

## **PARENT TESTIMONIALS REGARDING REMOTE LEARNING**

### **St. Paul School, Kensington**

“SPS PreK4 did a fantastic job prepping our son for a daily school schedule and Kindergarten curriculum. It was unfortunately cut short by the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, but even through those challenges, Mrs. Oppel and the rest of the staff were very organized with keeping on track with their schedules and assigned work. We were impressed by the level of structure provided (daily zoom calls with some/all of their class) along with daily activities to keep the attention and motivation of the class, and it was a joy working with our son on the fun activities provided (scavenger hunts were a favorite in our household!). It was also good to see the added religion topics in the curriculum, even at this young age. The staff at SPS, both teachers and administrators, were great to work with throughout the year, and we only wish that our son was able to join a year earlier for PreK3!”

**-Joe and Sheyla Marranca**

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### **Sacred Heart School, New Britain**

“...the zoom meetings are incredible with the teachers, I cannot thank you enough. The teachers are amazing for doing them. The more they do them, the more I see them feel like things are ok!! I really appreciate their time.”

**-Danielle Ebrahimi (parent of 4th and 7th grader)**

“I just want to write a quick email to thank you (both) for all that you have done for Lilly this year. I absolutely love the album of Lilly. That just made me cry. Thank you so much! I have showed my friend what Lilly has done over the course of the year and she is just amazed and shocked that she was able to learn and have so much fun at the same time. Every time we pass by Broad Street and she sees her school she just bursts in tears and cries. She misses everyone and she misses all the activities she did. She is excited to start kindergarten in the fall.”

**-Ewelina Ciszewska (parent of Pre-K4 student)**

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### **St. Lawrence School, West Haven**

“Dear Mr. DeFonzo, I hope you and your family are doing well and staying healthy. I just wanted to commend you and your staff on how everyone has stepped up to the plate to make sure the children continue with their lessons. You have all done this quickly and efficiently. The children did not miss a beat. My daughter has been working and learning at the level as if they were in the building. The teachers have been wonderful, even still offering extra help! Mrs. Amarosa has even been taking extra time with Maddie and reading with her and other students virtually to make sure they understand their literature. The children even have time to meet together at certain times to talk. That is so essential for their mental health as they are all used to being together. I cannot thank you and your staff enough. I hope all of this effort is being acknowledged by the Archdiocese. Again, thank you!”

### **Tammy Santarcangelo**

“Good Afternoon, I've been meaning to reach out for a while but have not due to the madness. My husband and I really would like to express our gratitude to Mrs. Mattiello and St. Lawrence as a whole for all the hard work you've all put into making this process smooth and effective. I've had to compare it to the public schools' process, and I am in awe of the difference and so beyond grateful. I respect the teachers so much more and I have firsthand experience of how difficult it can be, so that's saying something. I feel like our Lesmari is still learning everything she needs and I love having an inside look on how she is taught in the classroom by watching Mrs. Mattiello on her YouTube videos. I really appreciated the YouTube videos for the Morning Prayers and Announcement allowing for a sense of normalcy. Well Done! If nothing else, this crisis has further assured me that my child is in the best hands. Thank You and God Bless.”

**Leslie M. Brown and Bryan Brown**

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### **St. Bridget School, Cheshire**

“...I could not be more thankful that Natalie is in your hands and part of SBS.

With my crazy work schedule, this time has been exhausting/overwhelming and you all have been a God-send to me, by myself every day with these kids. I check in and provide guidance, of course, but your organized schedules, creative assignments and the individual attention to the students has just kept Natalie so engaged and focused. Most of the time she is really excited about her work and learning.

In fact, she was really disappointed that she missed the optional "chat session" at the zoo yesterday, but she was so fixated on the song parody project!

I would not survive this if I also had to be the 'teacher.' I am so glad she already has wonderful teachers!

Well I just wanted to pass this along because I think we all could use a little encouragement right now. I am sure I have missed some important people on this email but maybe you can share with them my gratitude and some virtual 'warm hugs'.

Thank you, thank you, thank you, and God Bless you!”

**Rachele Patrignelli, 7<sup>th</sup> grade parent**

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### **Northwest Catholic High School, West Hartford**

"Thank you, Northwest Catholic, for taking the time to ensure that the students were able to maintain instruction and stability in these times of uncertainty. We are appreciative of the efforts put forth by faculty and staff and are hopeful that everyone will be able to be together again at school where they belong."

**Julie and Tom Armstrong**  
**Parents of Taylor '19 and Lauren '21**

"I would like to say thank you to all of you great Northwest Catholic teachers who have been working hard during this time to make sure all the students get what they need as a part of their education and social development."

**Rachana Patel**  
**Asha '20**

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### **Catholic Academy of Waterbury**

"In the fall of 2018, we became part of the Catholic Schools family in Waterbury, CT. Our son, Stephen, entered 5th grade at Catholic Academy of Waterbury, transferring from the Waterbury Public School system. Although we never had an issue, per se, at Wendell Cross Elementary in Waterbury, we knew that Stephen deserved more. He deserved a higher level of education than he could receive in the public school system and we decided that CAW was a fit for our family.

The 2018-2019 school year was great. Overall, we were pleased with the level of education Stephen was receiving and happy with the administration at that time. Hearing the news that CAW was going to have a new principal as we entered the 2019-2020 school year was a surprise, but one that we trusted would afford our son the same guidance and leadership that we enjoyed during our first year. This is the reason for my letter.

Christa Chodkowski has been the best, most engaged principal/administrator that we have ever experienced working with (two of our children are now in college). Her level of engagement with parents is second to none. We are kept well informed of important happenings at the school and receive regular updates, email communications and newsletters from Christa directly. We saw a noticeable difference in the appearance of the children once Mrs. Chodkowski started at CAW – the standards for excellence extend beyond the classroom and reinforce dress code and behavior expectations; which is refreshing for a family like ours who hold rules and respect in high regard.

When this pandemic began in mid-March and it was decided the schools would close, our children did not miss out on a minute of education. The quality of the lessons, interaction via online learning, face to face Zoom meetings and extensive use of Google Classroom has allowed our son (and other CAW students) to continue the high level of learning that they did on-site. Mrs. Chodkowski and all of the faculty at CAW should be commended for their level of preparation and dedication to the education of our children.

I cannot stress enough how pleased we are with the entire CAW team of educators. I know they are passionate about the education of their students and truly are dedicated to providing high quality learning in any environment.

God Bless,"

**Jami and Steve Dohoney**

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### **St. Rita School, Hamden**

"In my opinion, I thought SRS did an amazing job with virtual teaching and had excellent communication between parents and teachers."

**The Young family**

"We think the virtual learning format went very well and our daughter continued to progress well. You all should be congratulated for seamlessly switching to that and keeping the kids learning and interacting."

**The Davis family**

"We would like to reiterate our thanks to all the faculty, staff and administrators for the wonderful work they accomplished during the online schooling this year. We appreciate everyone's tremendous efforts to provide our children with a solid education in very trying circumstances. Thank you."

**The Burns family**

"Virtual learning has been amazing! Congratulations on being a leader in this endeavor! If we are required to be on-line, there is no school that does it better than St. Rita."

**The Cochran family**

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**St. Mary School, Simsbury**

"My kids are doing more than just maintaining - I sense they are flourishing!

The teachers have adapted to the "interim normal" and my kids are benefitting from their love and dedication. They just keep impressing me!"

**Phil M. P'21,'21**

"Thank you so much for all you are doing during this crazy time! My girls feel so supported and loved even though they can't be together at school with their classmates and teachers. Mike and I have been so impressed with how well you all have adapted to each new challenge. Thank you again, we appreciate you!

God Bless,"

**Liz & Michael B. P' 23, '27**

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**St. Paul Catholic High School, Bristol**

"St. Paul Catholic High School didn't skip a beat when it came to distance learning. They jumped in and made the transition seamlessly. Students were able to continue their education in a safe environment all while seeing their teacher and friends. St. Paul continues to set the standard of a great education and proves that they are truly an extended part of our family."

**Kim and Michael Daly**

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"St. Paul has set the standard on distance learning. The teachers' care and concern for each student can be heard from listening in on their classes. The transition to distance learning was seamless and helped lessen the 'loneliness' of missing friends, since they saw each other all day long."

**Arnie and Tricia Belfonti**

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"When I pass my daughter's room, I know class is in session. I hear the warmth and positivity from the teachers in the Zoom meetings. There is genuine care and concern in their voices. There are funny responses from the kids and thoughtful, reflective, serious moments, too. St. Paul didn't skip a beat... they started with online learning the first week out. They have full, dedicated

and real days of classes. The students are truly progressing. It's been an adjustment for all, but each day I'm so relieved to know that my daughter's schooling didn't suffer and she's being challenged as we have come to expect. I'm so thankful for the care that everyone at St. Paul has taken with every aspect of online learning.

**Liz and Eric Panke**

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**St. Timothy Middle School, West Hartford**

"Thank you very much for the update, and for handling this challenging situation so well. The communication from the school has been clear every step of the way and I am amazed that the teachers were able to transition in one weekend from school-based to home-based learning. My family and I are deeply impressed and grateful for the ingenuity and dedication the whole STMS staff has shown over the last couple weeks."

**Lynne Lofberg.**

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**Notre Dame High School, West Haven**

"In a time when everything seemed to be upside down, NDWH kept my son focused, engaged and educated. The dedication of the administration, staff, teachers and coaches went above and beyond! Thank you NDWH! Without NDWH my son's freshman year of high school would not have been what it was - excellence in all facets!  #BESTDECISIONEVER!"

**Megan A. McLoughlin-Mikos Son-James Mikos '23**

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**Notre Dame High School, West Haven, cont'd.**

"Omgosh. How very creative! Notre Dame has the BEST TEACHERS and STAFF. Thank you all for changing the curriculum to online learning with only a few days' notice.    
Stay well to all,"

**Karen & Richard True. Son-Josh True '22**

"I wanted to congratulate you as well as the rest of the administration and faculty on the success of ND's Virtual Learning program! Everyone I have spoken to, including Aidan thinks it has been a great success so far. The speed with which the Virtual Learning program was ramped up was impressive and a compliment to all involved! ND should be looked at as a model school in how they handled these students during this crisis. Just one more example of why I'm proud to be an ND Grad!"

**Chip Walsh '82. Son-Aiden Walsh '20**

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**St. Gabriel School, Windsor**

"Distance learning was something no one was truly ready for. The moment the schools closed, St Gabriel didn't skip a beat. That Monday we had assignments and were ready to go. Other family members from other schools didn't have a transition as seamless as ours."

"The teachers worked well to make sure that each individual had what they needed in order to succeed."

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**St. Matthew School, Forestville**

“We are so impressed with how ‘distance learning’ has been effectively implemented in such a short time. SMS didn't miss a beat! Only one school day after the building closed, our children were fully engaged in learning on our home computer and in the workbooks that were sent home. Over the next few days, they were printing out worksheets their teacher emailed them, taking a science test online, and having class discussions with their teacher and classmates on a video-conferencing app ("zoom") that they downloaded themselves! We are especially pleased with how independently and productively our 4th grade daughters have worked. They get so excited when their teacher emails them and are thrilled when they receive an individual email that includes feedback from her. Their typing skills and overall knowledge in technology have progressed significantly in just a week. We have also been praying together as a family during the school prayer times. I have been told that I need to speed up the pace of my Hail Mary's, but otherwise it has been smooth sailing. :)

**Amy Werner**

“In Mid-March our worlds were turned upside down, our faces covered in masks and our routines dissolved. With little notice, St. Matthew School sprang into action immediately developing a comprehensive, compassionate and cohesive distance learning model that fostered academic advancements, while maintaining focus on the continued connection between the faculty and students. As we waited in confusion and fear of what was to come in our worlds, there was a calming consistency that filled our homes every day.

Mrs. Treacy's morning messages and scripture readings began our days with hope and positivity. Daily emails from the teachers outlined the targeted academics for the day, while allowing room for flexibility as families sought to conform to their new normal. The zoom live classroom lessons provided our children a virtual place to learn, but more so the opportunity for that social connection they so greatly missed among their teachers and peers. The teachers did a fantastic job of intertwining faith into their everyday academics. St. Matthew School faculty continued to go above and beyond, planning surprise school wide virtual field trips to NASA Space Center and San Diego Zoo! It was such a joy seeing the smiles on our children's faces as they ate breakfast with the baby penguins and learned how astronauts walked in space. These well-planned field trip days gave the children a chance to expand their imaginations, and the parents a mental break from being ‘the teacher.’

The faculty added additional enrichment activities including surprise zoom mystery readers, virtual field day led by the upper class students, and a reverse end of school car parade to celebrate another wonderful school year. Father Dietrich, Mrs. Treacy and all the faculty of St. Matthew School did more than ‘make the best of’ an unprecedented situation. They ‘brought out their best’ and gave our students a memorable, enlightening virtual learning experience. The faculty were a warming light during darker times. In years to come, when this is all behind us, our children will hopefully not remember the fear and uncertainty. They might remember masks and social distancing. I am certain, however, they will remember the warmth, love, compassion, connection and comfort their pastor, principal and teachers provided. Thank you to all for your dedication and efforts in providing our children with such a wonderful experience.”

**Kerry Thompson**

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### **St. Thomas the Apostle School, West Hartford**

“I have truly been so impressed with STA, and I am not easy to please when it comes to the care and education of my kids.”

“Just sending a quick note of gratitude as you navigate these uncharted waters. You are all (teachers, administration, staff, et al) remarkable humans and we are so happy that you are part of our family. I know it must be stressful, but you are (as my students say) ‘crushin’ it.’ Stay healthy.”

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### **St. Mary School, Milford**

"Thanks so much. I have to say, as crazy as all of this is, I am blown away with St. Mary's response and the amazing lessons that you guys are putting together. I work in Fairfield which has a lot more resources than St. Mary's and I feel you guys have transitioned very smoothly, even more so than we have. I am sure it doesn't feel that way on your end but as a parent and a fellow teacher, I am very impressed. It just goes to show, money doesn't make the difference, people do."

"We are in awe of the teachers and all they have done to keep students engaged and connected. They have gone the extra mile and we appreciate them immensely. We didn't miss a step once schools were closed as you all made for a seamless transition to online learning the following week. So grateful and a testament to the SMS staff."

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### **Assumption School, Ansonia**

“My husband and I were in awe of the seemingly seamless transition that our twin boys’ 4th grade teachers made from the ‘traditional’ classroom setting to the remote classroom.

Starting less than 48 hours after the school closure was announced, Assumption School’s 4th grade homeroom teacher, Marilena Martucci and their English teacher, Rachel Sosnovich, had our boys logged into Google classroom (a platform already integrated into their curriculum), but with the added component of utilizing the ‘Google meets.’ Allowing the boys to connect with their classmates and educators during the COVID-19 pandemic allowed their teachers to identify and recognize any difficulties they were having with the material, and they both constantly adjusted their teaching style to address issues as they arose.

As my husband and I continued to work during the COVID-19 pandemic, having Mrs. Martucci, Mrs. Sosnovich and the dedicated staff at The Assumption School remain at the helm of our boys’ education was invaluable. The School went above and beyond to keep their studies and their faith in focus during this very isolating and scary time in their lives. In a time when reevaluating budgets and cutting spending is on the top of our minds, we truly recognized the value of our boys’ Catholic education. Thank you, Assumption School!”

**(N.Marini)**

“We have two girls at Assumption, second and fourth grade. During Covid-19 when all the schools closed, we were blessed to have teachers at Assumption who went above and beyond to prepare us for online learning. They took the time to teach the students and parents the new apps needed to continue distance learning. We found the teachers easily accessible.

They communicated daily assignments and continued classes with the same intensity of in-school learning. The girls’ assignments were documented through the apps. The whole process was a learning experience and the faculty made us feel confident that we were well prepared to continue through the end of the school year. We thank Assumption for a successful school year.”

**(J. Roberto)**

” My daughter is entering 8th grade. She has been a student at Assumption School since kindergarten. I cannot say enough great things about the school. They really wowed me during the Covid19 pandemic. Before classes were cancelled, they were planning and practicing. They did a test run Thursday March 12th to make sure each student was able to get on remotely without issues. Classes began and her teachers taught without skipping a beat. I was impressed with the interaction between the students and teachers. Test taking went on with parents proctoring. Different times throughout the day, she had to log on for different classes with different teachers. That was a lesson in itself teaching kids time management and responsibility. Each class she logged into had attendance taken, lectures from the teachers, a time for questions and answers, homework and tests. Assumption did a wonderful job. I could not be more pleased!”

**(K. Soldra)**

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### **Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Waterbury**

“Many of our parents were very happy with the way our teachers went above and beyond during this emergency learning method in making videos, reaching out to help, delivering supplies as needed, utilizing our aids for extra help and offering extracurricular activities. We are so proud of our teachers! It has truly brought us all together as a team in full force.”

**Francesca Corona Director of Admissions/Advancement**

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### **Sacred Heart High School Waterbury**

“SHHS did a phenomenal job with Distance Learning! Right from the start they were organized with schedules, student expectations, and parent involvement. My student stayed constantly engaged throughout the entire time. There was continuous communication among administration, teachers, students and parents. My child was able to contact teachers with any academic or technology issues and resolution was always quick. Thank you SHHS for making it easy for my student as well as me as a parent during the challenging time.”

**Donna Marie Mirabilio**

**Parent of Nicholas, Class of 2022**

“Distance learning provided a number of benefits for our child. Although, it can never replace face to face traditional learning, it provided flexibility and gave time for our son to learn at his



pace, emailing teachers and developing healthy teacher/ student relationships. The best benefit is it taught him to prioritize and become a more responsible student and take initiative in the learning process.”

**Tracy Radden**

**Parent of Mitchell, Class of 2023**

“Overall, the distance learning was successful. It simulated a typical school day but worked well because the schedule was set in a manageable fashion with 1/2 hour between classes and in most instances a day in between the class. This gave our child more time to prepare for classes and complete the work set by teachers. The live lectures were successful because the class was able to meet at a specific time and kept the students on a schedule which also helped with time management. It put the responsibility on the student to be on time and in class every day. Our child felt it was a good preparation for college because the classes were an hour long and she was held accountable for attending class. Although the classwork was less time consuming as a daily class would be, it still kept her on track for her AP exams and placement exams for college. All of the teachers kept in contact with the students and if extra help was needed it was always offered. Sacred Heart High School’s plan was executed well and overall was successful for my child.”

**Robert & Rhonda Nonamaker**

**Parents of Elizabeth, Valedictorian of the Class of 2020**

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### **Sacred Heart Middle School Waterbury**

“The daily interaction with my son’s class and teachers made distance learning very manageable. The weekly Q & A day was great in case anyone was struggling, and they could receive extra help. I believe SHMS did a great job with the distance learning.”

**Tracie Hernandez**

**Parent of Carlos Hernandez, Jr. Class of 2021**

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