



ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

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OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

June 19, 2015

Dear Friends,

As I prepare to meet with Pope Francis in Rome and receive the pallium, my thoughts are with you and your children, asking God to keep them safe over these summer months. I also will be following closely some important developments related to our Catholic schools. They are a place of hope and learning and a beacon of safety in our communities. Our schools are also a key ministry of our Catholic faith. Our teachers not only instruct our students about math, science, history, technology, and literature, but also about our Catholic values: dignity of the human person from conception to natural death, care for the poor and vulnerable, participation in the family and community, care for God's creation, the dignity of work, and solidarity as one human family. Their focus on academic excellence results in a graduation rate of 98 percent for our high school seniors. Of those graduating seniors, 95 percent go on to attend college.

With this letter, I want to share with you important information about the Illinois Kids Campaign and ask your help in supporting it. The Illinois Kids Campaign is an initiative that seeks to increase funding for both private and public schools. The Catholic Conference of Illinois is a leading partner in the Illinois Kids Campaign, a diverse coalition of organizations working to advance education policy forward. In particular, we are working to ensure two provisions of significant importance to Catholic school parents and supporters of Catholic education are included in the final state budget.

These provisions would:

- Increase the education expenses tax credit for school parents to \$1,000 from the current \$500.
- Create scholarships so more students can attend Catholic and other schools their parents believe are the best fit for their children.

The goal of the Illinois Kids Campaign is to ensure that the mission of our schools remains vibrant and that more students have the opportunity of a Catholic education. We also want Catholic and other school parents to be reimbursed for more of their education expenses. That's why the Illinois Kids Campaign is important. The Illinois Legislature is in its final weeks of session, and we need you to contact your state lawmakers now and urge them to support the Illinois Kids Campaign. Now is the time you can make a difference. More information about how to contact your state representatives can be found at www.ilcatholic.org, or you can call the Catholic Conference at 312-368-1066 for help.

Wishing you every blessing, with kind regards I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Blase J. Cupich
Archbishop of Chicago