



# ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS

## Office of Communications and Planning

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 19, 2016

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## Archdiocese of St. Louis Will Close John F. Kennedy Catholic High School in June 2017

**ST. LOUIS** – Most Reverend Robert J. Carlson, Archbishop of St. Louis, has accepted the recommendation of the Archdiocesan Board of Catholic Education to close John F. Kennedy Catholic High School in Manchester, MO. The 2016 – 2017 academic year will be the final year for the archdiocesan high school that opened in 1968.

“I am grateful for the parents, staff, faculty, school leadership, alumni and supporters who have given so much for the benefit of the students over the past five decades,” said Archbishop Carlson.

Kennedy Catholic High School was built at a time when the population of West St. Louis County was growing and the Catholic parish elementary schools were increasing in enrollment. Over the past several years Kennedy Catholic has been struggling with enrollment. At the conclusion of the 2015 – 2016 academic year the school had 260 students, down from 333 just three years ago. Enrollment for this fall is 191 students, with a freshman class of 33. In recent years, the number of Catholic families in this area of the archdiocese seeking a Catholic high school education for their children has been diminishing. Kennedy High School’s freshman enrollment has dropped by 50% in two years. Total student enrollment for all four years of high school is down 43% since 2013.

Lower enrollment and rising costs have made it difficult to sustain the school, even with financial assistance from the archdiocese over the past three years. Recently the Archdiocesan Board of Education and the School Oversight Committee have determined that continuing a sustainable archdiocesan high school in this part of the metropolitan area is no longer possible.

“I can’t say enough about our families and friends who have worked so hard to support our students and our school. Today is a sad day for Kennedy Catholic, but our emotions do not dampen our spirit, the *Kennedy spirit* which has been created over the past 48 years,” said Fr. Richard Wosman, President. “We always have been here for our students, during the many celebrations and the times of crisis as well. We pledge our tireless commitment today to help every student during this time of transition.”

Kennedy Catholic High School, the Archdiocese of St. Louis and the Office of Catholic Education have announced plans to transition students to the private or archdiocesan Catholic high school of their choice in the Archdiocese of St. Louis.

“We are fully committed to helping our families and students, emotionally, financially and spiritually, during this transition,” said Dr. Kurt Nelson, Superintendent of Catholic Education. “Every student and family will receive personal guidance and support during this difficult time. Every scholarship and financial arrangement that a family has will be honored at the archdiocesan high school to which the student transfers.”

John F. Kennedy High School has recently been recognized for its excellence in academic achievement by AdvancED accreditation services. Last year a graduating senior received a National Merit Scholarship. Many other benefits, including the Individualized Curriculum Program, numerous athletic and extracurricular programs and, above all, the dynamic and dedicated participation in spiritual activities, have made Kennedy Catholic one of our community’s great assets. More than 6,000 students graduated from Kennedy Catholic in the school’s nearly 50-year history. The Archdiocese of St. Louis will continue its financial commitment during this final academic year, to ensure excellence in academic and extracurricular programs.

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