May 2020

Dear SHG Students, Parents, and Faculty,

The fourth quarter of the 2019-2020 school year has been anything but predictable. Although the SHG faculty had been utilizing technology on a regular basis in their day-to-day instruction prior to the stay-at-home order, virtual learning was a whole new situation to navigate. We made decisions that we felt were best to uphold the integrity of our SHG educational goals while giving special consideration to the social and emotional pressures the sudden closures created for everyone. The crisis hit our state and all of us acted with the speed and urgency necessary to successfully complete this school year. I am extremely proud of what the faculty has accomplished and I applaud the students for the work that has been done over the last 9 weeks. Parents, this would not have been possible without you! Thank you for partnering with us to get through this challenging time in history.

As we plan for the 2020-2021 school year we must give consideration to possible future stay-at-home orders and temporary school building closures. It is for that reason that we have developed a three tiered plan for instruction. We pray that we will be in session each and every day next year, but it is vital to have a comprehensive plan in place if we need to utilize virtual instruction again. I have included a brief description of this plan below.

Scenario 1: All students and staff will return to in-person instruction at SHG.

Scenario 2: Virtual Instruction- We have learned many things from our experiences during the fourth quarter of the 2019-2020 school year. In planning for future virtual learning experiences, all SHG faculty members will utilize the same online platform. Renweb/FACTS now has a Google integration option so that teachers can utilize the Google suite and it will work in conjunction with FACTS. Students will no longer have to check multiple platforms for assignments, grades, notes, etc. This platform will also be utilized for a virtual face-to-face class twice a week for 30 minutes. This will be done for each course that your student is enrolled in. Feedback from parents and students helped us understand how important that face time is and we truly appreciate that insight. If virtual instruction is necessary during the 2020-2021 school year, we will likely utilize an A and B day approach. A days would be even number classes (second, fourth, sixth, and eighth hours) on Monday and Wednesday. B days would be odd number classes (first, third, fifth, and seventh hours) on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Fridays would be reserved for faculty office hours. Teachers would be available for student support during that time. Students would only be required to be responsible for four classes per day instead of all eight.

Scenario 3: Hybrid of face-to-face and virtual instruction. There is a possibility that we may have to limit the number of individuals in our school building at certain points next year. If that is the case we will adopt and alternate schedule where we have freshmen and sophomores in the building two days a week and then juniors and seniors in the building.
two different days. Similar to scenario 2, we will reserve one day of teacher office hours. On the days that your child is not physically in the building, virtual instruction will be utilized.

With this planning we have also decided to move to semester grades instead of quarterly grades. During the closure this school year we were out the entire fourth quarter. Looking to the future we have no idea when or if we will be closed so we have decided it would be most responsible to move to the semester grading. With this change we will not have to change the quarterly weighting like we did this year. The semester grades would count for 80% while finals would be the traditional 20%. These will be combined for the report grade. There will not be an official report card issued each nine weeks like there has been in the past, but we will send progress reports.

Planning for our physical space is also extremely important. We will abide by all CDC and IDPH guidelines to ensure the safety of all students and staff. Some considerations currently being discussed include, but are not limited to: temperature stations at the front doors, reducing the number of students in the hallways during passing periods, physical organization of the lunch room and classrooms.

In the coming weeks, all families and faculty members will receive a survey to help us assess your virtual learning experiences. We will use the data collected in our planning and preparation for the 2020-2021 school year. We are committed to providing training and support to our teaching staff and improving our technology infrastructure to support the possibility of future virtual instruction.

In closing, I would like to tell you how proud I am to be part of this community. Thank you for choosing Catholic education at SHG. This is a very difficult time in our history, but this community has been incredible throughout.

Blessings of peace, health, and safety,

Mrs. Rapacz