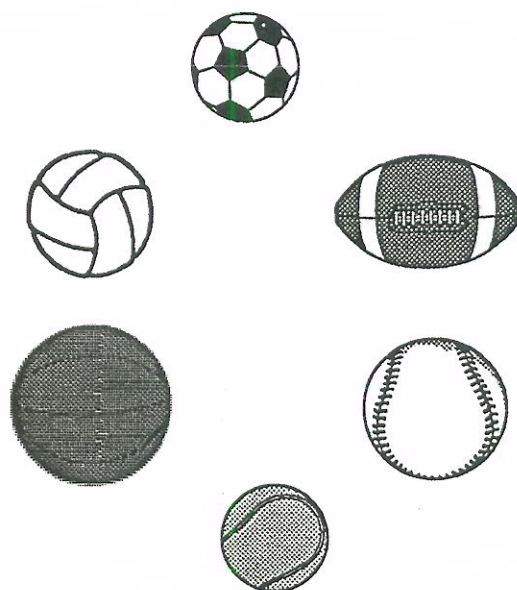


**Grand Rapids Area Catholic
Elementary Athletic Council
(GRACEAC)**

Handbook



Fall, 1996

Fall, 1996

Dear Members of the Grand Rapids Area Catholic Elementary Athletic Council,

For over 22 years the Grand Rapids Area Catholic Elementary Athletic Council has been assisting parents, school personnel and the Church in our combined effort to facilitate the total development of our youth. The GRACEAC members and especially the Executive Committee are to be commended for their leadership and assistance in establishing policies, administering programs and in promoting quality competitive athletics for our youth.

I know I speak for Parents, Principals and Coaches as I extend my sincere appreciation to the Executive Committee and the entire membership of the Grand Rapids Area Catholic Elementary Athletic Association for their extra efforts in conducting a most successful Catholic School Athletic Program.

The Office of Catholic Schools gratefully acknowledges the valuable contribution of the Athletic Council and appreciates and congratulates the Council on the revision of its Policy Handbook.

Mr. James E. O'Donnell
Superintendent

Forward

The Grand Rapids Area Catholic Elementary Athletic Council has been in existence for over 22 years. It supports the efforts of individual schools in the Grand Rapids Metropolitan Area in maintaining quality athletic programs in their schools while fostering Christian attitudes. The primary goals of the GRACEAC have been to establish reasonable policies to administer athletics throughout the Diocese and at the local level; to promote wholesome, competitive athletic programs; and to assist schools and individuals whenever possible.

The seven elected members of the Executive Committee represent many segments of the elementary schools in the Diocese including Principals, Athletic Directors, Coaches and the Coordinator of Athletics. The primary function of the GRACEAC is to maintain rules and regulations that ensure fairness in competition for the student athletes and a balance with other educational programs and activities. The council continues to be responsive to requests for rule modifications from member schools, appointed committees, and athletic organizations at the local level. The Council has attempted to seek the greatest good for the greatest number and to ensure that competition is conducted in a sportsmanlike atmosphere.

This handbook has been compiled to assist all connected with athletics, not only member schools, but all Catholic schools in the Diocese of Grand Rapids, in providing information necessary to conduct their programs as efficiently and effectively as possible. The contents of this handbook are subject to change based on decisions made by the council members, the Executive Committee, or the Superintendent. Also, this handbook sets minimum and maximum guidelines. Individual schools may choose to develop additional guidelines for their schools, provided they are not in conflict nor contradiction to this manual. This handbook therefore is a living, on-going testament to the dedication of hundreds of people who support the Christian, well-rounded growth of students in the Catholic Schools in the Grand Rapids Area.

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I. Introduction

A. Philosophy

The purpose of the athletic program at the elementary school level is to complement the home, church, and school in the development of the "whole Person". Activities of the program are for the benefit of the children, suited to their age and physical growth. The aims are 1) to recognize the need of physical fitness for the wholesome growth of the child, and 2) to provide enjoyable recreational activity which develops Christian attitudes of sportsmanship and fair play that can be sustained beyond the elementary level.

Indeed, the Grand Rapids Area Athletic programs are benefiting from involvement of young people who, having participated in our sports program, are now returning as adults to share their talents. This involvement in the church's apostolate to youth, in the role of coaches, adult advisors, and interested parents, is a sign of true ministry.

No one familiar with the American culture can deny the influence that sports and sports figures have on the lives of our young people. Groups such as the "Fellowship of Christian Athletes" are able to share their experiences and successes to bring young people to Christ. In less publicized ways, involved adults engage in an experiential education that results in strong character formation.

In conclusion, athletics and athletic competition can contribute to the development of the total child by being the proving grounds for the formal teaching which takes place in the church, the classroom, and the home.

Keeping in mind the many benefits derived from a well-rounded athletic program, the GRACEAC encourages the development of sports to meet the needs and desires of young people under the Christian leadership of the Church.

B. Purpose of GRACEAC

The Grand Rapids Area Catholic Elementary Athletic Council is the governing agent of all interscholastic athletic programs participated in by the member Catholic elementary schools of the Grand Rapids Area. The purposes of the Athletic Council are: to increase the educational value of the Catholic elementary school interscholastic athletic programs in the Grand Rapids area; to assist in the regulation of competition so that the Catholic elementary school athletic program fits into the school curriculum; to regulate the interscholastic athletic program so as to safeguard the physical welfare of participating students and to act on behalf of the Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Grand Rapids as a screening agent for all complaints, problems, and/or grievances concerning interscholastic athletics in the Grand Rapids Area Catholic Elementary Schools.

The GRACEAC is subject to all regulations which proceed for the Diocesan Office of Catholic Schools and to the veto of the Diocesan Superintendent of Schools, respecting the responsibilities given to the Superintendent by the Bishop of the Diocese of Grand Rapids.

C. Code of Ethics

It is the duty of all concerned with GRACEAC athletics:

1. To emphasize the proper ideals of sportsmanship, ethical conduct, and fair play.
2. To eliminate all possibilities which tend to destroy the best values of the game.
3. To stress the values derived from playing the game fairly.
4. To show cordial courtesy to visiting teams and officials.
5. To establish a congenial relationship between visitors and host.
6. To respect the integrity and judgement of sports officials.
7. To achieve a thorough understanding and acceptance of the rules of the game and the standards of eligibility.
8. To encourage leadership, use of initiative, and good judgement by the players on the team.
9. To recognize that the purpose of athletics is to promote the physical, mental, moral, social, and emotional well-being of the individual players.
10. To remember that an athletic contest is only a game - not a matter of life or death for player, coach, team, official, spectator, parish, community, state or nation.

D. Breadth of Program

Season	Boys	Girls
Fall	Football (Grades 5-8)	Basketball (Grades 5-8)
	Soccer (Grades 5-8)	Cheerleading (Grades 5-8)
		Soccer (Grades 5-8)
Winter	Basketball (Grades 5-8)	Cheerleading (Grades 5-8)
		Volleyball (Grades 5-8)
Spring	Baseball (Grades 5-8)	Softball (Grades 5-8)
	Track (Grades 5-8)	Track (Grades 5-8)
		Soccer (Grades 5-8)

II. Diocesan Policies Affecting Athletics

A. Philosophy / School Athletic Program

The purpose of the athletic program is to complement the home, church, and school in the development of the "whole person". Activities of the program are for the benefit of the students, suited to their age and physical growth.

The aims of the program are to:

- ✓. recognize the need of physical fitness for the wholesome growth of the individual,
- ✓. develop a healthy interest in sports by participation, and
- ✓. provide enjoyable recreational activity which develops Christian attitudes of sportsmanship and fair play.

Policy

adopted: 5-13-75

revised: 6-29-84

B. Role of School Principal in Athletic Program

All programs, including athletic programs, are under the supervision of the building principal, who is responsible to see that they are organized and integrated into the parish program in accordance with proper procedure.

It is important that all those in parish leadership positions recognize that athletic and other co-curricular activities are part of the total program of the school and are encouraged in order to promote the development of the "whole child".

Policy

adopted: 7-12-83

revised: 6-29-84

C. Eligibility / School Athletic Program

Each school shall be responsible for establishing, implementing and enforcing an eligibility code which is uniform for all sports and for all grades / levels in a manner which is dictated by the uniqueness of the local situation. All eligibility codes are to have the qualities of justice and fairness based upon performance in the areas of conduct and effort.

Policy

adopted: 6-29-84

III. Grand Rapids Area Catholic Elementary Athletic Council (GRACEAC)

A. Constitution

Article I The name of this body shall be the "Grand Rapids Area Catholic Elementary Athletic Council".

Article II Nature and Function

This body is the governing agent of all interscholastic athletic programs participated in by the member Catholic Elementary schools of the Grand Rapids Area. The purpose of the Grand Rapids Area Catholic Elementary Athletic Council are: to increase the educational value of the Catholic elementary school interscholastic athletic programs in the Grand Rapids area; to assist in the regulation of competition so that the Catholic elementary school athletic program fits into the school curriculum; to regulate the interscholastic athletic program so as to safeguard the physical welfare of participating students and to act on behalf of the Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Grand Rapids as a screening agent for all complaints, problems, and/or grievances concerning interscholastic athletics in the Grand Rapids Area Catholic Elementary Schools.

This body is subject to all regulations which proceed from the Diocesan Office of Catholic Schools and to the veto of the Diocesan Superintendent, respecting the responsibilities given to the Superintendent by the Bishop.

Article III Membership

- Section 1 The Grand Rapids Area Catholic Elementary Athletic Council shall include members of the Principal's Association, Athletic Director, Parish or Area Board Members and Parents with each Parish School having representation.
- Section 2 The members of the Area Athletic Council shall be appointed by the Parish Board of Education of the school they represent.
- Section 3 Each member shall serve a term of two years, with the exception that the original members shall serve terms varying from one to two years with approximately on half serving a one year term, and one half a two year term to be determined by lot.
- Section 4 Any representative who is absent from two consecutive regular meetings of the Council may be removed from the Council, unless excused by the Council President. Upon notification of such action by the President, member schools shall designate a new representative within one month.
- Section 5 Each member school shall be assessed an annual fee payable by October 1 every school year.

Article IV Officers

- Section 1 The officers of the Council shall consist of President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and such assistants and officers as the Council may elect.
- Section 2 The officers shall be elected annually. They shall be nominated at the meeting following the Winter sports season. Balloting shall take place at the meeting following the Spring sports season. Officers shall hold office until the next election is certified.
- Section 3 The President shall act as Chairperson of the Council and of the Executive Committee; shall be the Executive Office of the Council; shall appoint all committees unless otherwise specified by the Council; shall execute on behalf of the Council all written communications except as otherwise directed by the Council; shall be responsible for the agenda to be used at meetings, and in general shall perform all duties incident to the office of a president and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned by the Council.

Section 4 The Vice-President at the request of the President shall perform the duties and exercise the functions of the President, and shall perform such other duties as delegated by the President.

Section 5 The Secretary shall keep the minutes of the meetings of the Council; shall see that all notices are given in accordance with the provisions of this constitution; shall be custodian of the records of the Council; and in general, shall perform all duties incident to the office of the Secretary of the Council and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned by the President of the Council.

Section 6 The Treasurer shall manage the financial records of the Council; shall collect the annual assessment from member schools; shall make expenditures as deemed appropriate by the Council or the President, and make an annual report of finances at the meeting following the Spring sport season. In addition, the Treasurer shall perform all such duties incident to the office of the Treasurer of the Council as from time may be assigned by the President of the Council.

Section 7 The Assistant Officers shall have such duties as from time to time may be assigned to them by the Council or by the President.

Article V Meetings

Section 1 The Council shall meet four times each year; one prior to any participation and one after the completion of the Fall, Winter and Spring sports seasons. The meeting after the spring sport season shall be the election meeting. Special meetings may be called by the President or by a majority of the Council.

Section 2 All meetings may be held at such times and places within the attendance areas of the member schools as may be fixed by the President or by a majority of the Council upon not less than three (3) days notice. All meetings of the Grand Rapids Area Catholic Elementary Athletic Council are to be open meetings while retaining the right to go into an Executive Session.

Section 3 A majority of the entire Council is necessary for the transaction of business at meetings, and a majority vote of those present shall be sufficient for any decision or election.

Article VI Committees

Section 1 Executive Committee

The Council may provide for an Executive Committee of five (5) or more members, the President is to be the Chairperson thereof. During intervals between meetings of the Council, the Executive Committee may possess and execute all the powers of the Council conferred in this constitution, to the extent authorized by the resolution providing for the Executive Committee or by the subsequent resolutions. The Executive Committee shall meet at the call of its Chairperson and shall fix its own rules or procedures and notices to be given of its meeting. The Executive Committee shall deal with all complaints that need immediate attention. Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be open meetings. A majority shall constitute a quorum. Any Executive Committee decision other than grievance rulings may be overturned by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present at a regular or special meeting.

Section 2 The Council may by resolution provide for such other committees as it deems advisable and may discontinue the same at its pleasure. Each entity shall have such powers and shall perform such duties as may be assigned to it by the Council. Also, each entity shall be appointed, and vacancies filled, in the manner determined by the Council. In the absence of other direction, the President shall appoint all committees.

Article VII By-Laws

The Council shall make such by-laws as may be necessary in carrying out the provisions of the Constitution.

Article VIII Amendments

This Constitution may be amended or supplemented at any time by a two-thirds (2/3) approval of all the members present at a regular or special meeting.

Article IX Ratification

This Constitution shall become effective immediately upon ratification of two-thirds (2/3) approval of all members of Council.

B. By-Laws

Article I Eligibility of Members

The members shall be parishioners or employees of the parish school they represent.

Article II Method of Voting

Each member school is to have one vote.

Article III At-Large Members

Section 1 The Diocesan Schools Office and the Diocesan School Administrators' Association shall each have at-large representation.

Section 2 At-large representatives shall be ex-officio members, having no vote.

Article IV Executive Committee

Section 1 Election
The Executive Committee shall be elected at the regular election meeting of the Council.

Section 2 Membership
The Executive Committee shall consist of the Officers of the Council, one member Principal elected by the Council, and one other member to be elected by the Council.

Article V Procedure for Adopting Policies

Policy recommendations may be brought to the Council by any member. A policy committee may be formed to review the recommendation and report its findings to the Council. A policy shall be adopted by approval of a simple majority of the members present.

Article VI Grievance Procedure

Section 1 Grievance Procedure for Violations of League Rules / Policies

1. Any violation of league rules, regulations, or policies shall be reported to the Athletic Director of the reporter's school as soon as possible.

2. The Athletic Director shall forward the complaint to the League President, Coaches, Athletic Directors and Principals of the school(s) involved in the violation.
3. If the complaint cannot be settled at the League level within one week, the League President shall take the complaint to the Principal(s) of the school(s) involved.
4. If the Principal(s) are unable to settle the dispute, the matter shall be referred to the GRACEAC Executive Board, and the GRACEAC Grievance Procedure shall go into effect.

Section 2 Grievance Procedure for Violations of GRACEAC Policies

1. Any violation of GRACEAC policies shall be reported as soon as possible to the Principal of the reporter's school.
2. The Principal shall gather all pertinent data on the alleged violation, and in turn, report to a member of the Council's Executive Committee.
3. Within one week, a majority of the Executive Committee shall be contacted, and a determination of action shall be made.
4. The Executive Committee shall contact the Principals and Athletic Directors of the involved school(s) with its decision.
5. An appeal of the Executive Committee's decision may be made to the Diocesan Superintendent. Any sanction(s) imposed shall be postponed until the Superintendent has heard and acted upon the appeal.

C. GRACEAC Executive Committee

At the heart of the Grand Rapids Area Catholic Elementary Athletic Council is the Executive Committee whose task it is to coordinate the activities of the Council. The following three pages give additional information about the Executive Committee including addresses of the committee members and a typical agenda of a general meeting of the entire Grand Rapids Area Catholic Elementary Athletic Council.

The Executive Committee of the GRACEAC meets prior to the general meetings of the Council and at other times when the need arises. It is governed by the rules outlined in the Constitution of the GRACEAC. Its members set the agenda for the general meeting and deal with all complaints that need immediate attention. All Executive Committee decisions other than grievance rulings may be overturned by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present at a regular or special meeting.

D. 1996/ 97 Executive Council

At the current time the Executive Committee consists of the following officers:

President:	<p>Mr. Bob Wolf St. John Vianney School 4101 Clyde Park Ave. SW Wyoming, MI 49509 532-7001</p>	<p>Home: 2263 Ancient Drive Wyoming, MI 49509 (H) 538-9563 (W) 459-1100 (F) 459-3002 (C)DIOGRNDRPDSC</p>
Vice-President:	<p>Mr. John Hudson Holy Spirit School 2222 Lake Michigan Drive NW Grand Rapids, MI 49504 453-2772</p>	<p>Home: 1514 Sibley NW Grand Rapids, MI 49504 (H) (W) 791-9302 (F) (C)</p>
Secretary:	<p>Miss Julie Whelan, Principal Holy Trinity School 1304 Alpine Church Road Comstock Park, MI 49321 784-0696</p>	<p>Home: 1763 Greenfield Circle #102 Comstock Park, MI 49321 (H) 459-3898 (W) 784-0696 (F) 784-0677 (C) DIOGRE23</p>

Treasurer:

Mr. Ted Lewakowski
St. John Vianney School
4101 Clyde Park Ave. SW
Wyoming, MI 49509
532-7001

Home:

1548 Trentwood SW
Wyoming, MI 49509
(H) 538-5243
(W)
(F)
(C)

Assistant Officers:

Mr. Bill Davidson
Athletic Director
St. Stephen School
740 Gladstone Ave. SE
East Grand Rapids, MI 49506

(H) 243-9148
(W)
(F)
(C)

Mr. Joe Maitner
Principal
St. Jude School
1110 Four Mile Road
Grand Rapids, MI
49505

(H)
(W) 363-7725
(F) 363-1470
(C) DIOGRE14

Mr. Tom Barnes
Athletic Director
St. Alphonsus School
228 Carrier NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49505

(H) 791-4576
(W) 336-5105
(F)
(C)

Coordinator of Athletics:

Mr. Mike Braunschneider
(H) 453-4744
(W) 243-0491
(F) 243-1442
(C)

E. Meeting Structure

The agenda of general meetings of the GRACEAC typically follow this pattern:

Agenda

1. Call to Order
 - A. Prayer
 - B. Opening Remarks
2. Approval of Minutes
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Reports of Committees
 - A. Executive Committee
5. Unfinished Business
6. New Business
 - A. Previous Season Sports Review
 - B. Coming Season Sports Preview
 - C. Remarks from the floor
7. Establishment of next meeting date
8. Adjournment

Those present at the general meetings are asked to sign their names and what school they represent to a ledger. Through the combined efforts of the Superintendent's Office, the Principals of the member schools and the Athletic Directors, Coaches, and Council Representatives, the meetings have high representation and participation.

IV. GRACEAC Policies Regarding Grand Rapids Area Elementary School Athletic Programs

Through the years, the Athletic Council has struggled over a variety of issues concerning the structures and content of athletic programs in its member schools. These struggles have resulted in a series of policies that were developed through constructive communication, study, debate, and reflection upon the trial and error method through the years of interscholastic athletic competition. The development of these policies is the result of the work of many people over many years. The policies were formed with the central idea of searching for what would be best for the "whole person" involved in the various athletic programs. The following are details of the policies that are currently in effect in the member schools.

Policies

These policies embody the minimum requirements which must be observed by all the schools participating in the Grand Rapids Area Catholic Elementary Athletic Leagues. More stringent regulations may be imposed on individual schools by their Parish Boards of Education.

A. Eligibility Codes

1. Each school shall be responsible for establishing, implementing, and enforcing an eligibility code which is uniform for all sports and for all grades in a manner which is dictated by the uniqueness of the local situation. All eligibility codes are to have the qualities of justice and fairness based upon performance in the areas of conduct and effort.
2. Any student who wishes to be a student athlete and who faithfully practices must be allowed to participate for a significant amount of time except for disciplinary reasons. Eligibility rules are binding on all student athletes.
3. Any student who has attained the age of 15 prior to September 1 of that school year, shall not be eligible to participate in the athletic program.

Any student who has attained the age of 14 prior to September 1 of that school year, shall not be eligible to play in the 7th grade league.

Any student who has attained the age of 13 prior to September 1 of that school year, shall not be eligible to play in any 6th grade league.

Any student who has attained the age of 12 prior to September 1 of that school year, shall not be eligible to play in any 5th grade league.

These students who are over age may only participate at the next higher level. (Adopted 1-30-79)

4. Beginning with the 1980-81 athletic season, fourth graders are prohibited from participating in the Grand Rapids Area Catholic Elementary Athletic Programs.

B. No Cut Policy

Recognizing that all students who have the desire to participate should be encouraged to take part in the athletic programs, a no-cut policy, other than for disciplinary reasons, shall be an integral part of all athletic programs.

C. Minimum Amount Of Time Per Game

To insure total participation it shall be mandatory that any student who faithfully practices with the team be allowed to participate the *Minimum Amount of Time Per Game* as listed below:

20/0

Sport	Grades 5 & 6	Grades 7 & 8
Soccer	30 minutes per game 22 or more players = 15 minutes per game	35 minutes per game 22 or more player = 17.5 minutes per game
Football	8 plays per game	8 plays per game
Boys & Girls Basketball	6 minutes per game	4 minutes per game
Baseball	2 full innings per game Rocket Rule / Batting	2 full innings per game Rocket Rule / Batting
Cheerleading	One Full Half	One Full Half
Volleyball	3 serves per match	3 serves per match
Softball	2 full innings per game Rocket Rule / Batting	2 full innings per game Rocket Rule / Batting
Track	2 events per meet	2 events per meet

These minimum participation standards shall apply to all regularly scheduled league games, invitational tournaments, and city tournaments.

At all times the health and safety of the participant must be considered first and foremost.

It shall be the joint responsibility of each league, and the Principal and Athletic Director of each school to make provision for, promulgate the information, and implement this policy of "Total Participation". (revised 3-18-85)

D. Competition Levels

Teams composed of 5th & 6th graders shall compete at the "C" Level. Teams comprised solely of 5th graders must compete at the "D" Level. (revised 3-18-85)

Participation on the 7th & 8th grade teams shall include specifically students from those grades, with the following exceptions:

1. Sixth grade boys may participate in the 7th and 8th grade football league if they are either too old or too heavy to participate in the 5th and 6th grade league. Written parental permission is required.
2. Sixth grade students may participate at the 7th grade level for basketball provided all of the following conditions are met:
 - a. The school has no 5th and 6th grade team, and
 - b. The Principal and Board of Education has provided written permission from the parents prior to any participation.

E. Sports Banquet

It is recommended that sports banquets be limited to a simple event as a fitting tribute for good sportsmanship and participation. If recognition is given, identical, inexpensive certificated and/or awards should be given to all participants, not to exceed \$10.00 in value. (Revised 7-28-92)

F. Physical Examinations

Any students, boys or girls, who participate in the athletic program must have on file with the Principal and/or Athletic Director a current year physical examination, written permission of the parents to participate, and some proof of insurance coverage. Physical form and permission slip must be dated after May 15th to be valid for following school year.

G. Practice Time

Practice time and number of practices for all students shall not exceed two (2) hours per day and five (5) practices per week. The time limit and number of practices set below are ultimates in each sport. We encourage schools to cut time for practice and number of practices where there is an opportunity.

Sport	Pre-Season	Season (after 1st game)
7th & 8th Grade Football	10 hours 5 practices per week	8 hours 4 practices per week
5th & 6th Grade Football	10 hours 5 practices per week	6 hours 3 practices per week
7th & 8th Grade Basketball	8 hours 4 practices per week	6 hours 3 practices per week
5th & 6th Grade Basketball	6 hours 3 practices per week	4 hours 3 practices per week
5th - 8th Grade Baseball / Softball	8 hours 4 practices per week	6 hours 3 practices per week
5th - 8th Grade Track	6 hours 3 practices per week	4 hours 3 practices per week
5th - 8th Grade Soccer	8 hours 4 practices per week	6 hours 3 practices per week
7th & 8th Grade Cheerleading	8 hours 4 practices per week	6 hours 3 practices per week
5th & 6th Grade Cheerleading	6 hours 3 practices per week	4 hours 3 practices per week
7th & 8th Grade Volleyball	8 hours 4 practices per week	6 hours 3 practices per week
5th & 6th Grade Volleyball	6 hours 3 practices per week	4 hours 3 practices per week

**All time limits above do not include game time during the regular season.*

H. All Star Games

All-Star games shall be forbidden at all levels and in all sports. Any combination of student-athletes from two or more schools at any time during the school year to compete against another team shall be considered an all-star team and is forbidden. No Athletic Director, Coach, Parent, Teacher or Administrator of a GRACEAC school may assist directly or indirectly with the coaching, management direction, selection or transportation of student-athletes to and from an all-star game.

I. Boys' / Girls' Sports

Boys' may not participate in girls' sports. Girls may not participate in any boys' sport if the school sponsors the same sport for girls or if it is a contact sport (i.e. football, basketball). Softball and baseball shall be construed as the same sport.

J. Number of Games Per Year

The number of games of basketball for all teams in all leagues shall be limited to twelve (12). This number will include any and all tournament games with the exception of the city tournament. No student may participate in more than one (1) contest per day. Volleyball may however allow student-athletes to compete in more than one match or game per day, due to the nature of the sport. (Revised 3-18-85)

K. Policy Violation

The Grand Rapids Area Catholic Elementary Athletic Council shall meet at the conclusion of each season to hear cases and impose penalties for any violation of the policies they set forth. Emergency meetings may be called at the discretion of the Coordinator of Athletics and/or President of the Council.

L. Athletic Directors

Each member school shall have an Athletic Director appointed by its Parish Board of Education, upon consultation with and recommendation of the Principal, to be responsible to the Board and the Principal. (Adopted 1-30-79)

M. League Rules

Each league must submit their rules for the approval of the Grand Rapids Area Catholic Elementary Athletic Council prior to June 1 of every even numbered year. In alternate years, changes are to be submitted to the GRACEAC two weeks prior to the first scheduled league game. (Amended 11-17-83)

N. Sanctions

Sanctions that have to be applied by the GRACEAC shall vary according to the gravity of the situation. (Adopted 10-1-79)

O. CCD Students

CCD students are excluded from participating in the Catholic Elementary School Athletic Programs. (Adopted 11-6-79)

P. Practice Start Dates

All fall sports may begin practice on Monday, the week of August 15. Winter sports may begin practice on Monday, the week of November 15. Spring sports may begin practice on Monday, the week of March 15. Prior to these dates, a coach may work with a maximum of three (3) individuals at any one time. Girls' Cheerleading shall be considered a sport and subject to these starting practice dates. (Adopted 11-17-83)

Q. League President

Each league must designate to the GRACEAC prior to the completion of its current season, a league president who will preside over the league during the following year's season. Fall league meetings shall be held during the second (2nd) week of August. Winter league meetings shall be held during the first (1st) week of November. Spring league meetings shall be held during the third (3rd) week of February. (Adopted 1-17-83)

R. Game Pass Policy

The Grand Rapids Area Catholic Elementary Athletic Council has instituted the use of the game pass to allow a Principal, Athletic Director, or their designee to enter an athletic contest area without paying the admission cost. This game pass is designed to assist each school to better administrate their own program. Usage of this game pass is contingent on the following:

1. Each respective league had the final authority over its acceptance of use for that sport.
2. Each school will be distributed no more than six (6) game passes.
3. Game passes will be restricted for use to the Principal, Athletic Director, Parish personnel (priests, nuns, teachers, etc.) and GRACEAC members and representatives or their designees. Each person using the game pass must accept the responsibility to deal with concerns and/or problems that may arise at that athletic contest. Immediate steps should be taken to address a situation or a report should be made regarding the concern/problem to the appropriate Principal, Athletic Director, or League President or the Coordinator of Athletics.
4. One game pass admits **one** individual only. ***IT IS NOT A FAMILY PASS.***
5. Any school violating this policy shall be reported to the GRACEAC President or another Board Members for discussion. Penalties shall range from a letter asking for an explanation of the policy violation to the forfeiture of all game passes for a determined period of time.

Adopted General Council Meeting: 2-15-89

S. Athletic Eligibility Policy

Diocesan and Athletic Council policy mandates that each school develop and athletic eligibility policy based upon the concepts of efforts and conduct. The goal of such a program is to assure that athletic progress does not come at the expense of academic performance.

In an effort to standardize the eligibility process among all member schools, the Athletic Council recommends the following concepts be incorporated into each school's eligibility program:

1. Students should be evaluated weekly by appropriate faculty members in the areas of effort and conduct.
2. The first time a student is marked ineligible within an athletic season, that student assumes a probationary status for the remainder of the season. Parents, and coaches must be notified as soon as possible when this occurs.
3. The second time a student is marked ineligible within an athletic season, that student is prohibited from participating in any game for one week (or until the next evaluation). The student may practice with the team, but may not dress or participate in the game. As before, parents and coaches must be notified of their child's status immediately, and warned that another ineligible marking will result in removal from the team.
4. The third time a student is marked ineligible, he / she is permanently removed from the team. Parents and coaches are thus informed as soon as possible.
5. In the event of serious violation of school rules, the principal must have the right to bypass the normal procedure and take whatever action he / she deems appropriate.

These guidelines are suggested as minimum components of a just and fair system of athletic eligibility. Many schools already employ more stringent rules for eligibility.

Since the athletic eligibility procedure is an administrative function, the responsibility for its successful operation lies within the school Principal. This requires, however, support of the Principal's efforts from Parents, Coaches, Athletic Directors and Boards of Education.

T. Guidelines For Schools Hosting GRACEAC League or Tournament Games

1. Host schools shall designate a "Game Manager", responsible for all functions necessary for efficient operation of all contests.
2. The Game Manager shall be on site one-half hour (30 minutes) before the start of the first scheduled game and a Game Manager will remain on site until the last player or fan leaves the playing site.
3. The Game Manager shall report any violations, protests, or unusual events to the host school Principal or Athletic Director.

4. The Game manager will provide a separate, private and enclosed "safe" area for Game Officials.
5. The Game Manager will ensure that GRACEAC Policies and all GRACEAC League Rules are implemented and upheld. Violations will be reported to GRACEAC President and / or Coordinator of Athletics.

U. Unconscious Player Rule

An unconscious or apparently unconscious player is determined by the game officials (referees). An unconscious or apparently unconscious player will be removed from the game by the official. The player may not return to play in that game without written authorization from a physician (M.D. or D.O.). This authorization must be given to the game officials prior to the player's return.

V. Blood Borne Pathogens Policy and Procedure

A player who is bleeding or has an open wound or has an excessive amount of blood on his uniform must leave the game. The game official (referee) will stop the game and allow the coach one minute to bring in a substitution. The affected player must sit out one full play before returning to the game. Excessive bleeding or an excessive amount of blood is any amount of the uniform or skin that can be transferred to a player, opponent, or official. The player may not return until the bleeding has been stopped, and if necessary, the affected area covered. If the player has an excessive amount of blood on his uniform, the uniform must be removed. Coaches are encouraged to have extra pants, jerseys, socks, etc., for the player to change into. Inexpensive, numbered T-shirts can be used as long as they are of similar color as the game jersey.

W. Tobacco and Alcohol Policy

Policy:

For Coaches, Officials, Parents and Spectators of all GRACEAC Sponsored or Authorized games, the use of tobacco products of any kind within sight of players and spectators and the use of alcohol during a contest or at any time before it on the day of the contest is prohibited.

Enforcement:

Tobacco - It is not intended that a violation of the tobacco policy should lead to immediate ejection of a Coach, Official, Parent or Spectator. He or she should be reminded of the policy and reported to his or her school Principal and Athletic Director and League President after the contest. Only if the Coach, Official, Parent or Spectator is unwilling to comply should he or she be removed from the contest area.

Alcohol - Coaches, Officials, Parents and Spectators are to be promptly removed from the contest area if under the influence of alcohol. The removal must be reported to each schools Principal, Athletic Director and League President.

X. Merger Rule

A merge can only be requested when a team does not have enough students in the 7th and 8th grade combined or the 5th and 6th grade combines to field a team under the standards listed below:

Football	17 or more cannot apply
Basketball	8 or more cannot apply
Track	11 or more cannot apply
Softball	13 or more cannot apply
Baseball	12 or more cannot apply
Soccer	13 or more cannot apply
Volleyball	10 or more cannot apply.

Even though a team cannot apply for a merge they can let the League President of their league know that they are willing to merge if a school needs a place to play. The League President of each league will have the authority to do this. Final approval will come from the Coordinator of Athletics.

Maximum effort will be made by the football leagues to complete merges in the spring.

Y. Taunting Policy

Taunting includes any actions or comments by coaches, players, or spectators which are intended to bait, anger, embarrass, ridicule or demean others. Included is conduct that berates, needles, intimidates or threatens based on race, gender, ethnic background and conduct that attacks religious beliefs, size, economic status, speech, family, special needs or personal matters. Examples of taunting that would lead to ejection include, but are not limited to, "trash talk", physical intimidation outside the spirit of the game, reference to sexual orientation, "in your face" confrontation by one player to another, standing over / straddling a tackled or fallen player.

In all sports, Officials are to consider taunting a flagrant unsportsmanship foul that disqualifies the offending bench personnel or contestant from the contest/day of competition and the next contest/day of competition. A warning may be given but is not required before ejection. Spectators may be given one warning for taunting. Spectators who taunt are to be removed from the contest area by the Contest / Game / Gym Administrator. All incidents of Taunting are to be reported the next day to the School Principal, Athletic Director and League President.

V. Title IX

A. Introduction

Those involved in athletic programs in schools in the Diocese of Grand Rapids strive to ensure equality for all students. Every school is obligated to adhere to the guidelines established by the government regarding Title IX which deals with exclusion based upon a person's sex. Each school is responsible for maintaining athletic programs which do not exclude on the basis of sex. The following section deals specifically with the supplement to Title IX concerning athletics.

B. Title IX

Since the 1972 Educational Act was passed, there has been issued by the HEW a special supplement to Title IX concerning athletics (June 4, 1975). Its text directly affects the administration of women's and men's programs.

Section 86.41 Athletics

1. General

No person shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, be treated differently from another person or otherwise be discriminated against in any interscholastic, intercollegiate, club, or intramural athletics offered by recipient, and no recipient shall provide any such athletics separately on such basis.

2. Separate Teams

Notwithstanding the requirements of paragraph (1) of this section, a recipient may operate or sponsor separate teams for members of each sex where selection for such teams is based on competitive skill or the activity involved is a contact sport. However, where a recipient operates or sponsors a team in a particular sport for members of one sex but operates or sponsors no such team for members of the other sex, and athletic opportunities for members of that sex have previously been limited, members of the excluded sex must be allowed to try out for the team offered unless the sport involved is a contact sport. For the purpose of this part, contact sports include boxing, wrestling, rugby, ice hockey, football, basketball, and other sports the purpose or major activity of which involves bodily contact.

C. Equal Opportunity

A recipient which operates or sponsors interscholastic, intercollegiate, club or intramural athletics shall provide equal athletic opportunity for members of both sexes. In determining whether equal opportunities are available the director will consider, among other factors:

1. Whether the selection of sports and levels of competition effectively accommodate the interests and abilities of members of both sexes,
2. The provision of equipment and supplies,
3. The scheduling of games and practice times,
4. Travel and per diem allowance,
5. Opportunity to receive coaching and academic tutoring,
6. Assignment and compensation of coaches and tutors,
7. Provision of locker rooms, practice and competitive facilities,
8. Provision of medical and training facilities and services,
9. Provision of housing and dining facilities and services, and
10. publicity.

Unequal aggregate expenditures for members of each sex or unequal expenditures for male and female teams if a recipient operates or sponsors separate teams will not constitute noncompliance with this section, but the director may consider the failure to provide necessary funds for teams for one sex in assessing equality of opportunity for members of each sex.

D. Adjustment Period

.... A recipient ... shall fully comply with this section as expeditiously as possible but in no event later than three years from the effective date of this regulation.

VI. Leadership Roles and Responsibilities

Successful operation of elementary athletics in the Grand Rapids Diocese requires the commitment and hard work of countless adults. However, a number of people have the opportunity to play leadership roles, and guide the program in the proper direction. The following few pages discuss these leadership roles, and offer guidelines for each.

A. Principal

Final responsibility for the athletic program at the local level rests with the Principal. While authority for athletics may be delegated, it is essential that the Principal set the proper course, and closely monitor activities of the program.

The Principal must also establish the importance of the fundamentals of good sportsmanship in the minds of the entire school family and all those associated with any of the school's activities. The quality of sportsmanship displayed at athletic contests reflects the leadership provided by the Principal.

Following are a number of specific responsibilities of the Principal in the effective operation of an elementary athletic program:

1. Never allow any activity to supersede or interfere with the educational objectives of the school. Victory celebrations, game rallies, and unscheduled bursts of mass enthusiasm should not be permitted to interfere with the school program.
2. Establish definite eligibility procedures and be sure that they are understood and enforced.
3. Require the passing of a medical examination, the receipt of parental permission, and proof of insurance before a student is allowed to compete.
4. Be honest in the certification of team members, and base that certification on complete information concerning the student athletic and scholastic status. Questionable cases should be referred to the Executive Committee of the GRACEAC before the privilege of competition is given.
5. Encourage the employment of coaches who are primarily concerned with educational objectives and the well being of the students.
6. Give loyal support to coaches in their efforts to carry out local, GRACEAC, and league policies.

7. Take an active role in the development of athletic policies.
8. Have a complete understanding of the athletic policy of the school and the GRACEAC, and of the individual responsibility of all concerned.
9. Have a definite understanding with the athletic director about eligibility, schedules, care of fields and gymnasiums, handling of spectators, etc., and give that person every assistance in carrying out such duties.
10. Attend as many athletic contests as your schedule will allow.
11. Attend as many GRACEAC meetings as your schedule will allow.
12. Promote good relationships with support groups and acquaint them with your responsibility for good sportsmanship.
13. Be sure parents thoroughly understand what the school expects of its players.
14. Be sure that all spectators have a definite understanding of the kinds of behavior expected of them.
15. Support and encourage school programs designed to deepen and understanding of good sportsmanship.
16. Commend opposing schools for outstanding examples of fine sportsmanship.

B. Coordinator of Inter-Parochial Athletics

The position of Coordinator of Inter-Parochial Athletics was established at the start of the 1984-85 School Year. The Coordinator, as Executive Officer of the Athletic Council, is responsible for the administration of GRACEAC policies, acts as the liaison between the Council and each league, and oversees the finances of each league.

More specifically, the Coordinator's duties include:

1. Organize and conduct all league meetings with league President's.
2. Oversees organization of each league, selection of league Presidents and development of league schedules.
3. Establish a network for reporting scores of all league games.

4. Assist schools in the coordination of invitational tournaments.
5. Maintain and enforce all league rules.
6. Maintain a complete listing of all coaches and athletic directors.
7. Oversee all financial transactions for each league; provide a complete financial report to the Athletic Council at the conclusion of each athletic season.
8. Hire, coordinate, evaluate, and pay officials for each sport.
9. Standardize all city tournaments.
10. Act as a liaison between leagues and the Athletic Council.
11. Work with leagues to improve the level of sportsmanship, coaching, officiating, and competition.
12. Act as a resource person to promote Catholic Schools through the medium of athletics.
13. Act as Executive Officer of the Athletic Council, responsible for the administration of GRACEAC policies.
14. Such other duties as deemed appropriate by the GRACEAC.

C. Athletic Director

Less visible than the coaching staff but nonetheless of great importance to the overall program of sportsmanship is the Athletic Director.

This person is the official representative of the school in the interscholastic athletic activities. The numerous details which are essential for a smoothly functioning educational contest require the efforts of an individual dedicated to the true purpose of school athletics. The philosophy which this person holds is reflected in the policies and procedures which he initiates, the behavior of the coaches and players, and in the conduct of all athletic contests.

This person must subscribe to and promote the ideal of sportsmanship. In addition to a formal position description, which should address the uniqueness of the local setting, every Athletic Director should:

1. Have a clear understanding of the philosophy of the school and GRACEAC in regard to elementary athletics.
2. Secure only those coached and adult volunteers who subscribe to the philosophy stated above.
3. Assemble only those schedules which are educationally and physically sound for the athlete, and in accordance with Diocesan and Athletic Council policy.
4. Cooperate with the school and community in the development of a character-building athletic program.
5. Provide sufficient adult supervision for spectator control.
6. Enlist the support of coaches and school personnel in the development of sportsmanship programs.
7. Report incidents involving poor sportsmanship to the appropriate school's Athletic Director. It is each respective school's Athletic Director to report incidents to their own principal.
8. Report incidents involving questionable league concerns to the league presidents and/or to the Coordinator of Athletics. Every effort should be made to handle problems at the league level.
9. Remove unruly or impolite spectators when their behavior impedes the smooth progress of the game.
10. Be fair in administering the program. Let others know that all children deserve a chance to benefit from athletics. Don't over emphasize the competitive side of sports.

D. The Responsibilities of the Coach

The coach bears the greatest burden of responsibility for sportsmanship. His influence upon the attitudes and behavior of the players and spectators is unequaled. In order for good sportsmanship to become a reality, it is essential that the coach subscribe to the values of sportsmanship and teach its principles through word and deed.

Specifically, it is recommended that the coach:

1. Always set a good example for others to follow.

2. Teach the values of honest effort in conforming to the spirit as well as the letter of the rules.
3. Instruct the players in their sportsmanship responsibilities.
4. Discipline those students who display unsportsmanlike behavior; if necessary, forfeit their privilege of representing the school.
5. Be a perfect host to opponents; treat them as guests.
6. At every opportunity remind spectators that the opposing team deserves their respect and courtesy.
7. Respect the official's judgement and interpretation of the rules. Public protests can only lead to similar behavior by the players and spectators.
8. Publicly shake hands with the officials and opposing coach before and after the contest.

The school may expect:

1. The work of the coach should be an integral part of the schools with its educational contribution,
2. Mastery of the principles of pedagogy and consequent improvement in teaching as well as coaching,
3. Loyalty to superiors in making athletics fit into the general school program, and
4. Insistence upon high scholarship and enforcement of all rules of eligibility.

The athletes may expect:

1. A genuine and up-to-date knowledge of that which the coach proposes to teach,
2. Fair, unprejudiced relationship with all squad members,
3. Careful attention to the physical condition of players at the time of each contest, and

4. A Christian manner of speech and action that will, in itself, be a teaching tool.

E. Responsibilities of the League President

1. Each League President shall be responsible for appropriate communication and providing all financial information for their league to the Coordinator of Athletics and the Executive Council of GRACEAC.
2. Schedules must be distributed to all league members prior to the first contest of the season.
3. Any schedule changes should be made known well in advance of the contest.
4. Prompt communication with schools.
5. Each league must submit their rules for the approval of the GRACEAC prior to June of every even numbered year. In alternate years, changes are to be submitted to the GRACEAC two weeks prior to the first scheduled league game.
6. Each League President must submit a complete financial transaction report to the Coordinator of Inter-Parochial Athletics at the beginning and the end of each athletic season at the General Council meeting. Also, each League President must submit a complete financial transaction report to the Coordinator of Inter-Parochial Athletics on June 1.
7. Each league must designate to the GRACEAC prior to the completion of its current season, a League President who will preside over the league during the following year's season.
8. Work with the Coordinator of Athletics to improve the level of sportsmanship, coaching, officiating and competition.
9. League Presidents must realize that they are part of the total athletic picture and not a separate entity unto themselves.

F. The Responsibilities of Support Groups

Support Groups are considered those groups that directly influence the athletic program of individual schools through their financial and / or service contribution.

1. Keep the lines of communication open between Principal, Athletic Director, and Support Groups.
2. Respect the authority of the school administrator, who is ultimately responsible for all athletic activities that school children are involved in.

G. The Responsibilities of the Spectators

The enthusiasm for sports among many spectators indicates that they play a vital role in the development of good sportsmanship. Their habits and reactions determine the quality of sportsmanship which reflects upon the reputation of their school. It is recommended that spectators:

1. Know and demonstrate the fundamentals of sportsmanship.
2. Respect, cooperate, and respond enthusiastically to cheerleaders.
3. Censure fellow spectators whose behavior is unbecoming.
4. Respect the property of the school and the authority of school officials.
5. Show respect for an injured player when he is removed from the contest.
6. Do not applaud errors by opponentes or penalties inflicted upon them.
7. Do not heckle, jeer, or distract members of the opposing team.
8. Never criticize the players, coaches, officials, or scorekeeper for the loss of a game.
9. Respect the judgement and strategy of the coach. Refrain from being a second guesser.
10. Avoid profane language and obnoxious behavior which are antiethical to sportsmanship.

VII. Miscellaneous

A. Physical Forms and Proof of Insurance / Parental Permission

Any students who participate in the athletic program of a school must have on file with the Principal and/or Athletic Director a current year physical examination, written permission of the parents to participate, and some proof of insurance coverage. Included in this handbook are two examples schools might use when seeking physical exams and parental permission slips. The first is a simple one taken from the Michigan High School Athletic Association. The second is from a member school of the GRACEAC.

B. Transportation

Students who participate in athletics must be responsible for providing their own transportation to and from practices and games. At no time should the school be responsible for providing transportation to athletic contests or practices for reasons of liability. If students are transported by those other than their own parents, the GRACEAC recommends that each child wear a seat belt and that the number of students being transported does not exclude any student from having a seat belt on.

C. Outreach to the Diocese

The Grand Rapids Area Catholic Elementary Athletic Council is willing to reach out to not only the member schools but all schools in the Diocese of Grand Rapids to aid in the effective formulation of athletic programs that will benefit children in those schools. Those who wish more information should contact the president of the GRACEAC.

D. Sportsmanship

Sportsmanship is defined as that quality of responsible behavior characterized by a spirit of generosity and a genuine concern for an opponent. Within the framework of the school athletic program, the responsibility for good sportsmanship is vested in all those associated with the program. The Grand Rapids Area Catholic Elementary Athletic Council will be active in assuring that everyone fulfills their obligation to the development of good sportsmanship on our student athletes.

VIII. Afterward

The primary function of elementary athletics in the Grand Rapids Diocese should not be the development of exceptional athletes. Rather, it must be the development of student-athletes who genuinely display the Christian qualities of good sportsmanship and fair play in every aspect of life. The successful operation of athletics depends upon a true commitment from all adults involved.

This handbook was written in an effort to delineate roles and responsibilities, and to encourage you to do all in your power to recognize positive behavior, and eliminate improper actions, wherever they might occur. The Office of Catholic Schools, together with the Grand Rapids Area Catholic Elementary Athletic Council, is confident that, as a result of this effort, athletics will remain an integral part in the Christian formation of our children.

Appendix

Physical Examination
(to be completed by Physician)

Name: _____

Age: _____ Weight: _____ Height: _____

Body Build: _____ Posture: _____

		Normal	Abnormal
1.	Blood Pressure	_____	_____
	Pulse	_____	_____
2.	Eyes	_____	_____
	Vision	_____	_____
	Contact Lenses (Yes/No) _____	_____	_____
3.	Ears	_____	_____
	Nose, Throat	_____	_____
	Bridges, Braces (Yes/No) _____	_____	_____
4.	Neck	_____	_____
5.	Chest	_____	_____
	Lungs	_____	_____
	Heart	_____	_____
6.	Abdomen	_____	_____
	Hernia (Yes/No) _____	_____	_____
	Genitalia	_____	_____
	Pubertal Code	_____	_____
7.	Neurologic	_____	_____
	Muscular	_____	_____
	Orthopedic	_____	_____

Recommendations:

I certify that I have examined the above student and find him/her physically able to participate in all supervised athletic activities except those circled.

Baseball - Basketball - Cross Country - Football - Golf - Gymnastics - Track - Wrestling
- Hockey

Signature of Examining Physician _____ Date _____

Name: _____
(Last) (First) (M.I.)

Parent: _____ Employment: _____

Family Doctor: _____ Phone: _____

Headaches	_____	Back Aches	_____
Convulsions / Fits	_____	Frequency of Urination	_____
Blackouts/Fainting	_____	Kidney Disease	_____
Tuberculosis	_____	Stomach Pains	_____
Night Sweats	_____	Jaundice / Hepatitis	_____
Chronic Cough	_____	Rupture or Hernia	_____
Heart Disease/Murmurs	_____	Asthma	_____
Rheumatic Fever	_____	Hay Fever	_____
Chest Pains	_____	Allergies	_____
Painful Joints	_____	Progressive Weight Loss	_____

C. Have you ever been hospitalized for anything other than an operation? If yes, list reason, hospital and date:

List: _____

I hereby give my consent for my son/daughter to engage in physical education, intramural, and interscholastic athletics, and to accompany the team as a member on its out of town trips.

I hereby authorize the team physician or his designee to administer emergency care to my son/daughter, in event of accident or injury.

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Office of Catholic Schools

St. Joseph Center

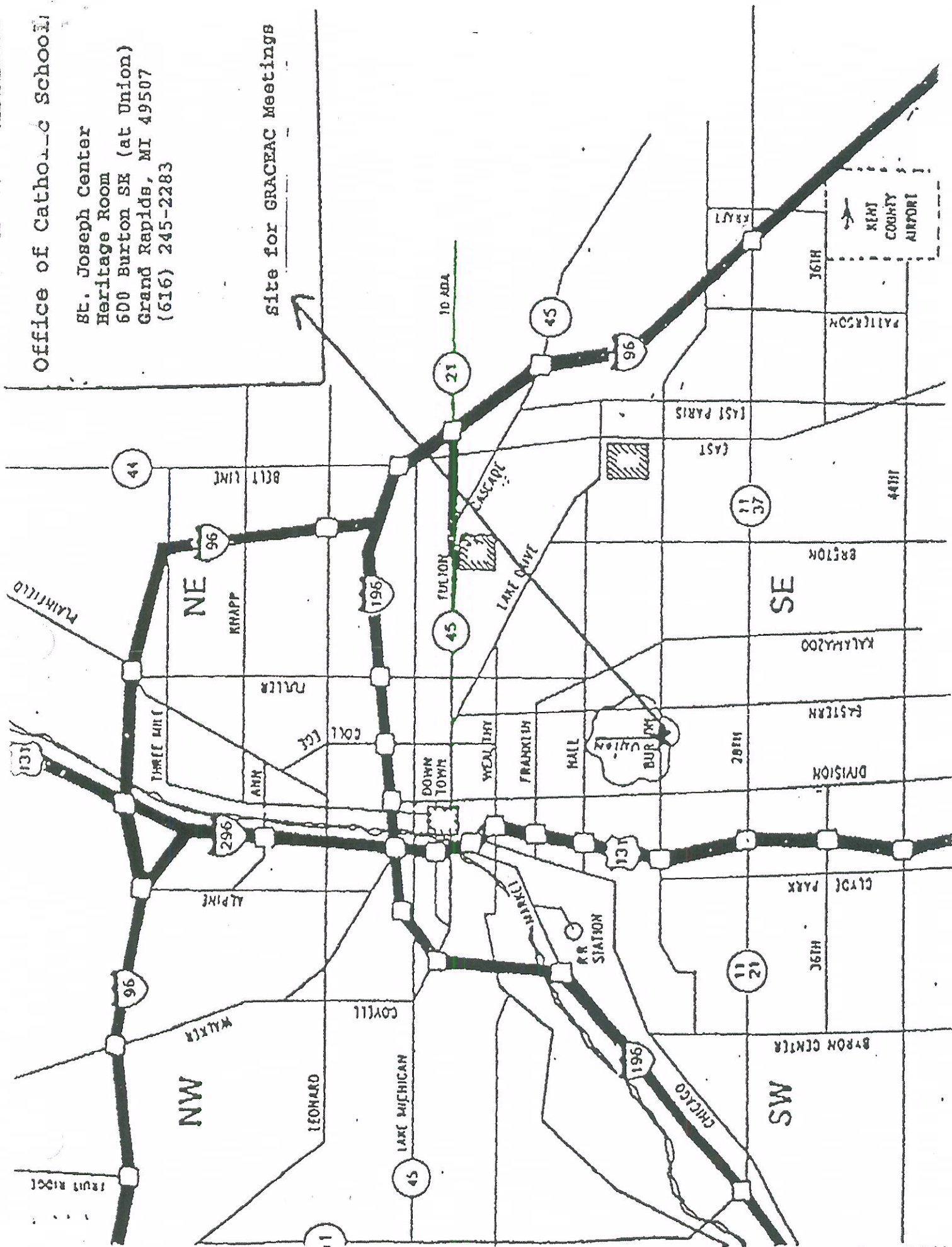
Heritage Room

600 Burton SE (at Union)

Grand Rapids, MI 49507

(616) 245-2283

Site for GRACEAC Meetings



This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.