



July 26th, 2020

Dear Parents,

Is everyone in a tizzy or is it just me? If anyone has a cure for the tizzies, please let me know what it is! I am seem to be working all of the time and going around circles coming back to square one many times. The drawing board has been truly utilized repeatedly and erased a million times since school closed on June 11th. I do not ever remember a time in my professional life that has created such tumult. But....onward and upward we move with Jesus at our side. As we prepare to journey toward September I want you to know that above all else we need to be vigilant in our practices these coming weeks to keep the NJ curve as flat as can be. The data is radiating great hope and let us pray that this hope will translate into little feet walking into our building at the beginning of the school year. I ask that you continue to be aware of the 'hot spots' for travel and the policy that is in place for quarantining if you travel to those areas - especially in the two weeks before school opens.

Much to our disappointment, we were not able to secure the extra space that we had hoped to get for a variety of reasons. Fr. George and I did our due diligence in all departments and we decided that the alternative space would not be suitable for our needs at this time.

Our only option now is to go with the A/B Hybrid model that I explained in last week's letter. Families will be placed in an A group and a B group. (Nothing to do with the A/B classes in school). Each class will be divided in half making sure that siblings come on the same day. This scenario gives us the opportunity to ease into school and be in total compliance with all of the guidelines from the CDC, the WHO, NJ Department of Education, the Diocese of Paterson Schools Office and medical experts. If I could morph into the Incredible Hulk, I would -to push these

walls out to accommodate every single child every single day. In this situation though, it is best to be safe rather than sorry.

Our Task Force has been working very hard on the plan that will be distributed during the week of August 3rd. The members were introduced to you last week and I inadvertently left out our most important member, Nurse Reilly. She has been incredibly busy gathering all the information that we will need to be fully ready for the children's safe return. Our plan, "The Road Back to Saint Vincent Martyr School" will present you with the entire fine details that you will need to know to get you and your children ready for school. We will have half of children in a class and the other half at home each day and this will give us the opportunity to safely observe how to do what is needed to provide an education in a very loving and caring environment. Our desire is to continue to create the 'SVMS happy' while at the same time ensuring the safety and health of everyone within our walls.

We had to change our PreK schedules in an effort to get this age group in every day and tend to them in a way that will allow them to get the individual care that they need. We have been blessed for a few years with bumper numbers in PreK. These numbers also brought the challenge of placing obstacles in our way as we plan to do what is right and safe by these little ones. PreK3 and PreK4 will now have a morning and afternoon session. The hope is to accommodate a smaller group in each session to be able to practice social distancing in a reasonable and effective way while at the same time presenting these children with a Catholic education that will empower them to begin their educational journeys replete with spiritual lessons.

The word 'remote' has become a bad word in the English language and we are working to convert it into a very successful term at SVMS. The teachers, while not knowing exactly what shape school will take in September, have been working hard to prepare to be the best teachers in whatever classroom situation that they may find themselves in - be it virtual or in-person. There is much buzz around the fact that we will more than likely be fully remote at some stage during the upcoming school year. It would be good if you could evaluate your own 'home readiness' for this as we are preparing to get 'school ready'. Look back on your previous experience and evaluate if your home Wi-Fi served you well. This is something that I had to do myself and we had to upgrade. If we do go remote, one major change for us is that there will be a schedule in place for every grade from K-8 that will

mimic the in-school schedule as much as possible. It is important that the children have their own device to work from if that is feasible. For about five years now, our incoming 6th graders have to come to school with their own Chromebooks in September. They get suggestions on what to buy. These suggestions are posted elsewhere in this eNewsletter. I feel that a Chromebook is a good choice of device because it helps with dexterity and helps the children to become proficient in keyboarding. Is that a lost art? - Not at SVMS! It may be wise to do this now to avoid the possibility of devices being available in late August. Please be aware also that the devices will need to be provisioned to the school server so it is best not to use the device until the provisioning is done. Hopefully, I will be able to provide you with these dates soon.

Members of our technology committee- Sharon Burke, Matt Hagovsky and Justin Picciano - have been busy researching how best to live-stream classes for the children who will not be in school on a given day and for families who choose remote learning for their children every day. They had a virtual meeting with "Future Generations" -our tech service providers- to evaluate what they have to offer and to get quotes. This will be a costly venture but it will be worth the investment. I will keep you posted when I have exact information.

Thank you for completing the survey last week. It gave us a good gauge of where you are leaning right now. When we will roll out the plan, we will ask for a definite commitment from families who will choose remote learning. Please be reminded that this commitment will be for a marking period.

Thank you for being so patient and so understanding. The task before us is monumental and does not have a precedent but I feel confident that with our parent body we will be able to provide schooling for our children that will be top-notch in all scenarios. Please continue to pray for me as I do for you. Know that your children are our top priority and it is our desire to help them to live through this experience with minds full of good learning, hearts full of childhood love and souls filled with the confidence that God will see us through. Stay strong and healthy and I am counting the days that I will see you all again.

Blessings,

Sr. Noreen