



# CRISTO REY

JESUIT HIGH SCHOOL  
MILWAUKEE

March 9, 2025

Dear Cristo Rey Parents and Students,

First and foremost, we want to acknowledge the concerns we heard from you at Friday's board meeting. We deeply value and appreciate your feedback. We understand your expectations for clear and timely communication and acknowledge we have not met everyone's expectations. This has been a trying and hard time for everyone, and we are sorry that this happened. We are committed to providing a nurturing, transparent, and open environment for both our students and their families, and we hold sacred openness and trust with our community.

We want to reassure you that we are listening to you. Here are some of the actions we are taking immediately to address your concerns.

**1. Legal Advisor to Assert Pressure In this Case**

Cristo Rey Jesuit is committed to the highest standards of ethical behavior and integrity and does not tolerate inappropriate or illegal activity on the part of any staff member, volunteer, or youth. Therefore, Cristo Rey Jesuit is hiring a legal advisor to liaise directly with the Milwaukee Police Department and the District Attorney's Office to ensure Fernando Bustos is brought to justice.

**2. Improved Communication Channels**

We are reviewing and enhancing our systems that support how we share information with you. We want to assure you that transparency is a top priority for us, and we are committed to making improvements that allow for a more timely flow of information between the school and our parent community. Some of the steps we are taking include:

**Frequently Asked Questions:** We acknowledge this situation has been changing quickly over the past few days and while we have attempted to share information with you as it has become available, it has been in various forums, and we understand not all of you have been able to access all of them. Therefore, next week we will provide parents and students with a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) web page with answers to your questions. This will be a way for you to access all of the information in one place and will be updated throughout the rest of this process as we receive more questions, and we learn more information. This will also give us an opportunity to share with you various other resources available to you to obtain information you may want.

**Parent Engagement:** We will convene a group of parents to regularly discuss issues, share feedback, and collaborate on solutions related to this and other matters impacting our school and community.

**3. Request for Public Assembly and Solutions**

After careful consideration and discussions with safety advisors, we have decided that holding a large public assembly is not the appropriate course of action at this time. Here are some of the key reasons for this decision:

**Maintaining a Safe and Respectful Environment:** Our goal is to create a space for understanding. While we deeply value open dialogue, we also must ensure that the atmosphere remains safe and respectful. As we saw Friday, that may not be possible in a large group setting.

**Respect for Privacy and Confidentiality:** Some of the issues at hand involve sensitive matters, including personal and legal issues that cannot be fully addressed in a public setting due to privacy laws and confidentiality obligations.

**Focus on Solutions and Moving Forward:** The ultimate goal is to address your concerns in a meaningful and respectful manner while also focusing on the solutions and next steps for our school community. We believe that smaller, more focused discussions will allow for more personalized responses and allow us to better address specific issues. While a large assembly may not be feasible, we encourage you to reach out to us directly for private meetings if needed at 414-436-4600.

#### 4. **Additional Security Guards**

The safety and well-being of our students are our top priorities. Every student in our care deserves to feel safe, supported, and protected while in school. We understand that recent events have caused alarm, and we deeply regret any distress this has caused you and your family.

We want students to feel secure, both physically and emotionally at Cristo Rey, especially during this challenging time in our community. Beginning Monday, March 10th, we will begin doing bag checks and wandering as well as adding additional security guards to our school safety team to reassure all our Cristo Rey community that there are trained professionals readily available to manage any unexpected situations and to support our school staff in maintaining safety. These security professionals will work with school leadership to ensure that safety is well-balanced with the welcoming and nurturing environment that defines our school.

#### 5. **Safety and Security Evaluations**

Milwaukee Police completed a full search of our school building and determined that there are no other unauthorized recording devices on our campus. We are immediately implementing regular inspections of our campus for unauthorized recording devices. In addition, we are committed to continuously reviewing and improving our safety practices and protocols to ensure that they align with best practices. This includes hiring an outside company to conduct thorough reviews of our school emergency plans and evaluate our school buildings for any security vulnerabilities. We recognize that safety is not a one-time effort, but an ongoing process.

While we understand that no single measure can guarantee complete safety, please know that we are committed to doing everything within our power to create an environment where your children can learn and grow without fear.

#### 6. **Additional Support for the Well-Being of Our Students**

A crucial element of ensuring a safe environment is supporting the well-being of our students. Standard at Cristo Rey Jesuit, we have two trained socio-emotional counselors who are available for students any time they need them. Counseling has been, and will continue to be offered to students through small groups or individual sessions.

In addition, we are increasing access to counseling and resources for students' wellbeing, especially those who may be experiencing emotional or psychological distress at this time. Sixteenth Street Community Health Centers already provides students with medical services, and beginning next week every student will have the opportunity to meet with a counselor from Sixteenth Street or from another area school, in addition to our counselors at Cristo Rey.

7. **Employee Background Check Process Evaluation**

Currently, Cristo Rey Jesuit follows the hiring practices of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, the Midwest Province of Jesuits and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. However, we are working with an outside consultant to evaluate our current background check procedures to help us identify what more we can do, above and beyond what is currently required.

We understand how important it is for you to have confidence in the people entrusted with the care of your children. Therefore, we are committed to keeping you informed about the actions we are taking. We want to ensure that our policies and actions are transparent and responsive to the needs of our community.

We believe in the strength of the relationship between school and home, and we are grateful for your dedication to ensuring the best for your child, and all of our students. We encourage you to continue to share your thoughts with us, as your feedback helps guide our improvements. Together, we can foster an environment that supports both academic success and a strong sense of community.

Thank you for your understanding and continued collaboration as we navigate these challenges together. We appreciate your involvement in our school community and are committed to collaborating with you to create a positive, safe and supportive environment for all students.

Sincerely,

Andrew Stith  
President, Cristo Rey Milwaukee Jesuit High School

Kris Ropella  
Chair, Cristo Rey Milwaukee Jesuit High  
School Board of Directors