

March 24, 2020



Good Parents and Students:

Peace be with you!

This morning as I write, I wish that I was standing out in front of school giving fist bumps, seeing smiles, and exchanging morning greetings. Yesterday, before the governor's announcement, our leadership team was meeting. Everyone remarked on missing our community: Each member is unique, unrepeatable, and important to the fabric of Saint Francis. Although you have all been in our prayers, we miss our students and their physical presence.

Our own home has been set up into several different workspaces for the eight little, middle, and big Chittles who are now learning from home. All of us, perhaps especially my high schoolers, miss their friends, teachers, and teams tremendously. I think the happiest one is little Iggy who gets to interact with his siblings for prolonged periods daily. Of course, this is one of the blessings of the slow down time with family.

Before break we wanted to get out one more communication as on-line learning has been extended and may well be extended again. **I also want to applaud and thank both the students and teachers for their diligence in our new learning format.** I see the hard work daily as students and teachers give their best to the design, delivery, and learning of lessons. I also need to thank our parents for partnering with us as they encourage their students to continue their traditional hard work in this new situation.

Below are summary bullet points from our Leadership Team meeting (This team consists of Department Heads Mrs. Cheryl Schmuckal, Mr. Rod Taplin, Mr. John LaCross, Mrs. Molly Klettner, Mrs. Trish Zamarron; Curriculum Director, Mr. Matt Bauman; iPad Coordinator, Mrs. Vanessa Tucker and yesterday Counselor, Mrs. Beth Maday joined us along with a few other teachers.)

Instruction, Testing, Grading

- We will continue to deliver instruction paring down to the essential standards needed for completion of the course and readiness for next year.
- It is each teacher's goal that students average about 30 minutes of work a day for regular courses; and about 45 minutes to 1 hour for AP and Honors courses. (This could mean an extended period of time one day and much less the next.) Also, some electives such as Band, Choir and other arts will be less than the above, and the workload will be at the discretion of the teacher.
- **Moodle is the platform of choice -- A few teachers are still transitioning to Moodle while the vast majority are using it currently.**
 - **Teachers will post the weekly schedule on Moodle by 1:00 pm on Monday.** Even if teachers choose to send daily e-mails, this will serve as the central point that all parents and students can go to for information.
 - Teachers have been using Moodle for the following:
 - Testing – teachers can set the time that the test opens and closes. Test can shuffle questions and responses. Teachers are setting longer windows for testing; i.e., a day to provide flexibility for the students.
 - Forums that allow a teacher to answer a question that can be seen by all students.
 - Wikis that function like a bulletin board for posting weekly information.
 - A place to post and collect assignments.
 - A place to post Power Points
 - A place to post links of any kind; i.e., video links to EdPuzzle or Zoom.

- **EdPuzzle** has shown to be a good solution for showing videos.
- The **ShowMe App** is being used mostly by the Math Department for solutions to problems. It allows for students to hear teacher voices as they watch the teachers work out the problems.
- **ScanBot** has proven valuable for students and teachers for scanning and uploading documents.
- The **Zoom App** is looking like the best option going forward for video conferencing and video lesson delivery. This application is already being used by a few of our teachers while others are testing it with lessons both live and recorded. As a couple of Department heads pointed out yesterday that it is a blessing for students to see their teachers and get a few laughs.
- **Testing:** We will continue to write assessments knowing that they will be open note and open book. While this is not ideal, it is the best we can do for now.
- **Grading:**
 - 3rd quarter will remain the same, which will end on Wednesday. Report cards will be open shortly after spring break.
 - **Michigan Department of Education's decisions about granting or not granting credit have little bearing on our school as noted by both Mr. Michael Buell and Mr. Frank Sander.** As long as we feel confident that we have delivered and the students have learned the essentials of this semester, we will be granting credit.
 - Teachers will continue to contact home for students who are not turning in work. **Thank you for keeping an eye on RenWeb for missing work.**
- **Please encourage your son or daughter to use their teacher's virtual office hours when they are confused or stuck.** Many students are using them regularly.
- Please do not expect new work during Spring Break; The teachers will need this time to plan forward and take time with their families.
- Advanced Placement testing changes have made these classes much more manageable. College Board, the company that runs AP, has truncated the curriculum and tests. Most of our AP teachers have completed – or are within a couple of weeks of completing – the curriculum that the new version of the tests will cover. AP tests will also be taken at home on-line this year. Again, not the best scenario, but probably the best given the context.

I understand that many are rightfully very concerned about all of our activities: sports, prom, Baccalaureate, graduation, etc. It is our intention to have as many of these activities as possible, but this dynamic situation makes predictions foolish and impossible.

On a lighter note, I found a list of the 50 best Catholic films of all time. I was surprised to see *Groundhog Day* on the list. I did watch it and in a certain sense it was about the sanctification of time, doing the good possible with the time we have, letting go of selfishness and egoism.... It was also much like my days at home -- very repetitive, but a blessing. I am not recommending this movie as it has a few unscrupulous scenes, but I am praying that we all let God sanctify these strange days.

Let us hold each other up in prayer while committing to earnest prayer for all impacted by the Coronavirus.

Peace and all good,

Dr. Erick Chittle