



A multi-billion dollar gift in challenging economic times -

Catholic Schools contribute 19.8 billion to nation

WASHINGTON , D.C.—While auto manufacturers, secondary mortgage lenders and investment bankers are reaping billions of dollars in federal funds, there is one entity that is saving the nation billions - the network at almost 7,400 Catholic schools across the country.

According to Karen Ristau, president of the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA), Catholic schools provide \$19.8 billion in savings each year for the nation. The figure is based on the average public school per pupil cost of \$8,701 and the total Catholic school enrollment of more than 2.2 million students.

“Catholic schools are a gift to the church - and to the nation,” said Dr. Ristau. “The enormity of this gift is more striking during these challenging economic times.”

In addition to the monetary rewards, the nation also gains in other ways. Catholic school students excel academically on standardized tests, more than 99% graduate and 94% go on to college. Studies show that graduates of Catholic schools are reliable workers, good citizens and more likely to attend church.

“Our graduates have a strong commitment to community service because that is a foundation of our schools,” added Dr. Ristau. “In fact, this past year Catholic school students performed 2.2 million hours of public service in honor of Pope Benedict’s visit. That kind of involvement is also a gift to the country - and one that cannot be measured in dollars alone.”

Catholic school effectiveness—Research on school effectiveness in the last 10 years has continued to focus on academic outcomes of students. The outcomes include standardized test scores, graduation rates, post-secondary aspirations and college attendance. Catholic schools, while they aspire to academic success, include among their primary objectives an understanding of the Catholic faith, a commitment to the practice of religion and a strong set of values. These goals, along with academic achievement, are the key components of the Catholic school’s effectiveness.

Catholic schools provide faith formation and values. Teachers view the formation of Christian character as a non-negotiable, which is Gospel centered environmental cross-curricular and essential in a society where values are often ignored.

The NCEA, founded in 1904, is a professional membership organization that provides leadership, direction and service to fulfill the evangelizing, catechizing and teaching mission of the church. NCEA members include elementary schools, high schools, parish religious education programs and seminaries.

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