



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

## DIOCESE OF SAGINAW

### DECREE OF SUPPRESSION OF SAINT ELIZABETH AREA CATHOLIC SCHOOL REESE, MICHIGAN

In the Name of God. Amen.

#### PREAMBLE

Whereas Saint Elizabeth Area Catholic School, located at 12835 E. Washington Rd, Reese, Michigan 48757 has provided Catholic education and formation to the faithful of the Diocese of Saginaw. Established in 1947 under the direction of Saint Elizabeth Parish. The school has served as a place of academic excellence and faith development for generations of students.

Throughout its history, Saint Elizabeth Area Catholic School has been supported by Saint Elizabeth Parish, Benefactors, and the Diocese of Saginaw, ensuring its mission to educate young people in the Catholic faith preparing them for their future vocations.

However, in recent years, the school has faced growing challenges that have significantly impacted its ability to sustain operations.

#### THE FACTS

Despite various efforts to sustain operations, including fundraising initiatives and tuition adjustments, the financial deficit has continued to grow. After careful assessment and consultation, it has been determined that Saint Elizabeth Area Catholic School will no longer continue due to the following reasons:

1. Declining Enrollment – Over the past last years, the student population has steadily decreased, making it increasingly difficult to maintain financial stability.
2. Financial Constraints – The cost of maintaining the school, including faculty salaries, facility upkeep, and educational resources, has placed an unsustainable burden on Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Parish. Despite efforts to secure additional funding, the necessary resources have not been obtained.
3. Changing Demographics – The shifting population and the presence of alternative educational options have contributed to the decline in new student enrollment.

4. For the past three years, the Diocese of Saginaw has provided substantial financial assistance to support Saint Elizabeth Area Catholic School. Despite these efforts, the school has continued to experience significant financial deficits that cannot be sustained any longer. The continued operation of the school is not economically feasible due to rising costs and insufficient resources.

### **THE LAW**

In accordance with canon 806,§1 of the Code of Law, the Diocesan Bishop has the responsibility to oversee and regulate Catholic schools within his diocese to ensure their proper governance and sustainability. Furthermore, canon 801,§1 emphasizes that Catholic educational institutions must maintain suitable conditions for their mission.

When a juridic person ceases to exist, canon 123 requires that its suppression be formally enacted and that its assets be distributed according to ecclesiastical and civil.

In accordance with canons 50, 51, and 806§2, the decision to close the school has been made after consultation with the Office of Catholic Education, the Parish Council, and Finance Council. These consultations revealed that the school's closure was the only option left after exploring all possibilities for sustainability.

### **THE ARGUMENT**

1. The fundamental mission of a Catholic school is to provide quality education in fidelity to the teachings of the Church. However, when circumstances prevent a school from effectively fulfilling this mission due to financial, demographic, or structural reasons, prudence and responsible stewardship require that alternative solutions be considered.
2. For the past three years, the Diocese of Saginaw has provided substantial financial assistance to support Saint Elizabeth. Despite these efforts, the school has continued to experience significant financial deficits that cannot be sustained any longer. The continued operation of the school is not economically feasible due to rising costs and insufficient resources.
3. The preservation of Catholic education remains a priority, and efforts will be made to assist affected students in transitioning to other Catholic schools within the diocese. Faculty and staff will also be provided with pastoral support and guidance regarding future employment opportunities.
4. Given these circumstances, and in fulfillment of my pastoral duty to oversee the well-being of Catholic institutions in the diocese, I find it necessary to formally suppress Saint Elizabeth Area Catholic School.

### **DECREE**

**Therefore**, having considered the historical significance, the current facts, the applicable law, and the pastoral needs of the diocese, I, Most. Rev. Robert D. Gruss, Bishop of Saginaw, in accordance with norms of the Code of Canon law, I hereby decree the suppression of Saint Elizabeth Area Catholic School, effective at midnight on the last day of the Spring Semester of the 2025 academic year.

I further decree that:


1. All Students' records shall be preserved and made accessible through the Diocesan Education Office.
2. The assets and property of the school shall be disposed of in accordance with canon law and civil law, ensuring the proper use of any remaining funds for Catholic education and Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Parish.
3. Students, parents, faculty, and staff shall be provided with necessary pastoral support and assistance during this transition.
4. This decree is to be communicated to the school administration, faculty, parish staff, students, and parents of the school, as well as parishioners. The Diocesan office of Catholic Education will assist families in transition to alternative Catholic educational institutions within the Diocese.

This decree shall be made known to all those affected and published in the official diocesan records. In accordance with canons 1732-1739, any parent of students affected by this decision may seek hierarchical recourse within the prescribed time.

Everything I have decreed must be observed in all its parts. Anything else to the contrary notwithstanding, even if worthy of particular mention, may not be carried out following the promulgation of this decree by way of publication on the website of the Diocese of Saginaw, entering date into force.

Given on this day of March 17 in the year of Our Lord 2025, at the Chancery of Saginaw.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Robert D. Gruss  
Bishop of Saginaw



Reverend Alberto E. Vargas, JCL.  
Chancellor pro-tem