



The MESSAGE

Southwestern Indiana's Catholic
Community Newspaper

September 5, 2025

Volume 56, Number 1

www.evdiomessage.org

Mater Dei, Reitz Memorial launch girls flag football programs

By JOHN ROHLF
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Both Mater Dei and Reitz Memorial High Schools in Evansville are joining a growing list of schools to start flag football teams.

For the fall 2025 season, girls flag football is an Indiana High School Athletic Association emerging sport. Both Mater Dei and Reitz Memorial have over 20 players participating in their inaugural flag football seasons. Both schools began their seasons Sept. 3 at Castle High School.

Mater Dei Athletic Director and assistant flag football coach Sam Fleming said it is "very nice" that Reitz Memorial and Castle High School in Newburgh will also have girls flag football teams. He said one of the final reasons Mater Dei decided to proceed with offering girls flag football was having an in town option for games.

"We'll be playing them quite a bit

on Wednesdays," Fleming said. "So hopefully we get a lot of people out. I know there's a lot of interest and it's going to be exciting."

Flag football 'a very exciting opportunity' for Reitz Memorial student athletes

Current Reitz Memorial senior Audrey Holt was approached late last school year by Reitz Memorial Athletic Director Chad Dockery about the potential of the Tigers forming a girls flag football team.

"I was like let's do it," Holt said. "It's a very exciting opportunity for us girls who have always wanted to participate in this sport . . . It's just a really unique opportunity for all of us."

Reitz Memorial senior Gabriella Unfried said flag football has "been very different than normal football." Instead of playing 11-on-11, flag football fields seven players on

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A Mater Dei athlete hauls in a pass during practice.



The Message photos by John Rohlf
Reitz Memorial Head Coach Joey Kiefer, left, coaches during practice.

Sixteen diocesan schools earn 100 percent pass rate on IREAD assessment

By JOHN ROHLF
The Message assistant editor

Over a dozen Diocese of Evansville Catholic schools achieved a 100 percent pass rate in the latest IREAD assessments.

For the 2024-2025 school year, 16 diocesan schools reached the 100 percent pass rate on the Indiana Reading Evaluation and Determination assessment. This is an increase over the 11 schools that were at the 100 percent pass rate in the 2023-2024 school year. As a whole, students at diocesan elementary schools with 10 or more students achieved a pass rate of over 94 percent. Complete data was not available for schools with fewer than 10 students.

Diocese of Evansville Superintendent Michelle Priar said they are "so proud of our students' performance" on the IREAD assessment.

"It's a testament not only to their hard work but also to that of their teachers and parents, who instill a love of reading and stress how important it is to master this essential skill," Priar said. "Congratulations to our third graders on a job well done!"

IREAD is a state reading assessment developed in accordance with state legislation. It is designed to measure foundational reading skills based on Indiana Academic Standards through grade three. Beginning in the 2024-2025 school year, all grade two students participated in the spring administration of the assessment. All students in grades two and three participate in IREAD unless they received a passing score in second grade.

Diocesan schools who received a 100 percent pass rate are Corpus Christi School, Good Shepherd School, Holy Redeemer School, Resurrection School and St. Benedict Cathedral School, all in Evansville; Holy Cross School in Fort Branch; St. James School and Sts. Peter and Paul School, both in Haubstadt; Holy Trinity School in Jasper; St. Matthew School in Mount Vernon; St. Philip School in Posey County; St. Joseph School in Princeton; St. Bernard School in Rockport; St. Wendel School in St. Wendel; St. Joseph School in Vanderburgh County and Flaget Elementary School in Vincennes.

Fall Professional Development Day for educators

On Aug. 29, teachers and principals from 15 Diocese of Evansville Catholic Schools gathered at Holy Rosary School in Evansville for a Fall Professional Development Day. This year, teachers and administrators had a



The Message photos by Megan Erbacher

choice of 23 different breakout sessions. During the session titled, *Storytelling with Puppets, Props and Playful Tales*, Mary Jo Huff had educators wiggling and giggling while using props for storytelling. See more photos on page 8.

