



November 12, 2020

Subject: Siena COVID update: 11.19.20

Dear Siena Catholic Schools families,

It has been a whirlwind of a week, taking in the news from the City of Racine Public Health Department and pulling a planning committee together to discuss next steps. As you may have heard, the Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty (WILL) and the Wisconsin Council of Religious and Independent Schools (WCRIS) are challenging the health department's authority to place the order to force Racine schools to go virtual; they have filed a petition with the Wisconsin Supreme Court.

These are incredibly complicated matters and we believe that our schools provide a safe and healthy environment for our students. They are cared for socially, emotionally, academically, and physically. We have previously made the decisions to quarantine an entire class and an entire school due to COVID-19, and will continue to make these decisions as data warrants. We also want to follow the law. However, we do question if the local health department has the authority to make a decision like this.

That being said, we also must prepare as if we have to go virtual. A team of principals, leadership, and staff have met and will continue to meet to discuss the logistics of switching to virtual, synchronous teaching. This includes picking up technology and other materials that might be needed. Additional information will be shared by school principals.

With input from the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Siena leadership has decided that St. Rita Catholic School will remain open for in-person learning. St. Rita faculty and parents have worked tirelessly to keep the school safe and have not had a case of COVID-19 in their building. They are not under the jurisdiction of the City of Racine Public Health Department. Central Racine County Health Department has stated that they do not have the authority to close schools and do not have the intention of doing so. Again, should the data support closing a class or a school, that decision would be made at that time. Principal Jennifer Jeffers and the St. Rita staff have worked diligently to prepare to shift to virtual learning if and when that is necessary.

Our planning team will be meeting again on Friday and will continue to share the news that we receive from WILL and WCRIS. Again, school principals will be sharing specifics with you, including device pickup times and other logistics.

Thank you all for your continued support of Siena Catholic Schools of Racine.

Blessings in Christ,

Brenda White

