



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

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Diocesan Superintendent to Receive National Award for Advancing Catholic Education

Grand Rapids, Mich. – The Diocese of Grand Rapids is excited to share that David Faber, superintendent of Catholic schools, has been honored with the prestigious Dr. Karen M. Ristau Innovations Award by the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA). This esteemed award recognizes individuals, schools, or programs that have significantly advanced the mission of Catholic education through innovative programs or approaches. The award is extra special as Dr. Ristau was the president of NCEA when Faber became superintendent. Dr. Ristau served as a mentor for him.

Faber, who has dedicated nearly 32 years to the ministry of Catholic education in the Diocese of Grand Rapids, has been a transformative leader in the area's Catholic schools. His extensive experience spans roles as both a certified K-12 administrator and a K-8 teacher.

"I am deeply honored to receive the Dr. Karen M. Ristau Innovations Award," said Faber. "This recognition is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the entire community within the Diocese of Grand Rapids. Together, we continue to innovate and strengthen our Catholic schools, ensuring that we provide a high-quality education rooted in faith for generations to come."

During his tenure as superintendent, Faber focused on building an alliance of Catholic schools through shared services, collaboration, and ongoing leadership training. During his leadership, two new Catholic schools have been created in the diocese and three others reimaged with a new name and mission focus. Faber also helped design and implement the Bishop's Catholic Schools Initiative in 2014. The three-year, three-part initiative sparked a renewal of Catholic schools in the diocese.

Faber is especially proud of three innovative practices that have been developed under his leadership. The first is the implementation of what has become known as the TIP Strategy. TIP is an acronym for Timely Invitations and a Phone call. Through a partnership with 52 Catholic churches in West Michigan, more than 6,000 households receive regular and timely personal outreach to consider enrolling in their parish's Catholic school or faith formation program. The second is the bi-annual school board summits which routinely gather 100+ local Catholic school leaders (board members, principals, pastors, etc.) for training and best practice sharing. The



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third is the Catholic school faculty formation program which includes weekly lessons and transformational faith sharing on the topics of the Theology of the Body and the holy Eucharist.

These innovations have yielded remarkable results, including seven years of enrollment growth across the diocese and record numbers of preschool and kindergarten enrollments. Faber's strategic focus on these early grade levels has positioned the Diocese of Grand Rapids for long-term enrollment growth, ensuring the continued success of Catholic education.

Faber will receive the award at the annual NCEA Convention in Orlando, Florida, on April 21.

Biographical information about David Faber

Dave, 58, holds a master of education in educational leadership from Grand Valley State University and a bachelor of science in elementary education from Franciscan University of Steubenville in Steubenville, Ohio. He began his teaching career at Lincoln Elementary School in Zeeland, Michigan, before becoming principal of St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School in Grand Rapids. He served as principal of the school for 17 years, until July 2010 when he became Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Grand Rapids. He has served as superintendent since that time.

About Catholic schools in the Diocese of Grand Rapids

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Grand Rapids are an alliance of 31 vibrant learning communities serving more than 6,400 elementary and high school students throughout West Michigan. Our schools inspire young people to grow in Catholic faith and grace, achieve more in school and in life, develop creativity and character, and feel welcomed and cherished for their unique gifts. We partner with parents to awaken the whole child to a world of light and life—that grows better and brighter when children reach their potential.

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