



DIOCESE OF  
**FORT WAYNE-SOUTH BEND**  
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend Announces School Closures Amid COVID-19 Pandemic**

Given the continued spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) and multiple confirmed cases within the diocese, the Catholic Schools Office has announced the closing of all our 43 Catholic Schools within the 14-county service area effective Monday, March 16, 2020 and for a minimum of three weeks. A set date has not been established for the re-opening of our schools. Additionally, all afterschool and extracurricular activities are suspended until further notice.

The diocese has been, and will continue to be, in constant communication and follow the directives of local health authorities, the Indiana Department of Health, the Indiana Department of Education, the CDC and the Indiana Governor's office.

"The health and safety of our students, staff, and their families is of utmost importance" says Dr. Joe Brettnacher, Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the diocese. "We do not take this decision lightly and understand this impacts thousands of families. As things continue to evolve, we are working hard to follow every direction of local health experts and to implement preventative measures to limit the spread of COVID-19."

Beginning March 16, school officials will be working with staff members from all of our 43 schools to finalize plans for eLearning or distance learning for our students. Parents should watch for communications from their principals for more information.

The diocese has also created a webpage for the most current directives and resources for all of our diocesan parishes and schools: [www.diocesefwsb.org/covid-19](http://www.diocesefwsb.org/covid-19).

The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend extends prayers for every student, faculty and staff member. Also, we pray for those who are sick, those who care for them, and for an end to this pandemic.

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***About the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend Catholic Schools:** built upon the foundation laid by St. Mother Theodore Guerin, Monsignor Benoit, Bishop John Henry Luers and Bishop Joseph Dwenger, Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend work with parents to help children grow in holiness, develop their God-given talents, prepare them for lives of serving others and giving glory to God. Our 43 Catholic schools spanning the 14 counties of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend serve 13,000 children. Our schools are known for their academic excellence, strong Catholic identity and our caring and dedicated faculty and staff. For more information about the Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, please visit <http://www.diocesefwsb.org/Catholic-Schools-Office>.*