

Parents Know

Parents know where real value is, and they know the value of our Catholic schools.

Parents know the results of standardized tests and how our students compare so favorably with students from other schools on those same tests.

They know that Catholic schools address the whole person: physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and spiritual. It is a matter of integrity, integrity of the student and integrity of the school. They understand that without spiritual development all education is fundamentally flawed.

They know that Catholic schools integrate prayer in the course of the day and highlight the sacraments as critically important in our lives. Periodic celebrations of the Mass give praise to God and remind us of our identity. The saints are presented as models for every age.

They know that Catholic schools function as families and that our schools encourage the involvement of parents, guardians, and grandparents.

Parents know that Catholic schools require order and an atmosphere conducive to learning. They provide safe and secure environments.

They know that Catholic schools cultivate study habits in our students and train them in work habits which serve them for life.

They know that Catholic schools enable youngsters to establish roots for steady and strong growth. They understand that without roots you are left with dryness, decadence, and decay.

Parents know that Catholic schools teach us to love God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – our origin and our ultimate destiny.

They know that Catholic schools give direction to our lives. They understand that our schools provide a moral compass, enabling us to stand against aimless drift.

They know that Catholic schools focus attention on every single student, each one created in the image and likeness of God.

They know that Catholic schools see in religion a unique and extraordinary incentive for the practice of the virtues.

They know that Catholic schools produce leaders, academically prepared, knowledgeable of the world around us, and sensitive to the needs of others.

Parents know that with all of us working together, and with God's grace, Catholic schools produce great people.

What More People Should Know

If finances were not the problem, our schools would be teeming with students and others trying to enter. So often we hear parents say they would be thrilled to have their youngsters in our schools, for all the reasons listed above, but they simply cannot afford the tuition.

All sorts of programs have been developed at diocesan levels and local levels to subsidize our schools and provide scholarships for individual students. These programs must continue to grow and expand. The increasing involvement of corporations and foundations is gratifying and encouraging.

Government should be providing more financial assistance at the state, federal, and local levels.

It should be known that the Catholic schools in the six states of New England currently save government approximately 1 billion 350 million dollars a year in operational expenses. This figure does not include the costs for capital repair and new construction which would be necessary if our schools did not exist. It also does not include the lien which the dropouts from other schools place on the public assistance rolls for years to come. Those costs are in the multi billions of dollars.

Catholic schools have a dropout rate of a fraction of 1%. Other systems reach rates of 37% to 40%.

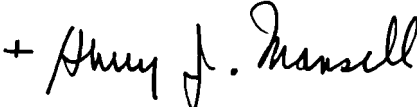
Various states in the United States have provisions for government aid to non-public schools which suggest that we could be doing much more than we are here in New England. Government funding would provide meaningful help in the following areas: text books, library materials, technology, transportation, mandated services (covering costs of record keeping), school nurses, teacher training, tuition tax credits, corporate tax credits (for assistance to public and non-public schools), etc.

When we consider the enormous contributions that Catholic schools make for society at large, in educating both Catholic and non Catholic students, financial assistance from government could reap rich dividends for everyone.

Gratitude

The history of Catholic schools in the United States is an incomparable story of sacrifice, leadership, and success. The epic continues. Our heartfelt gratitude goes out to so many who make it possible: pastors, principals, teachers, administrative staff members, parents, guardians, grandparents, and other parishioners. Clergy, religious, and lay people carry forward the momentum together.

Numbers and statistics affirm the importance of Catholic schools. When you hear and read, however, the profound and emotional expressions of gratitude from parents whose children would not be able to attend Catholic Schools without the assistance they receive, you appreciate beyond a semblance of a doubt the significance of our schools. Parents know where real value is.

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Most Reverend Henry J. Mansell
Archbishop of Hartford