

Good afternoon St. John School,

Thank you for your continued support as we make it through this winter COVID surge. I wanted to provide a few overview numbers of the past two weeks. I know that the one off daily emails you get each day can be a bit overwhelming. Since January 3, we have had 33 individuals test positive for COVID – this represents about 12% of our student population. Many of these students have already returned to school and more will on Tuesday. We have also had 61 students enter remote education for at least a day. This represents 28% of eligible students. This does not include an additional 15 or so preschool and prekindergarten students who had to quarantine. Through all of this, our students continue to learn and grow and that is a testament to our teachers. During our half day today, our teachers were able to have some reflection time and a retreat given by Mary Ann McLaughlin. Mary Ann is a former teacher who has done wonderful work in the area of faith formation for priests and lay people at both St. John's Seminary and the Archdiocese of Boston. She provided our teachers with some powerful thoughts and experiences today. This is the spiritual food and peace that will sustain them over the coming weeks and months. We all need these experiences!

Last summer, we decided to change our front bulletin board to a series of inspirational quotes. This means that every day I walk into school I am met by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and a special quote, "I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear." I talk about love a lot as a person (yes, I am one of those people who make sure I say I love you to my children and wife every morning and night) and as a leader, so this is an inspirational quote to see each morning. It encourages each student to choose to love every single day. This is one of Dr. King's legacy. On Monday, we celebrate Martin Luther King Day and I wanted to share with you his most famous speech and a short, or in another way long, personal story. If you have never actually watched Martin Luther King's I Have a Dream speech, I would encourage you to for innumerable reasons. You can view it at <https://youtu.be/l47Y6VHc3Ms>. When I was growing up, my mom was a middle school English teacher and she loved to teach this speech and Dr. King – the history, the ideas, the words, and the actual presentation (cadence and imagery). I had the honor of seeing her teach this speech in class when I was young and I remember the power that it had with her middle school students. It is a moment that helped crystalize why I wanted to be a teacher, particularly a

history teacher. I also remember as a child visiting Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta with my family. I was old enough to know what it meant and the role it has played in American history. When I became an adult, I had the opportunity to bring my mom to Memphis to visit the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis. This was a special trip where I was able to give something back to mom and we continued to learn about and immerse ourselves in Dr. King's life. These were special moments that we were able to share. We immersed ourselves in MLK's legacy and story and tried to come out of it as better people with a rationale to do more. A few years ago, I was able to continue this story with my own family. I brought my daughter (and baby son) to Ebenezer Baptist Church. I was able to talk with my daughter about Martin Luther King, the Civil Rights movement, the responsibility we have as humans to do better, and her grandmother's role in my life. Through all of this, the legacy that Dr. Martin Luther King leaves with us shines through— it is a powerful one and one that I am blessed to have been introduced to by my mother and shared with my children. I hope you have this same opportunity or create this opportunity, particularly on such an important and special day on Monday.

SJS Calendar

Monday, January 17 – No School

Friday, January 21 – End of Term 2

Friday, January 28 – Report Cards

January 30 – February 6 – Catholic Schools Week

Thank you

March 18 Half Day

On Friday, March 18, SJS will have a half day for teacher development. This half day was not on our original school calendar. There will be no aftercare and no PM buses. I apologize for this late notice.

Mask Mandate

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has extended their mask mandate through February 28. SJS will comply with this mandate.

Catholic Schools Week

Catholic Schools Week (CSW) will occur between January 30 and February 6 this year. CSW is an annual celebration of Catholic education in the United States. This year's theme is Catholic Schools: Faith. Excellence. Service. We will have a few events during the week, such as our Spelling Bee and Geography Bee, so be on the lookout.

Second Notices

Financial Aid Applications for 2022-2023

The financial aid application for the 2022-2023 school year is now available through FACTS. Please log on to <https://factsmgt.com/aid>. If you already have an account, just sign in. If you are applying for financial aid for the first time, you will need to create an account and select St. John School, Canton. Financial Aid applications are due March 4 and we will make decisions by the end of March.

Mass Schedule (During Catholic Schools Week)

Grades 6 – Monday, January 31

Grades 4 and 5 – Tuesday, February 1

Grades 1 and 7 – Wednesday, February 2

Grades K and 8 – Thursday, February 3

Grade 2 and 3 – Friday, February 4

Helpful Links

Ebackpack - <https://www.sjscanton.org/e-backpack>

Service Hours Tracker - <https://tinyurl.com/SJSService21-22>

2021-2022 School Calendar - [Click here](#)

Chris