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**Michigan Association of Non-Public Schools Joins Member Schools and Families
in Pursuing Legal Action to Allow Nonpublic High Schools to Remain Open**

GAYLORD, MICHIGAN — The Michigan Association of Nonpublic Schools (MANS) announced in a [December 7 press release](#) that it has joined three of its member high schools and several families in filing suit in federal court in the Western District of Michigan against the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Director Robert Gordon.

The suit, filed in response to the [December 7 MDHHS order](#) extending the “pause” of in-person learning in religious high schools, asserts multiple constitutional violations including that of the First Amendment right to practice religion. The suit’s intent is to ensure that MANS member schools, which include Catholic schools in the Diocese of Gaylord, can resume educating their students in a manner consistent with each school’s COVID-19 safety plans.

“Each of our diocese’s Catholic schools is a member of MANS and will be impacted by decisions that are made,” says Mr. Michael Buell, Superintendent of Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Gaylord. “In our schools, COVID-19 safety plans have been in place throughout the 2020-21 school year. We have been following direction from the MDHHS and requiring strict safety measures in our schools throughout the pandemic, and, thankfully, these protocols have been successful in our Catholic schools.

“We are hopeful that outcome of this suit will allow us to continue making decisions regarding the education of our students at the local school level, which has proven successful thus far. We believe this maintains the constitutional rights of our families and is in the best interest of our students, families, staff, and communities.”

Bishop Walter A. Hurley, Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Gaylord, states, “Catholic education is of immeasurable significance. We are very supportive of this effort to protect our religious freedoms and rights as the Church, and, at the same time, continue providing a safe learning environment for our students. Sadly, this is a polarizing time in our state and nation, and there is potential that any lawsuit could unintentionally perpetuate such division. Our prayer is that this will not be the case. Rather, we pray that just decisions will be made that safeguard our religious rights and freedoms and protect the common good.”

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The Diocese of Gaylord was established by His Holiness Pope Paul VI on July 20, 1971. The territory encompasses 11,171 square miles and includes the 21 most northern counties of Michigan’s Lower Peninsula. The region is home to nearly 50,000 Catholics, served by 75 parishes, 17 Catholic schools and many closely-related institutions. For more information, visit www.dioceseofgaylord.org.

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