



THE JOHN CARROLL SCHOOL

Transcript of Reopening Announcement from President DiBiagio – Recorded July 31, 2020

President DiBiagio:

Hi, I'm Steve DiBiagio, the president of The John Carroll School.

I hope your summer is going well, you're able to relax with your family and stay strong and healthy

I appreciate this opportunity to share some thoughts and information about the opening of school. First and foremost, let me state clearly and emphatically, we have an obligation to safeguard the physical and emotional wellbeing of our students and our employees. And we all thrive best when we're together here on campus.

But the situation is complicated. And while we can all agree that we would like our students and employees to return to campus as soon and as safely as possible, the how and the when is very complicated.

Let's also agree that we would like a constant definition of what the return to school options look like. There are three. The first is full return to campus, which is exactly what it is: between 700 and 800 persons return here to the John Carroll campus in September. The next is full distance learning, which we experienced last spring, and the third is a hybrid of the two.

The first two options are clear. The hybrid option seems to be widely interpreted, so let me clarify our definition of a hybrid solution:

- It is a prioritized, sequenced and tightly managed progression of activities and student groups back to campus.
- It moves in stages.
- It is capability and capacity driven.

- Each stage is released, measured, evaluated before progressing to the next level. For example, we might start with providing lunches to 50 students. We'll manage that, measure that, evaluate it. When we get that right, we'll go to 100, and then perhaps 200 and 300, and so on.
 - A classroom example: We're very comfortable delivering science instruction in the classroom. The complication is the lab work. How do we manage an effective lab exercise while maintaining the physical distance? We'll work that out and it'll be perfect.

The key is we don't move forward until we are certain that we get it right and when it comes to safety, the margin for error is darn near close to zero. Masks, social distancing, hand cleansing, pre-school check-in have to be managed, and will be managed flawlessly, so it'll be a series of measured steps. And the timeline will be determined by capacity and capability, not the calendar. We'll move forward when we get it right, and when it's time to move forward.

So the next step we can all agree on is let's make the decision as soon as possible. True, but a "soon decision" might not be the best decision. That's why we're continuing to gather and evaluate information and adjust. And frankly, although we're only 30 days out from orientation, in this pandemic environment, 30 days seems like 30 years, things are changing so dramatically and so rapidly.

Whatever path we take, the decision will be evidence-supported. But that evidence is also constantly evolving, and it comes from multiple sources. In fact, sometimes the sources even conflict with their interpretations. So we've landed on the CDC guidelines and the Maryland Roadmap to Recovery as our roadmap going forward and to drive our decisions.

As well and as hard as we'll work to make a consistent plan, we also know we have to maintain flexibility due to the unpredictability of the environment. Any return to campus plan is linked to factors beyond our control. This virus is unpredictable. The situation is unpredictable and interdependent. We could be doing a great job and be in full compliance with all guidelines here on campus; however, something could occur not even remotely close to our community, and not directly involving anyone from John Carroll, but can cause the Governor to take action that could directly impact and interrupt the path and progress of our plan.

So I'm asking everyone to be patient. We will pass along the information to you as we know it. I'll ask you to prepare for a near-term scenario which may have some level of distance learning with a mix of campus activity.

I know it's not easy, and I know this isn't comfortable for anybody, but we're all doing our very best. I want to thank you for working together with us on this very important mission.

I hope to see everybody very soon. Have a great day and make tomorrow better.