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## **Big Shoulders Fund saves 11 inner-city Catholic schools**

By Kate Ryan

(Crain's) — Eleven inner-city Catholic schools that were under consideration to be closed at the end of the academic year were spared by a grant from the Big Shoulders Fund.

Since 1984, more than 150 Catholic schools in Chicago have closed or consolidated with others. Today 136 Catholic elementary and secondary schools remain, 93 of which are supported by the Big Shoulders Fund, a non-profit organization founded in 1986 by Cardinal Joseph Bernardin to act as a safety net for the neediest Chicago Catholic schools. The 93 schools enroll about 25,000 students.

It's the first time in 10 years that no schools that receive financial support from the Big Shoulders Fund will close at the end of the academic year, the fund said.

“Working in conjunction with the Archdiocese, we are holding the line to ensure that inner-city youth have access to a tier-one, Catholic school experience,” said Joshua Hale, executive director of the Big Shoulders Fund, in a statement.

During this academic year, the foundation distributed \$9.6 million, including \$3.2 million in scholarships for about 3,000 students in Catholic schools.

The Archdiocese of Chicago said St. Stanislaus, Bishop and Martyr school in Posen will close this year.