



DIOCESE of SACRAMENTO
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Update on Events of the Week for the Catholic School Community

August 29, 2020

Dear Catholic School Community:

A lot has happened this week, including the release of a number of new guidelines at the state and county level, and I wanted to clarify how these changes affect us.

First, the good news:

- This week, we **received a waiver from Placer county** for St. Joseph School, Auburn, and the county is reviewing our application for St. Rose School, Roseville.
- On Friday, we submitted our waiver application to our two largest counties, **Sacramento and Solano**. They've already reviewed our return-to-school plans and offered me input.
- The state must review those applications, too, but Sacramento and Solano counties said we should anticipate a return to in-person instruction for grades TK-6 by **Sept. 14**.
- **Yolo County** has promised significant support for our schools that apply for waivers, including campus tours by health officers to give us their input on our plans.
- **Butte County** had challenges with their data and waiver applications were stalled, but there is a new health officer in place and we saw forward progress last week.

The New County Monitoring System:

- The state replaced the old county monitoring list with a new plan called the ["Blueprint for a Safer Economy."](#)
- In regards to schools, the governor's [website](#) explains that "Purple (Widespread) is substituted for the previous County Data Monitoring List (which has equivalent criteria to Purple). Schools in the (Purple) Widespread tier aren't permitted to reopen for in-person instruction unless they receive a waiver from their local health department for TK-6 grades. Schools can reopen for in-person instruction once their county has been in the Red (Substantial) tier for at least two weeks."
- For our schools in Butte, Placer, Sacramento, Solano, and Yolo counties, our waiver applications continue in process.
- As before, if conditions worsen in any county, it could delay our receiving a waiver.
- This doesn't affect open schools in El Dorado, Nevada, Tehama, and Shasta counties.
- We will work with county health officers in Colusa and Sutter counties to understand whether this rule change affects the process in those counties.



DIOCESE of SACRAMENTO
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

The New Small Group Rules Announced August 25:

- On August 25, the CDPH released [updated guidelines](#) authorizing small-group, in person services at schools in counties on the monitoring list.
- [Per the accompanying FAQ](#), these guidelines allow us to serve students from vulnerable groups on campus for limited purposes. The state lists those groups in order of priority: Students with disabilities; English learners; students at higher risk of further learning loss or not participating in distance learning; students at risk of abuse or neglect; foster youth, and students experiencing homelessness.
- These guidelines are not a “side door” to in-person direct instruction.
- A county ordinance can supersede these guidelines; Sacramento county, for example, [issued an ordinance and FAQ](#) on August 28 with specific guidance for schools.
- Your principal can submit a plan for serving students in these groups to my office; we will review that plan and then proactively share it with the local health officer.
- **If your school is in an open county, is operating under a waiver, or applied to operate under a waiver, your current return-to-school plans do not change.**
- Some other schools have been marketing these rules as an opportunity to return to campus without a waiver. This is not school as usual or daycare by another name. According to the FAQ published by Sacramento county on Friday, for example, [no more than 25%](#) of the overall enrollment may be on campus at one time. There is no such thing as a “provisional waiver.” If you are asking yourself, “how can that other school get away with it?” the short answer is, they probably won’t.

Fires and AQI: This fire season is already a bad one, and we are all worried about air quality. Our general rule is that if the AQI is above 150, we cancel outdoor activities, and if it is above 200, we will consider canceling school. Numbers aside, if it’s clear that it’s just not healthy for our students to be out and about, we may call a smoke day based on what we observe.

Be vigilant: Please, make sure your students stay distant and stick to their bubble when at home. Our plans for safe schools depend on students and families being vigilant at all times.

Thank you for choosing Catholic education. May the Lord Jesus guide us in His goodness as we serve our students in His name.

Peace,

Lincoln Snyder
Executive Director of Schools
The Diocese of Sacramento