

## **An Open Letter to all PVNC Graduating Students from the Director of Education**

May 6, 2020

Dear PVNC Graduating Class of 2020:

I hope this letter finds you safe and healthy, and coping well with the unique times we are in and the challenges we are all facing. Who could have imagined, last September when your graduating year began, that we would all be dealing with a global pandemic, learning and working from home, and being challenged to adapt to a new way of living and learning? I am so impressed with how you have taken up the challenge to continue to be engaged in your learning through our PVNC Learn@Home program. This online learning opportunity is growing every day, despite the fact that it has required teachers and other staff members to learn a whole new way of leading and supporting your learning, as well as the fact that you have had to adapt to a whole new way of being a student and engaging with your teachers and classmates. I thank you and your teachers for your courage, your dedication, and your perseverance.

I have had the opportunity to talk with your student trustees and student council representatives, and they, in turn have been in touch with many of you. In addition to the general stress of this pandemic, I am very aware that some of you are facing very difficult personal circumstances: parents are out of work, there are food shortages in some homes, some students are working 40-60 hours per week in grocery stores and some of you are currently the sole income-earners in your homes, some of you are caring for younger siblings at home, and some you have parents who are healthcare workers and you live with a constant worry for their health and safety, as well as your own. All of you, especially those living with such unique challenges, have my deepest respect and support.

A number of questions have been brought to our attention that are of particular concern to graduating students. I would like to address these with you now.

We are doing everything possible to ensure you have the opportunity to complete all of your graduation requirements by the end of June 2020, if that is your educational plan. The Minister of Education has suspended the literacy requirement and the community service requirement for this graduating class for this 2019-2020 school year only. Community Service hours completed will be recorded on the final report card. However, students who have not completed these graduation requirements and return for a fifth year will be required to complete ALL graduation requirements prior to June 2021.

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Mid-term marks for graduating students have been provided to OUAC/OCAS prior to the May 1 deadline. Teachers have been asked to share these marks with you as well. At the end of the school year, final marks for graduating students will be provided to OUAC/OCAS, replacing the midterm mark for consideration by postsecondary institutions. If a student withdraws from a course after their midterm mark has been provided to OUAC/OCAS, then their final mark will be revised with the new course status.

No doubt everyone is wondering about Graduation and Prom. We have made a decision to postpone Graduation ceremonies for this June. The new date for the Fall Commencement Ceremony is Thursday, October 8, 2020. Each school will set their own time and communicate the details to you and your families, so please save the date. There will not be a Spring Prom in any of our schools, but each secondary school will consult and make plans for some type of social event to celebrate your graduation, to be held in conjunction with the Fall Commencement Ceremony in October.

Graduates, we will all remember this year for the challenges we faced and the changes to which we adapted. Hopefully, we will also remember this year for the resilience we summoned, the courage we demonstrated and the generosity we showed to others, in our own homes and in the communities in which we live. The theme of this year's Catholic Education Week 2020 is "IGNITING HOPE". That's exactly what we all need to do: look to the future with hope for new possibilities, a hope that is grounded in our faith in God and our love for those around us.

My best wishes to all of you. You are in my prayers and I am wishing you every success as you complete your Grade 12 year.

Sincerely,



Michael Nasello  
Director of Education

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