

May 15, 2020

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update: Parents, Students, and Staff

I look forward to celebrating Catholic Education Week (May 18-22) with you next week. Each year at this time, we celebrate our Catholic schools and the connection of home, school, and parish that furthers faith formation and learning. Catholic education makes significant contributions to our communities and to our world, and our educators are proud to be part of a public mandate to provide education that is fully permeated in our Catholic faith. Most importantly, our schools support students to know, model, and witness Jesus Christ.

In keeping with this year's theme - *United in Prayer and Grateful for Catholic Education*, I encourage you to record a short video responding to the statement, "I am grateful for Catholic education, because..." and then [send it to us](mailto:communications@gsacrd.ab.ca) at communications@gsacrd.ab.ca. We will compile responses from students, parents, staff, alumni, and other members of the GSACRD community and share them as our community story next week. Please also wear blue on May 21, in support of World Catholic Education Day. Share your photos on social media, using #IbelieveinCatholicEd, #blueforCatholicEd, and #GSACRDproud.

[St. Kateri Tekakwitha Academy](#), our newest school (opening this fall), will host a live [virtual open house](#) on **May 21 at 6:30 p.m.** This is an opportunity to learn about the school and its programming, to meet some of the staff, and to ask questions. Everyone is welcome! Please [register online](#) for this event.

While the Alberta Government [has not made any decisions](#) regarding school operations for the 2020-21 school year, it is working with school authorities and education system partners on developing a comprehensive [re-entry plan](#). The plan will prioritize the safety and well-being of students, teachers, staff, and volunteers; honour collective bargaining agreements; and be informed by both Alberta's [Relaunch Strategy](#) and advice from the chief medical officer of health.

Today is the final day to submit nominations for the [2020 Laura Bird Memorial Beacon of Hope Award](#). Initiated by our Board in 2017, this annual award recognizes mentors of faith within our school communities. If you would like to nominate someone, please download, complete, and return this [nomination form](#). Complete details are available on our website.

We continue to celebrate our Heavenly Mother during this Month of Mary. Praying the rosary is a powerful and uniquely Catholic meditative prayer process that guides the faithful to contemplate, and enter into, the mysteries of Jesus' life. It includes 53 Hail Mary prayers – like a bouquet of flowers – offered to Mary. More [resources](#) are available on our website.

I encourage you to keep sharing your stories of faith and learning at home, using the hashtags #ABLearnAtHome, #GSACRDproud, and #GSACRDgrace. Please tag GSACRD in your posts, and follow and like us on [Facebook](#) (fb.com/GSACRD), [Twitter](#) (@GSACRD), [Instagram](#) (@GSACRD_official), and [YouTube](#) (@GSACRD). You can also [e-mail your stories](#) to us.

Just as we continue to follow and implement the recommendations of the chief medical officer and all levels of government, we encourage you to do the same. You can find credible and relevant health and safety information, as well as important updates about COVID-19, as follows:

- [Government of Canada: canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html](https://canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html)
- [Alberta Government: alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx](https://alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx)
- [Alberta Health Services: albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx](https://albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx)
- [City of St. Albert: stalbert.ca/city/eps/preparedness/resources](https://stalbert.ca/city/eps/preparedness/resources)
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\): who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019](https://who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019)

This continues to be a challenging time for some families. If you need support, please reach out to your local school. You may also access Alberta Education's help-line and email service for parents of students, especially those requiring specialized supports. Call 780.422.6548 (toll-free: 310.0000, followed by the nine-digit phone number), or [send an e-mail](mailto:studentsupport@gov.ab.ca) to studentsupport@gov.ab.ca. Services are available on Monday to Friday, between 8:15 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

I wish you a blessed long-weekend. Stay well.

Sincerely,

David Keohane
Superintendent of Schools