

Oct. 23, 2020

Superintendent's Update: Students, Parents/Legal Guardians, and Staff

It is hard to believe that we are nearing the end of October. As we look ahead to November, we are excited about all of the learning that is taking place within our schools – whether face-to-face or online. Despite these challenging times, we continue to “seek the Lord and His strength” and to “seek His presence continually”(1 Chronicles 16:11).

I am constantly amazed and encouraged by the ways our students and staff embody Christ to each other and our community, practically living out the Gospel message. Together, through a variety of creative initiatives, our schools have [collected more than 3,500 pounds](#) (and counting) of non-perishable food items for the St. Albert Food Bank. This aligns with the Catholic social teaching on the preferential option for the poor as we are assisting with the provision for the needs of our most vulnerable brothers and sisters.

Our Division has confirmed 14 positive cases of COVID-19 with the majority in the last two weeks. Our staff are working closely with AHS caseworkers, to help to keep our students and staff safe.

We ask that you continue to monitor your child(ren) for any signs or symptoms by using the [Daily Health Screening Questionnaire](#). Please remember to complete this checklist every morning, BEFORE sending your child(ren) to school. If your child is ill or has any symptoms, even if they seem mild, please keep him or her at home, call 8-1-1, and follow all instructions from AHS concerning testing and isolation requirements. Please also continue having open conversations with your child(ren) about COVID-19. Thank you for continually reinforcing how important it is to follow all [health and safety protocols](#). AHS's [Guidance for Parents of Children Attending School and/or Childcare](#) provides helpful information and answers to frequently asked questions.

On October 13, Alberta Education [announced](#) that [diploma exams](#) for high school students will be optional for the October and November 2020 administration period. The [letter](#), along with [Questions and Answers](#) from Alberta Education that I had sent to impacted families last week offered key considerations to help students and parents/legal guardians make informed decisions that are right for them. Students are encouraged to talk to their teachers about writing diploma exams.

As promised, we are checking in with families whose children are enrolled in the GSACRD Online Learning Pathway to see how online education is going for students and find out how they wish to proceed for the next portion of the school year. Schools have sent a [survey](#) to all parents/legal guardians to find out if they would like their child(ren) to switch from online to face-to-face programming or vice-versa. The deadline to complete this survey is Oct. 31, 2020. Parents/legal guardians will then receive a notification from the school principal regarding the program that they wish their child(ren) to be in by Nov. 5, 2020.

As you know, the situation around COVID-19 is changing rapidly. We continue to follow the direction of the province's Chief Medical Officer of Health and all levels of government on preparedness planning and will update our School Re-Entry Plan as required. We will keep you informed through these weekly notices, our [Parent Guidebook for School Re-Entry: 2020-2021](#), our [website](#) and social media ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#)) platforms, and other communication channels. Your child(ren)'s teacher(s) and school principal(s) can best address your concerns as they apply to [your child\(ren\)'s school](#).

We encourage you to follow all public health guidelines, including the new voluntary measures that Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health [announced](#) last week. Credible information about COVID-19 is available from [Health Canada](#), the [Government of Alberta](#), [AHS](#), and the [World Health Organization](#).

The gift of publicly-funded Catholic education in Alberta is a blessing. As a community, we are called in gratitude, faith, and action to ensure that our children and future generations continue to learn and grow in our Catholic schools. To that end, we are looking for a parent volunteer to be a member of our Division's GrACE ([Grateful Advocates for Catholic Education](#)) committee. The goal of GrACE – which includes representatives from all 16 Catholic school districts in the province and is supported by the Alberta Bishops, [Alberta Catholic School Trustees](#), and the [Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta](#) – is to present a united front to advocate for, and preserve, publicly-funded Catholic education, which educates approximately 170,000 students throughout the province. If you are interested in serving in this way, please [let us know](#).



As we enter the final week of this Month of the Rosary, I hope that [praying the Rosary](#) will continue to give you divine peace during these challenging days and encourage families to pray the Rosary together before the end of the month. In addition to connecting as a family in prayer, the intercession of our Blessed Mother is all the more important as we work to serve and support each other on this our collective journey through these times of pandemic.

In these uncertain times, when many have been affected by COVID-19, both financially and mentally, may we all direct our “hearts to the love of God and the steadfastness of Christ” (2 Thessalonians 3:5) as we endeavour to care for one another.

Thank you for your ongoing support in keeping our students, their families, our staff, and our communities safe. Blessings!

Sincerely,

Dr. Clint Moroziuk
Superintendent of Schools