



Advocates
FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

ACE Advocates for Catholic Schools

Parental Choice Resources

Alliance for Catholic Education

- The Case for Catholic Schools
- FAQs
- Online Helps
- Advocacy Groups
- Action Tips
- Education Tax Credits

ACE Advocates

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Tallahassee, Florida, May 2009. Over 5,500 parents, children, and even public school teachers marched for school choice at the largest rally ever held in our nation.

2010 - 2011

The researched case for Catholic schools

Rigorous scientific research confirms the success of Catholic schools. Among the findings:

- Catholic schools tend to operate as communities rather than bureaucracies, which links to higher levels of teacher commitment, student engagement, and student achievement (Marks, 2009).
- The Catholic school climate, mission, and purpose positively impact student achievement and attendance (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993).
- A faith-based orientation builds coherence and integration of schools and school community (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993).
- In Catholic schools, the student achievement gap is smaller than in public schools (Jeynes, 2007; Marks & Lee, 1989).
- In Catholic schools, overall academic achievement is higher (Coleman, Hoffer, & Kilgore, 1982; Sander, 1996).



dents in Catholic schools are more likely to graduate from high school and college (Grogger & Neal, 2000).

- Students with multiple disadvantages benefit most from Catholic schools (Greeley, 1982; Evans & Schwab, 1995; Neal, 1997).
- The poorer and more at-risk a student is, the greater the relative achievement gains in Catholic schools (York, 1996).
- Graduates of Catholic high schools are more likely to vote (Dee, 2005).
- Graduates of Catholic high schools are more likely to earn higher wages (Neal, 1997).
- Catholic schools tend to produce graduates who are more civically engaged, more tolerant of diverse views, and more committed to service as adults (Campbell, 2001; Wolf, Greene, Kleitz, & Thalhammer, 2001).
- When a Catholic school closes, neighborhood disorder increases (Brinig, Garnett, 2009).

No child should be denied his or her right to an education in faith, which in turn nurtures the soul of a nation.

--Pope Benedict XVI

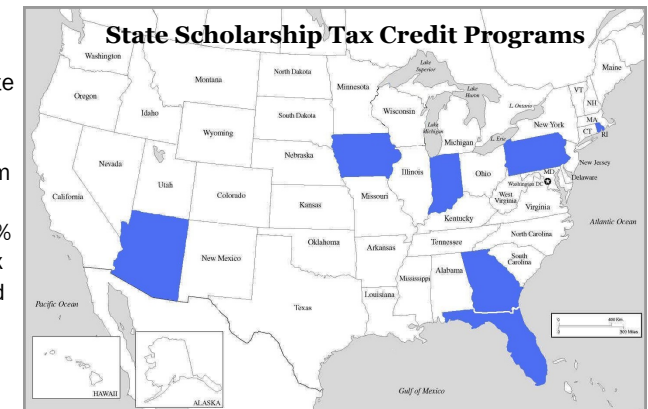
- In Catholic schools, student math scores improve between sophomore and senior years (Carbonaro, & Covay, 2010).
- Latino and African American stu-

What You Need to Know About Tax Credits

Scholarship Tax Credit Programs create new pools of funding so that children can receive scholarships to attend the private schools of their parents' choice.

Corporations or individuals make private donations to nonprofit organizations that provide these scholarships to eligible children (preference is most often given to children from low-income families). In return, those who donate receive a state income tax credit.

For instance, program donations made in Georgia receive 100% of the donation in tax credit (e.g., A married couple who makes a \$2,500 donation earns a \$2,500 tax credit).



There are nine corporate and/or individual scholarship tax programs across the country from which thousands of children are benefitting. Research has demonstrated that these programs improve student achievement and save money for state and local governments.

If you live in Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Pennsylvania or Rhode Island, we encourage you to take advantage of a state income tax credit by donating to an educational scholarship program. For information about how the program works in your state, visit the American Federation for Children at www.federationforchildren.com.

What You Can Do

Have a **prayer service** for Catholic schools at your home or church. Enlist the participation of your parish priest.

Have a **wine tasting and presentation** to teach others about **parental choice**. Include anyone you know who cares about **Catholic schools** but may not understand the **urgency** of current needs.

Make **copies** of this **booklet**, or design your own **flyer** and distribute it in **your community**.

Consider your **gifts**—arts, business, reading, talking, financial, technological, culinary—and

put them to work for Catholic schools.

Teach, work, volunteer, or coach in a Catholic school; **send your children** to Catholic schools.

Befriend a teacher in a Catholic school, supporting her or him with your time and encouragement.

Read *To Nurture the Soul of a Nation* to learn about **welcoming and enfold**ing more **Latino families** and children into Catholic schools (<http://catholicsschooladvantage.nd.edu>).

Earn tax credits by donating to an education scholarship program in your state (currently offered in Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island).

Host a speaker event for families from your local Catholic school.

Join ACE Advocates for Catholic Schools to learn more: <http://ace.nd.edu/advocates>.

Stop asking God to bless what you're doing. Get involved in what God is doing, because it's already blessed.

--Bono

Frequently asked questions

What is parental, or school, choice?

Parental choice, also called school choice, refers to the options parents have when it comes to educating their children, like choosing a school not in their neighborhood, or using a voucher to send their child to a private school.

What schooling options are there?

Generally, options fall into two categories. First are *choice schools*, all schools that aren't regular public schools—magnet, private, charter. In the U.S., there are about 133,000 schools; of those, about 40,000, or one-third, are schools of choice. Second are *choice programs*, like open enrollment, vouchers, and tax credits.

What are tax credits?

These are exemptions that reduce the amount taxpayers owe the government for each dollar they spend on education. For example, if a family owes the state \$4,000 and donates \$2,000 to a scholarship fund, they would pay just \$2,000 in taxes.

What are vouchers?

School vouchers are payments to parents—from private or public tax funds, or a combination thereof—for a child's education expenses, usually at a private school.

Doesn't use of public money for private schools violate the separation of church and state?

No. The Supreme Court ruled in *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris* in 2004 that school choice programs are constitutional. And public funding of faith-

based organizations is a firmly established practice. Catholic colleges and universities receive millions in federal and state funding every year.

What are the arguments for and against parental choice?

For many Americans, the freedom to choose a school is a given. But for numerous others, it is not. For those without resources—money, transportation, district permission to enroll their kids somewhere else—the local public school is their only option. Advocates of school choice say this is unacceptable. Some emphasize the matter of choice. All people should have the freedom to choose which schools they send their children to. Other advocates emphasize the matter of change. That is, public schools need to improve. They need more autonomy so they can be more innovative. They need more accountability and competition so they are challenged to succeed. School choice, these advocates say, can provide such essentials.

These arguments make school choice seem like a no-brainer. But there are those who disagree. They believe the movement is not helping our schools or students because choice programs are diverting funds from the public schools. And public schools educate the vast majority of America's children. Let's pour our resources into the schools most of our children attend, say these public school advocates. Lining up more options only decreases the overall quality of education in our country, and fails to promote diversity and community.

General Information

Black Alliance for Educational Options: www.baeo.org BAEO's mission is to actively support parental choice to increase quality educational options for children who are black. The website covers introductory info on types of school choice programs as well as links to its chapter and mobilization locations.

Education Commission of the States: www.ecs.org ECS's mission is to help states develop effective policy and practice for public education by providing data, research, analysis and leadership, and by facilitating the exchange of ideas and long-range strategic thinking among the states. The ECS website features packages of information on early learning, K-12 and post-secondary issues, from broad overviews to in-depth policy analyses.

Education Next: www.educationnext.org This journal on education reform is published by Harvard University.

Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice: www.friedmanfoundation.org The stated goal of the Friedman Foundation is to promote the idea that all parents have the freedom to choose the school that works best for their children, regardless of whether the school is public or private. On its website you will find publications, studies, and expert advice on school choice.

Institute for Justice: www.ij.org/schoolchoice/index.html The Institute provides news and detailed information on current and past school choice legal cases. For info on school choice programs, see "Complete School Choice Media Kit."

Jay P. Green's blog:
www.jaypgreene.com/about/

Jay Green is endowed professor of education reform at the University of Arkansas. A renowned researcher in the world of school choice, his blog offers well-versed thoughts on a variety of education policy and choice-related issues.

National Catholic Educational Association: www.ncea.org/public/SchoolChoiceInitiatives.asp This website gives a wide range of information on Catholic education and specifically highlights vouchers and tax credits, including a list of what each state in the nation offers.

National Center on School Choice: www.vanderbilt.edu/schoolchoice Neither advocating nor opposing school choice, this center does rigorous research on all forms of school choice. Its website has general information about choice, summarizes its research, and provides regular updates on its findings.

Thomas B. Fordham Institute: www.edexcellence.net This Washington, DC-based, non-profit is dedicated to advancing educational excellence in America's K-12 schools. The website provides overviews of Fordham reports on issues such as the No Child Left Behind Act, school choice, and teacher quality.

School Choice Info: www.schoolchoiceinfo.org A clearing house of information on school choice.

The Soul of a Nation: <http://catholicsschooladvocate.wordpress.com/> A blog about K-12 Catholic schools, the common good, and educational opportunity.

Advocacy Help

American Federation for Children: www.federationforchildren.com/ This is the nation's vanguard organization for promoting, implementing and enhancing K-12 educational choice.

Center for Education Reform: www.edreform.com The center advocates better educational opportunities for all children by leading parents, policymakers and the media into school choice advocacy. Its extraordinarily informative website aims to help advocates help themselves by providing general information about the issues, regular news updates, and excellent tips for grassroots action.

Children's Scholarship Fund: www.scholarshipfund.org The Children's Scholarship Fund provides partial tuition assistance for low-income families to send their children to private schools. More than 96,000 children have benefited from scholarships across the United States since CSF began offering assistance in 1998. Currently, more than 29,000 children nationwide are using CSF scholarships.

Citizens for Educational Freedom: www.educational-freedom.org A national, nonprofit corporation that promotes parental choice, the CEF website highlights its many activities, including journal and newsletters, seminars, conference and forums on freedom in education, and ways for advocates to get involved.

Hispanic Council for Reform and Educational Options: www.hcreo.org Founded to address the crisis in the achievement of Latino students, this is the only national public policy Latino organization dedicated solely to K-12 education reform. Its website high-

lights current issues as well as suggestions for getting involved in the school choice movement.

Learning Is for Everyone, Inc.: www.learningis4everyone.org This education consumer's union based in Florida provides broad-based information resources via a website, quarterly online newsletter, networking for parents, educators and education policy makers and an annual conference.

School Choice WI: www.schoolchoicewi.org On this website you'll find up-to-date information about the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, the nation's oldest and largest publicly-funded voucher program for low income children. The site also features information about Wisconsin's other expanded parent options like charter schools, and provides a link to its newsletter, Advocate.

