



Archdiocese of Los Angeles

Department of
Catholic Schools
Office: (213) 637-7300

3424
Wilshire
Boulevard

Los Angeles
California
90010-2202

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

The Archdiocese of Los Angeles is excited to announce that the elementary schools will be extending the academic calendar from the traditional 180 days to 200 instructional days. This change will begin at most sites for the 2011-2012 school year. Since each school site sets its own calendar, the opening and closing school dates will be determined locally as long as the school year does not extend beyond the closing of the fiscal year on June 30th.

As has been well publicized, recent international testing results continue to indicate that American students from all economic levels are performing at a level that is far below their international peers. In addition, the United States requires that schools maintain at minimum 180-day school year, which places it near the bottom when compared with other countries. States also have the authority to reduce the number of required academic days in times of fiscal crisis. In 2009, the California State Legislature reduced the minimum number of days of schooling to 175 due to the state budget crisis and many school districts have responded by lowering the number of instructional days.

Thus, we are responding to a tremendous need by ensuring that the students who attend our academically rigorous and faith-filled schools are best prepared to thrive in high school, college and beyond so they grow up to be successful leaders in our Church and in our nation. The expectation is that this initiative will lead to more sustained academic growth because of the increase in time on task that the extended year brings. Teachers will have more time to devote to the curriculum which will lead to more in-depth exploration and enrichment in the classroom.

For most schools, the resulting increase in staff salaries will require an increase in the tuition charged to families. While this will vary from location to location, it is anticipated that any additional increase in tuition cost will be equal to or less than the alternative care options many families need to seek for their children during the summer months. The expectation is that *no families will leave any of our schools because of increased cost*. We continue to work with the Catholic Education Foundation to ensure that Catholic education is available to every family who desires it and the local schools provide additional assistance to qualified families.

We are very excited that the Catholic elementary schools in Los Angeles are taking a leadership role by embracing an extended year. Thank you for choosing a Catholic school for your children. By doing so you show a commitment to their academic and spiritual growth and we are honored to partner with you.

God bless,

Kevin Baxter, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Elementary Schools