

## **Friday, April 17**

Dear Nolan Families and Students,

Thank you for all your incredible support as we continue to receive more information on the direction for the rest of the school year. In light of Governor Abbott's executive order, Nolan Catholic will proceed with distance learning and follow our academic calendar for the remainder of the school year. Please find more information about our ongoing instruction, grades, final exams, and locker distribution included in this email. Updates to activities and events will be sent as we get closer to each date. Virtual ceremonies and activities are currently being planned by staff, students, and administrators for class awards, VSPYs, VFAAs, Sophomore Talent Show, Junior retreats, and Junior Leadership Day. I apologize for the lengthy email but want to make sure I cover as much as possible.

We just completed our fifth week of distance learning and online instruction, and we are ready for the rest of the school year. We know how difficult this has been, and we are continuing to pray for our families who are experiencing challenges, hardships, and illness. Thank you to all of our parents, students, and staff for taking this journey with such positivity and creativity. Our students and staff have worked to incorporate faith, academics, and student life in ways I never thought possible. Our students provided beautiful prayer videos and interactive live feeds throughout the Holy week. They will continue to provide morning prayer and announcements in addition to working together, organizing upcoming prayer groups, activities, and virtual retreats.

### **Weekly Mass**

Please join us as we celebrate Mass every Thursday at 9:20 a.m. with Father Moon as regularly scheduled for our school-wide Mass days. Mass is shared as a live feed through the official Nolan Catholic Facebook page.

### **Ongoing Instruction**

Teachers have been so complimentary of our students and their participation with virtual sessions, projects, and lessons. Our goal is to continue providing an education for our students through a variety of modes of instruction and engagement. We have carefully reviewed and researched best practices and will continue with what is best for the teenaged brain by offering a variety of opportunities for engagement, exploration, and learning. Sitting in front of a screen for a set schedule has not proven to enhance learning. Nolan Catholic administrators have identified that the best instruction for our students comes from strategically planning with our educators. Our goal in keeping students engaged with quality assignments focused on learning and knowledge retention is reliant on working with educators on the curriculum objectives and collaborating to develop lessons that will provide a variety of learning opportunities. Allowing students to explore and creatively complete challenges are concepts held in every conversation with planning for instruction. Our intent is to continue encouraging students to collaborate and engage to empower their love for learning. As we continue to work with other districts, independent schools, and educators, we also continue to research, practice, and creatively teach our students in the way that is best for student learning at Nolan Catholic. In addition, we have identified support systems for students struggling with organization, time management, and self-efficacy with access to our teachers,



learning support, and counseling. Please contact Ryan Faller, our assistant principal for academic affairs at [rfaller@nchstx.org](mailto:rfaller@nchstx.org), if there are any questions, needs, or concerns about available student learning support.

## **Grades**

After much consideration, while acknowledging the dedication and hours our students have devoted to academic work, Nolan Catholic will continue with students earning numerical grades. It is important that we honor the integrity of our student/teacher engagement of learning and instruction as well as the long-term effects of logistical decisions for averages and GPA. After speaking with universities, colleges, and other school administrators, along with assessing our own practices, we will continue with our regularly scheduled review week and exams for courses.

## **Final Exams**

Much collaboration, research, and strategic planning have gone into our decisions for academics for our students. Administrators have researched and discussed the best methods to review and measure semester instruction in alignment with efforts to assess student understanding. There will be a few changes in recording the grade of the final exams, but after dissecting curriculum, lesson plans, and best practices in how the brain retains information, we have come up with the best way to address an authentic review of semester content for each course, followed with a well-suited exam option specific to each course. On Monday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Perales will be sending detailed information regarding review week, senior exemption options, and finals.

## **Locker Distribution**

In an attempt to distribute all materials, books, and supplies from lockers to students, we are working on approvals to share out our process for distribution. I apologize for the delay, but we still have several families in our community who have reported confirmed cases of COVID-19, and we have just received information on a few more confirmed cases. We will send explicit instructions for a distribution process early next week, and our hope is to start the process on April 27<sup>th</sup>. Again, details and specific instructions with regard to all restrictions and social distancing in relation to our distribution process will be sent to families next week through RenWeb, and the desired distribution date will begin on April 27<sup>th</sup>.

## **Graduation and Prom**

It is our goal to create some alternative experiences for our students in addition to prom and graduation and will share those out as we move through the next few weeks. Please keep your eyes peeled on our daily social media platforms to see our senior highlights sharing the accomplishments of each senior.

Based on the most recent information from Governor Abbott, we are opting for Plan B that was sent to seniors last week. We will closely monitor the orders for social distancing and any other directives as we move closer to the late July dates. Administrators are working with our live-stream vendor to make ceremonies available for family members to view and attend virtually.

**Plan B**

July 25 - Prom, 8:00 p.m., on campus

July 31 - Rehearsal, 11:00 a.m., Hartnett Arena

July 31 - Robing & Awards Ceremony, 6:30 p.m., Hartnett Arena

August 1 - Baccalaureate Mass, 4:00 p.m., Hartnett Arena

August 2 - Commencement, 1:00 p.m., \*venue TBD

*Administrators, club moderators, student leaders, and teachers are working on a variety of activities and goodies to honor and recognize our seniors.*

We are so grateful for your participation and ongoing positivity as we continue to educate our students with intention and purpose for each course as well as engaging students with opportunities for prayer and student life. The videos students have submitted to share with families with younger students, including reading books aloud with activities connected with the story, how-to instructional videos, and tutorials in different content areas, will be distributed to families in need of additional instruction in the home. Our students and educators have been wonderful in serving area schools with zoom videos, fun workouts, and activities to keep students engaged. It is so empowering to see our students continue to thrive and step up in ways that are so appreciated. Whatever the challenge, our Vikings RISE, and I couldn't be prouder of our students and staff for stepping out of the box and serving in unique ways! What a gift it is to work alongside students who have such a passion for learning and growing in their faith, academics, service, and student life. Please contact me or any of our administrators directly if there are any questions or concerns.

Many blessings and good health,

Leah Rios

President