

### **Catholic Schools: The Good News in Education**

Parents choose Catholic schools for their children because they emphasize academic enrichment and moral and spiritual development.

Catholic schools are known for their high level of academic achievement and high graduation rates. As a group, Catholic school students score above average on national academic tests. Nationally, 99.1 percent of students at Catholic high schools graduate. Of these graduates, 84.7 percent go to college, compared to 44.1 percent of public school graduates.

Catholic schools provide an education that goes beyond preparation for a secular life. They produce students dedicated to their faith, values, families and communities by providing an intellectually stimulating environment rich in spiritual and moral development.

Commitment to service is a core value of Catholic schools. Catholic students learn service—giving their time, talents and effort to help others—both as an expression of faith and good citizenship.

A Catholic school education is available in all regions of the country. Total Catholic school enrollment is about 2.1 million at close to 7,000 elementary and secondary schools. The average student-teacher ratio is 14 to 1.

Nearly 30 percent of Catholic school students come from minority populations. Enrollment of students who are not Catholic is 14.9 percent, an indication that many diverse families seek the benefits of a quality education with moral underpinnings.

Catholic schools play a key role in educating students of low-income families and students from the inner city. Urban schools represent 31.5 percent of the total number of Catholic schools, inner-city schools 11.5 percent, suburban schools 35.9 percent and rural schools 21 percent. The five states with the highest student enrollments in Catholic schools are California, New York, Illinois, Pennsylvania and Ohio.

Nearly half—42.5 percent—of students enrolled in U.S. private schools attend Catholic schools; 38.1 percent attend other religious schools and 19.4 percent go to nonsectarian schools.

In addition to providing quality education, Catholic schools offer economic benefits to the nation. Combined, Catholic elementary and secondary schools save taxpayers an estimated \$20 billion a year in education costs. They employ more than 151,000 full-time staff members.

