

# Archdiocese creates task force for reopening of Catholic schools

By Annalise Knudson  
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STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. -- A panel of experts assembled by the Archdiocese of New York will create a “safe and responsible plan” to reopen schools, announced Michael J. Deegan, superintendent of Archdiocese schools last week.



*The Archdiocese of New York created a task force to guide the reopening of schools. (Trisha Crain/Al.com)*

The task force will ensure all children and families of school communities will be protected. Members will provide a diverse range of expertise and experience that includes medical professionals, regional superintendents, and risk managers, according to an Archdiocese press release.

The Catholic Schools Reopening Advisory Council will report to Michael J. Deegan, superintendent of schools in the Archdiocese, according to the press release.

“From the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, we have been proactive and thorough in establishing policies to protect the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff,” said Deegan in the release. “While

there is no guarantee our school buildings will open on time for the next academic year, you cannot plan too much or too far in advance for an undertaking of this magnitude.”

Here are the members of the council:

- Maureen McElduff, coordinator of the Catholic Schools Reopening Advisory Council
- Frank Napolitano, director of Risk Management and Insurance Service - ADNY
- Kevin Quinn, operations Manager of Catholic Mutual Group
- Michael J. Coppotelli, associate superintendent of student services and public policy; Mayor's COVID-19 Education Sector Advisory Council
- Mary Jane Daley, regional superintendent of Dutchess, Northern Westchester and Putnam
- John Riley, regional superintendent of Northwest and South Bronx
- Steven Pallonetti, director of Child Nutrition – ADNY

- Amy Rodriguez, principal of Immaculate Conception School, Bronx
- Maureen Noonan, head of School Blessed Sacrament School, Manhattan
- Joann Walsh, associate superintendent of early childhood education - ADNY
- Jane Schwedfeger, director of property management - ADNY
- Dr. Walid Michelen, chief medical officer of Arch Care
- Dean Jackson – senior operations manager, Service Master
- Paul R Checco, AIA – PC Studio Architects, PLLC
- Rolando Kraeher – Kraeher Architects

“The experts we have gathered on this blue-ribbon committee represent the elite from their fields, including public health, risk management, logistics, architecture and engineering. We have brought together the best because that is what our schools deserve,” Deegan said.

Earlier this month, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced that education leaders, experts and advocates will sit on a council to help guide New York City in reopening school buildings in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Education Sector Advisory Council -- which consists of 45 members -- is one of six Sector Advisory Councils announced by the mayor last week. The councils serve as a link to disseminate information about reopening and providing guidance to shape the city’s response during the pandemic.

New York state has also made its own council to help “reimagine” what schools will look like in the future.

Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo recently announced that as New York begins to develop plans to reopen schools and colleges, the state and the Gates Foundation will develop a blueprint to reimagine education in the new normal brought on by the coronavirus outbreak.

Cuomo later announced the members of New York’s Reimagine Education Advisory Council, which is comprised of educators, students, parents and education leaders.