 2) Provide the safest possible option(s), mitigating the health dangers presented by COVID and by the spread of COVID, for our students, staff, and families.

We provided a third alternative, with supporting information, to the Diocese of Belleville Superintendent of Schools, asking for consideration of an option to put our in-person students in a Learning Center (cafeteria) instead of in the classrooms where there was more possibility of the spread of COVID if a student or staff member had COVID.

We very happy to be able to provide in-person learning in the Learning Center, where students will attend class via remote learning sessions and tools, but they will be assisted and monitored by Sister Thea Bowman staff to provide the best educational environment with more safety. We will continue to monitor the situation and return students to the classrooms for their in-person learning option as soon as possible based on safety.

Please take the opportunity to raise questions or concerns during our Orientation Sessions, or you can contact me at the school if you have a more personal issue to discuss. We thank you for helping us to keep Sister Thea Bowman Catholic School a great place for spiritual, academic, and social growth for our students. We all continue to pray for those who are affected by COVID, and for the health of our students and families.

Blessings, Peace, and Health,



Dan Nickerson  
Principal