



New York State Catholic Conference

465 State Street • Albany, New York 12203-1004 • Tel. (518) 434-6195 • Fax. (518) 434-9796
www.nyscatholic.org • info@nyscatholic.org

RICHARD E. BARNES
Executive Director

Contact: Dennis Poust
518-225-4882 (Mobile)
dpoust@nyscatholic.org

**For Immediate Release:
October 4, 2020**

Statement on threat of Covid-19-related school closures

Following is a statement of the New York State Catholic Conference on behalf of the Archdiocese of New York and the Diocese of Brooklyn:

Public officials have indicated that they may pursue the closure of all public and private schools in several COVID-19 “hot zones” in New York City and the Hudson Valley. We strongly urge that any action taken addresses actual problem schools where there is a sustained high rate of infection, rather than a broad-brush approach that penalizes all schools, children and families needlessly.

The Catholic schools throughout our state and, particular in the densely populated New York City Metropolitan Area, have rightly been held up as a model for safety in these uncertain times. Our Catholic schools opened for full-time in-person learning weeks before the New York City public schools and have had no significant COVID-19 outbreaks to date.

The Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of New York and the Diocese of Brooklyn have invested millions of dollars and countless personnel hours to prepare for the return of students, and the results have been a remarkable success. Media reports have praised our schools for our innovative social distancing practices, strict adherence to masking and frequent hand washing, and our continuous disinfecting of all public areas. We have shown the city, state and nation that with proper precautions, schools can safely reopen, whether in urban, suburban or rural areas, and can offer first-rate learning experiences even in the midst of a pandemic.

Should our schools be ordered closed by the state absent any significant COVID-19 outbreaks because of inferior protocols at non-Catholic schools, it would be a profound injustice to our families who have placed their trust in us to keep their children safe and whose faith has been richly rewarded to date.

We have been strongly supportive of the state’s efforts to protect our communities from the coronavirus, and we have been enthusiastic partners. We hope to continue that partnership for the good of all.