



SAINT AMBROSE ACADEMY
At Peace of Christ Parish
31 EMPIRE BLVD.
ROCHESTER, NY 14609
Phone 585-288-0580 Fax 585-288-2612



July 21, 2020

Dear Saint Ambrose Academy Families,

Hoping that this finds you safely healthy in this time of COVID-19, we write to share a matter of importance. As we begin another week of preparation for September, we express our appreciation to all the parents who responded to messages sent last week. Your excitement for starting a new school year, and ensuring your child's registration is complete, brings us hope during the planning phases for reopening. **We maintain our confidence in the academic structure in place to accommodate in-person instruction.** We are sensitive to each family's circumstances and realize the Governor's August 1-7 timeline for his decision on opening all schools is causing some delay in completing your child's registration. However, we need each of you to register to assure that our school will remain an educational option for our community.

It has been our experience that a large portion of the student registrations for each approaching school year have traditionally come in close to Labor Day as we were on track to do prior to COVID-19 in mid-March. Upon Peace of Christ Parish's review of St. Ambrose Academy's current registration data with the diocese's Catholic School Office, we do not at this time have the "critical mass" required to open a school. **Therefore, this year we need to have all registrations in by Friday, August 14th.**

If all those intending to register do not do so by August 14th for this coming year, St. Ambrose Academy will close. We do not share this information with you to scare you, but rather to alert you that the future existence of St. Ambrose Academy is in your hands. While Siena Junior High School was recently given a similar challenge and failed, we know from talking with those at our diocesan offices that two other elementary schools like our own - St. Agnes School in Avon and St. Mary Our Mother School in Horseheads - were given that same challenge and succeeded. **But, the clock is ticking, and Friday, August 14th is the deadline - one that will not be extended: our actual enrollment at that time will determine the decision.**

Below, we have outlined our current enrollment and the necessary goals that must be met in order to responsibly open in the fall:

- ✓ **As of today, 57 students are confirmed registered.**
- ✓ **We need to have 80 students fully registered by August 14 to remain open in the Fall 2020. (To assist in this, the Registration Fee has been cut in half to \$75.)**

Although some decisions are going to come from the Governor's office, we *can* tell you what school will look like for the Saint Ambrose Academy community when the Governor approves our plan for reopening. Our current building was constructed to serve 720 students. This is incredibly good news for all of us because we have plenty of space to grow, and do not need to worry about exceeding our 80% capacity that you are hearing about from area public school districts. What this means is, our plan for re-opening includes:

- ✓ **In-person instruction for every student.**
- ✓ Full day, five days a week.
- ✓ **We do not plan to stagger classes or days.** Every child will come to school five days a week with working parents not having to worry about who will take care of their child while they are at work. *Other schools cannot offer that assurance.*
- ✓ Class sizes limited to 18 students for social distancing.
- ✓ Modified polices for arrival, dismissal, safety drills, lunch, special area classes.
- ✓ Enhanced cleaning and sanitization.
- ✓ Creative learning options for those unable or uncomfortable attending in-person classes.

We will continue to offer:

- ✓ Tuition assistance if needed.
- ✓ Tuition costs below most day-care.
- ✓ Free breakfast and lunch.
- ✓ Before and after care options if needed.

We promise to deliver the same quality education you expected to receive when you chose to entrust your child's education with St. Ambrose Academy whether this is our intended in-person learning or is ever required by the Governor to revert temporarily to distance learning. We stand behind our mission to provide a nurturing environment to develop each child spiritually, academically, and socially to be tomorrow's leaders of hope in our communities.

Please feel welcome to continue calling the office or sending us messages with your clarifying questions. We are happy to discuss these with you, so you can stay informed of the latest information. We will communicate openly about our progress in planning for in-person instruction and how we will respond after receiving the Governor's decision on August 7. Our 100th anniversary of a school at St. Ambrose is only 3 years away, and we are hopeful that we will have a grand celebration when these next 36 months have transpired!

We look forward to serving as your administrators this coming school year and for many years into the future. We are in the office all week from 9:00-2:00. Please call us or Ms. Chambers at 288-0580 to assist you in the registration process. God's blessings as we act now for 2020-2021!

Ms. Christine Deutsch
Principal

Ms. Patty Macera
Finance Director

Fr. Robert Schrader
Pastor

P.S. from Fr. Bob: When Jesus was confronted with a terminal situation, he said to the people, "Do not be afraid, just have faith" (Mark 5:36). He says that to us now. Indeed, in the 97 years of our school's life, we survived the Great Depression, World War II, a fire in the school itself, 9/11, the financial crash of 2008 and much more. The only reason we are confronted with this present dilemma is because of COVID-19 which brought to a sudden halt in mid-March what was at that time a very successful period of increased registrations coming in for this September. COVID-19 will be conquered with the upcoming vaccine. Let's not let it conquer us. All we need do is complete what we had started just 20 weeks ago. Thank you for taking time right now to register your child for September—and, by all means, do so no later than August 14th! Peace!