

# THE SUPERINTENDENT'S CHRONICLE

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A quarterly newsletter provided by Catapult Learning, *The Superintendent's Chronicle* offers Catholic school leaders at the chancery-level current insights, ideas, and information about the landscape of Catholic schools and helpful tools for addressing emerging challenges.

## 2023 – The Year of School Choice

The COVID pandemic that so radically interrupted the academic calendar and typical classroom instruction in the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years continues to shape policy discussions and legislative action. Providing parents with more choices, i.e., funded choices, remains a high priority for state legislatures around the country. In 2023, 17 states have passed measures either establishing or expanding such options.

Whether in the form of tax credits, vouchers, or educational savings accounts (ESAs), these programs allow parents to access funds to send their children to alternatives outside their local public school, such as Catholic schools, charter schools, or even home-schooling.

For a state-by-state summary of 2023 school choices initiatives, [click here](#).

## National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA Events)

[NCEA 2024: Together in Pittsburgh:  
Connections, Commitments,  
Community](#)

Pittsburgh, PA • April 2-4, 2024

Whether you are involved in early childhood education, elementary, secondary, higher education or local parish leadership, NCEA 2024 has something for all including an opportunity to attend professional development sessions on Connecting with Community, Centered in Christ, Leading the Way, Characterized by Excellence, Serving All Students and Committing to a Successful Tomorrow.



NCEA Catholic Leadership Summit 2023 (CLS)  
October 13 - 16, 2024 in Seattle, WA

*Wishing you a  
Happy New Year!*

## Recently Appointed Superintendents & Central Office Leaders

Congratulations and best wishes to the following new diocesan leaders from:

Kim White ([Diocese of Rockford](#))

Elias Moo ([Archdiocese of Portland](#))

## Recently Retired Superintendents

We honor and celebrate the years of service, witness, and formation provided by recently retired superintendents, including:

Kelly Lazzara ([Diocese of Richmond](#))

**While continuing to serve this school year, the following leaders announced that this would be their last year, including:**

Diane Starkovich ([Archdiocese of Atlanta](#))

Readers are welcome to send any updates to Fr. Ron Nuzzi [ron.nuzzi@catapultlearning.com](mailto:ron.nuzzi@catapultlearning.com) or at 330.652.7944).

## ***Changes to Equitable Services Resulting from New Guidance***

The Office of Non-Public Education is pleased to announce that the [webinar](#), Title VIII, Part F of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965: Equitable Services for Eligible Private School Children, Teachers, and Other Educational Personnel, Non-Regulatory Guidance is now available on the U.S. Department of Education's (Department) website. Links to the webinar, presentation slides, and guidance are available on the ONPE [ESEA webpage](#).

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## ***Keeping Younger Students Back a Grade Shows Benefits***

Few challenges are more perplexing to both teachers and parents than asking a low-performing student to repeat a grade. However, a recent study suggests that directing younger students to master fundamental material before moving on may be beneficial overall to their reading and math performance.

Researchers evaluated the effects of grade retention on students' academic, attendance, and disciplinary outcomes. Findings revealed that third grade retention increases achievement in English Language Arts (ELA) and math immediately and substantially, and the effects persist into middle school. No evidence of grade retention effects on student attendance or disciplinary incidents were found.

See NaYoung Hwang and Cory Koedel, Holding Back to Move Forward: The Effects of Retention in the Third Grade on Student Outcomes by [clicking here](#).

## ***Artificial Intelligence (AI)***

When ChatGPT first appeared in November 2022, excitement swept through the world of technology. Business titans, political leaders, educators, and parents all expressed concern about the potential adverse effects of such technology, even while simultaneously being amazed at its abilities. Now, several new AI applications have arrived with a specific focus on church-related activities and information.

[Magisterium AI](#) can answer questions about church teaching and practices, helping to explain complex theological concepts in simple, understandable language. It is also well versed in church history and philosophy. With its ability to summarize church teaching, it can be used to create educational resources.

[Catholic Chat](#) is focused on The Catechism of the Catholic Church and allows users to interact with this repository of church teaching through questions, searches, comparisons, and other general inquiries. It is also able to respond at three distinct levels of sophistication: Child; Simple and easy to understand; and Adult.

[Text with Jesus](#) is a downloadable app that is AI-powered, offering responses to queries based on the Bible and biblical figures. Users can select their own faith tradition to guide the doctrines and beliefs expressed.

## ***Excellence in Teaching Conference***

The University of Notre Dame is hosting its annual **Excellence in Teaching Conference** for practicing teachers across the country. This year's theme, Making Sense of a Mathematical World, recognizes the importance and challenges of effectively teaching mathematics in today's classrooms.

Join the inspiring conversation, **March 8-10, 2024**, in South Bend, IN on Notre Dame's campus as expert speakers and renowned math education scholars discuss how to support students to develop a deep understanding of mathematical ideas.

**[Register now](#)**



### ***Virtual Equitable Services Institute (ESI)***

In need of an update regarding equitable services? Curious about the new guidance from the U.S. Department of Education? January offers three online opportunities for quick but informative updates on a variety of critical issues. Sponsored by Michelle Doyle Educational Consulting (MDEC), the sessions are scheduled as follows:

#### **January 16–Day 1: Title IIA and the ESSA Consultation Process**

Learn the new requirements for Title IIA professional development program design, followed by an overview of the process for timely and meaningful consultation that applies to Title I, Title IIA, Title III for English Learners, and Title IVA for student support and academic enrichment.

#### **January 17–Day 2: Title I**

This session will focus on the Title I count of students to generate equitable funding, determining student needs, and services that can be provided.

#### **January 18–Day 3: IDEA Program**

IDEA provides special education and related services for qualified students. This session will cover the child find process and the provision of services.

All sessions are from 2:00-3:30 PM EST.

[Register here.](#)



### ***High Quality Research on Catholic Schools***

The ***Journal of Catholic Education*** (formerly Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice), is managed and edited by the University of Notre Dame and digitally hosted by Loyola Marymount University. An open access journal representing Catholic colleges and universities, Catholic education leaders, and scholars from a variety of disciplines, the journal is committed to contributing research and encouraging best practice in Catholic elementary, secondary, and higher education by advancing the field of Catholic educational research.

Sponsored by a dozen Catholic universities, the journal is now in its 26th year and is one of but a handful of journals worldwide dedicated exclusively to Catholic educational concerns. For free access, [click here](#).

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### ***Special Education Numbers Soar***

The number of students in special education in the USA has risen dramatically over the past four decades. In the 2021-22 school year, 7.3 million students, or 14.7 percent of all public school students nationwide, needed special education services. In 2011-12, that share was about 13 percent of all students, and back in 1976-77, the first year when the U.S. Department of Education collected these data following the 1975 passage of the Education for all Handicapped Children Act, students in special education made up but 8 percent of the overall student population, or 3.6 million students. In 45 years, the special education population has effectively doubled.

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### ***Global Researchers Advancing Catholic Education (G.R.A.C.E)***

[Global Researchers Advancing Catholic Education \(G.R.A.C.E.\)](#) is a new international research project and community of practice dedicated to expanding the knowledge base of Catholic educational research around the globe. Five institutions are leading this effort: Boston College in the USA; Mary Immaculate College in Limerick, Ireland; The University of Notre Dame Australia; Saint Mary's University in the UK; and the International Office of Catholic Education in Rome. Free access to a blog is available for those wishing to stay informed of conferences, publications, and other activities.



### ***Job-Embedded Coaching***

Though many find the concept of coaching as being the sole domain of athletic activities, instructional coaching of teachers has become a highly effective tool in supporting academic growth. Research consistently shows that teachers—particularly new teachers—who collaborate closely with instructional coaches are more likely to remain with their schools. School leaders can also benefit from coaching, particularly in setting strategic goals, managing conflict, and overseeing major transitions.

Job-embedded coaching is a real-time, in-the-moment support system for leaders and teachers as they strive to continuously improve classroom management, practices, and results.

Working closely with instructional leadership teams, coaches help to create a highly collaborative and personalized plan—one that is specifically designed to improve conditions for teaching and learning in your schools and to help teachers and leaders achieve positive student outcomes.

For more information on building teacher and leader capacity through job-embedded coaching, [click here](#).

### ***Professional Development Workshops & Speakers for Dioceses & Schools***

Many dioceses host large, annual gatherings of educators in a convention-type atmosphere to advance professional learning, build community, and to celebrate the joy of Catholic education. Individual schools, or even groups of schools, often organize their own professional development days around specific needs or themes. Identifying the best speakers and presenters for such days is often a challenge, with leaders typically relying on word-of-mouth recommendations from colleagues.

To assist in such planning or simply to stimulate creative thinking around educational advancement, a catalogue of professional development workshops is available, much of which can be funded with various Title funding such as Title IIa. To download an electronic version of a professional development catalogue, [click here](#).

### ***Professional Development Program for Diocesan & System Leaders***

Boston College's Roche Center for Catholic Education and Catapult Learning collaborate in supporting a professional learning community (PLC) for diocesan superintendents and network CEOs. The group meets monthly via Zoom to share prayer, best practices, emerging research, and familiar challenges. Two in-person retreats are held annually, one in the winter and another in fall.

For more information about joining, please contact Dr. Melodie Wyttenbach at Boston College ([mwytttenba@bc.edu](mailto:mwytttenba@bc.edu)), Fr. Ron Nuzzi at Catapult Learning ([ron.nuzzi@catapultlearning.com](mailto:ron.nuzzi@catapultlearning.com)) or [click here](#).



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