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St. Joseph High School expanding

Catholic high school will move to its own campus for fall 2026

MARTINSBURG, WV — St. Joseph High School and the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston are partnering to expand its campus footprint in Martinsburg. The expansion includes the diocese’s purchase of a building near the school’s current campus that would provide the high school’s first stand-alone facility.

The diocese’s total commitment of \$1.3 million will support the purchase of the building and help fund necessary upgrades. Saint Joseph School will contribute an additional \$400,000 toward renovations. Together, these investments are expected to bring the total project cost to approximately \$1.7 million, with the goal of welcoming students into the new facility for the 2026–27 school year.

Using a gradual growth model, the high school currently consists of ninth-grade students and will grow to incorporate grade 10 next year and subsequent grades each year thereafter.

“Under the talented leadership of our local clergy, school staff and parishioners, Saint Joseph School has grown dramatically in recent years,” said Bishop Mark Brennan, leader of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. “Opening St. Joseph High School this year and moving to its first campus in 2026 reflects our diocesan commitment to the area, confirms our continued partnership with local school and parish leadership, and highlights our appreciation for local families who seek a quality Catholic education for their children. Not only will this building provide our high school students the opportunity to grow and thrive in a Christ-like setting, it also allows our grade school and middle school to expand to serve Catholic and non-Catholic families in the region.”

The Rev. Thomas Gallagher, pastor of St. Joseph Parish and School said, “From the time in which I arrived at St Joseph Parish, many of the school parents asked me when we would be able to start a high school. To me, this feels like fulfillment of the many prayers of our school parents.”

The building, located at 415 Wilson St. in Martinsburg, was formerly the site of the WVU Medicine Crisis Support and Recovery Center. Officials said the building offers immediate functionality, as well as the capacity for renovation and growth to house students in grades nine through 12. In August 2025, the high school welcomed its first freshman class since the original one closed in 1970.

“This acquisition of this property that will become the permanent home for our high school is a definitive turning point for Catholic education in the Eastern Panhandle,” said Jennifer Hornyak, superintendent of Catholic schools for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. “It is a joy to witness such vibrant growth in the Eastern Panhandle and especially at St. Joseph, and we are profoundly grateful to



Bishop Brennan for his providential support. He shares the vision of local leadership of having a Catholic high school in the Eastern Panhandle, and he has encouraged the school community to push forward to make this dream become a reality.

“By investing in this new home for our high school, the bishop is ensuring that our students have the specialized environment they need to excel academically and grow into the leaders our Church and world so greatly need,” Hornyak added.

Saint Joseph School Principal Maria Byrd said moving to a dedicated campus is just one of several projects being planned for the upstart high school.

“With continued support from our loyal families and generous benefactors, we hope to complete three phases of renovations/additions on this site to transform it into the ‘Home of the Crusaders,’ a special place where we seek to provide a high-quality education, demonstrate service to others and form disciples of Christ,” Byrd said.

“It is necessary for the future of the high school to have its own building,” she said. “It tells our parents and the community at large that we and the diocese are committed to providing a high school Catholic education in the Eastern Panhandle and are here to stay.”

Byrd said the new high school building will also allow its other grade levels to expand.

“Moving our high school program to its new location allows us to regroup our middle school program (grades six to eight) in our historical Queen Street building, and since our recent pre-K expansion, this opens up four more classrooms for our elementary school program,” she said.

The new high school building offers convenient highway access for students’ families and to nearby colleges and universities, with whom St. Joseph High School plans potential partnerships. The school and local churches are raising funds to purchase two buses to serve students traveling from regional Catholic parishes and to transport students for extracurricular activities and school liturgies.

Cutlines:

Wilson Street exterior: This building at 415 Wilson St. in Martinsburg, West Virginia, is being purchased by the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to house St. Joseph High School.

Wilson Street interior: This facility at 415 Wilson St. in Martinsburg, West Virginia, offers immediate functionality, as well as the capacity for renovation and growth to house St. Joseph High School students in grades nine through 12.