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.



Recent Changes Among Superintendents and Central Office Leaders for Catholic Education

Congratulations and best wishes to the following recently appointed (arch)diocesan superintendents:

Dora Jung	**Diocese of Sioux City**
Christina Moran	**Diocese of Springfield, IL**
Matt Walter	**Archdiocese of Chicago**

We honor and celebrate the years of service, witness, and formation provided by superintendents who recently left their positions or have announced their upcoming transition, including:

Chris Fisher	**Archdiocese of San Francisco**

Readers are welcome to send any updates to Fr. Ron Nuzzi ron.nuzzi@catapultlearning.com or at 330.652.7944.

Catholic Leadership Summit (CLS) Grand Rapids

The National Catholic Educational Association's (NCEA) annual leadership summit was held in Grand Rapids, MI on October 18-21, 2026 at the Amway Grand Plaza. Over 200 diocesan leaders, university faculty, policy experts, and partner vendors attended. Catapult Learning hosted Monday evening's dinner along with Sadlier, Flyn O'Hara, and Corporate Travel at the nearby Grand Rapids Public Museum. In addition to local historical displays, the museum featured a 1928 Spillman Carousel which was available for rides and photographs.



A fun evening at the Grand Rapids Public Museum

CLS 2027 is planned for October 24-27 in Jacksonville, FL.

IDEA Decisions Impacting Catholic Schools

In a series of new and important rulings from the U.S. Department of Education (ED), several states have been found in violation of important essential elements of IDEA. Major decisions from ED detailed ongoing transgressions and required remedies in California and Florida that impact multiple districts and dioceses, hundreds of schools, and thousands of students. A summary of these decisions can be found at the end of this edition of the Chronicle. To read ED's decision to diocesan superintendents in California, click here.

For some thoughtful analysis, click here.

EQUITABLE EDUCATION SERVICES

For immediate support with your own IDEA issues, be welcome to reach out to Henry Fortier. Fortier is the former superintendent in the Diocese of Orlando and has extensive experience in the archdioceses of Baltimore and New York. Henry now leads Equitable Educational Services and is available to help educate school leaders about all types of federal programs and troubleshoot problem areas, especially IDEA. Click here or email Henry at henry.fortier.essa@gmail.com.

Federal Scholarship Tax Credit (FSTC) Regulations Announced

The U.S. Department of the Treasury (TREAS) released the long awaited regulations for the 2027 implementation of the FSTC, including guidance regarding Scholarship Granting Organizations (SGOs), permitting a $3400 credit for married couples filing jointly, and strong encouragement for all eligible wage earners to participate. Of particular note is the fact that all taxpayers with federal tax liability are able to participate by diverting up to $1700 of their taxes to a qualified SGO. Students' ability to receive a scholarship from an SGO requires that they live in a participating state, but if your state of residence is not participating (shame on them), you can still contribute to an out-of-state SGO of your liking, perhaps one congruent with your values.

While it is regrettable that any state would not participate and so deny school-aged students such additional educational supports, that fact alone should not stop Catholic parents, church employees, faculty, and clergy from contributing to an out-of-state SGO. First, it is an exemplary way to stand in solidarity with children, families, and the broader civic community in showing support for the education of children. Second, the net cost of doing so is zero. This is a tax credit, dollar-for-dollar, and comes right off the total federal income tax owed. Finally, it is perhaps the best way to apply political pressure to recalcitrant governors and other state leaders, none of whom want to see money leaving their state that could otherwise benefit in-state children.

Getting Into the Weeds: Details and More on the Federal Scholarship Tax Credit (FSTC)

Two sets of rules were recently released. The proposed regulations will govern the program after revisions and following the standard comment period. These will go into effect in 2028. The temporary regulations are limited to program operations for calendar 2027 only.

- Proposed regulations
- Temporary regulations

A helpful interpretation, translating elements of the statue into practical rules for operation impact can be found here.

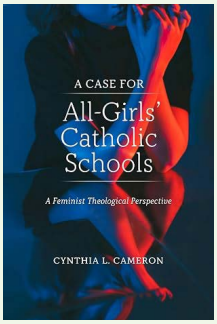
Annual NCEA Convention in Indianapolis

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis will serve as host for the 2027 NCEA Convention. The event, held annually during the octave of Easter, comes a bit early and will be held in downtown Indianapolis March 30 to April 1, 2027. For convention information, including registration, speakers, and housing, visit the NCEA website here.

In April 2028, the NCEA Convention is scheduled to be in Anaheim, CA.

A Case for All Girls' Catholic Schools

Professor Cynthia Cameron from St. Michael's Faculty of Theology at the University of Toronto recently published a new book, focused on the advantages of all girls Catholic schools. *A Case for All Girls' Catholic Schools* considers the challenges faced by young girls today and responds that a Catholic school is well positioned to meet the spiritual, psychological, emotional, and developmental needs of girls, all in service of their maturation, academic growth, and faith formation. While achievement data have consistently highlighted the outstanding performance of such single-sex schools, Cameron breaks new ground in this new, integrated approach to the particular needs of young girls.



Published by The Catholic University of America Press, the books is available here.

Dr. Cameron will be discussing her insights in this new book with the Superintendents' PLC in February 2027.

If you would like to participate in this session, please contact Fr. Ron Nuzzi at 330.652.7944 or ron.nuzzi@catapultlearning.com

U.S. Population Growth Ups & Downs

According to recent research reported by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University, the southern part of the U.S. has experienced a net gain of more than 7.4 million Catholics from 2000 to 2025. The West has seen minimal net growth, adding 1 million Catholics. During the same time period, the Northeast lost 4.4 million Catholics and the Midwest lost 2.3 million. This is part of the broader overall and long-term shift of the population from the Rust Belt to the Sun Belt.

Dramatic changes in several states stand out as particularly noteworthy. Among them:

- In 2000, Alaska had a Catholic population of just over 50,000. Today, Alaska has 110,000 Catholics, a 111% increase during a time when the overall state population growth was but 1%.
- The Catholic population of South Carolina grew 250% while the state's overall population growth was 37%. In 2000, South Carolina had 136,000 Catholics. Today, there are 450,000 Catholics in the state.
- Catholic population growth is outpacing total population growth in several other southern states, including Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee.
- Oklahoma's Catholic population has gone from 170,000 in 2000 to 250,000 today, a growth of 80% compared to a 23% growth in total state population.
- Nevada reported 695,000 Catholics today, up from 330,000 in 2000, a 107% growth rate, while the state population grew by 64%.

For a more detailed statistical breakdown and analysis, see "Where the Catholic Population Has Changed the Most," by Mark Gray, August 27, 2025 in The Cara Blog here.

Catholic Gains & Losses: A Top Ten List

The ten dioceses that gained the most Catholics from 2000-2020, followed by the ten diocese that lost the most Catholics from 2000-2020.

Ten (arch)dioceses that gained the most	Catholic Population
Atlanta	+939,000
San Bernadino	+878,000
Fort Worth	+871,000
Galveston-Houston	+749,000
Dallas	+691,000
Phoenix	+649,000
San Diego	+591,000
Sacramento	+571,000
New York	+419,000
Charlotte	+390,000

Ten (arch)dioceses that lost the most	Catholic Population
Miami	-340,000
Brooklyn	-335,000
Detroit	-300,000
Hartford	-296,000
Chicago	-231,000
Cleveland	-183,000
Philadelphia	-164,000
Buffalo	-162,000
Syracuse	-149,000
Milwaukee	-137,000

Professional Learning Community (PLC) for Superintendents

Boston College's Roche Center for Catholic Education and Catapult Learning continue to sponsor a PLC for diocesan superintendents and other Catholic school system leaders. In addition to monthly Zoom meetings, the PLC meets twice during the year in person for retreats and professional development. The fall 2026 retreat, immediately prior to the NCEA CLS gathering, was held in South Haven, MI on October 16-18, 2026. A Lenten retreat will be held at Manresa Jesuit Retreat Center in Dublin, Ireland, March 1-4, 2027. For information about joining the PLC, contact Melodie Wyttenbach (mwyttenba@bc.edu) or Fr. Ron Nuzzi (ron.nuzzi@catapultlearning.com).





Superintendents gathered for a retreat prior to CLS at The Water's View Inn, South Haven, MI.

"Where is Catholicism Growing in the U.S?" by Jonah McKeown was published in the National Catholic Register on August 24, 2025 and is available here.

Previous issues of The Superintendent's Chronicle dating back to Summer 2023 can be found here.

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Owner/Principal Consultant

IDEA & PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Violations and Findings from Recent California Complaint Summary

SERVING STUDENTS. SUPPORTING SCHOOLS. STRENGTHENING OPPORTUNITIES.

For parentally placed private school children with disabilities, IDEA places specific responsibilities on the LEA. Recent U.S. Department of Education findings in California highlight LEA violations resulting in a **5 year recalculation in back funding.**

1 CHILD FIND

- The LEA where the private school is located is responsible for locating, identifying, and evaluating students suspected of having disabilities.
- Child find must be ongoing and comparable in scope and timing to the process used for public school students.
- RTI/MTSS cannot be required as a prerequisite before the LEA evaluates a private school child.
- Evaluation cannot be delayed simply because the private school has not completed an RTI/MTSS process.
- The LEA must maintain accurate data on students evaluated, found eligible, and served.

COMPLIANCE CONCERNS

- "Complete MTSS first, then we will consider an evaluation."
- Private school referrals face extra steps or delays not imposed on public school students.
- Very few private school students are being identified despite significant enrollment or referrals.

2 CONSULTATION

- Consultation must be timely, meaningful, and occur during the design and development of services—not after decisions are already made.
- The LEA must consult with private school representatives and representatives of parents of parentally placed private school children with disabilities.
- Required discussion includes child find, proportionate share, service options, where/by whom services will be provided, and how consultation will continue throughout the year.
- Private school views must receive due consideration.
- If the LEA rejects private school recommendations about services, it must provide a written explanation of its reasons.
- Written affirmation follows meaningful consultation; it should not be requested in advance.

COMPLIANCE CONCERNS

- The LEA arrives with the service model already decided or with a single offering like speech therapy or consultative services in lieu of direct services.
- Requests for direct services or third-party providers are dismissed without meaningful discussion.
- An annual meeting or student-level case management is treated as the entire consultation process.

3 EQUITABLE SERVICES & FUNDS

- The LEA must annually calculate and expend the required proportionate share of IDEA Part B funds for equitable services.
- The calculation depends on an accurate count of eligible parentally placed private school children with disabilities—so inaccurate child find can directly reduce the amount available.
- How the proportionate share will be used is determined through consultation; eligible private school students do not have an individual entitlement to a particular service.
- Services may include direct services and may be delivered by the LEA or through a third party, as determined through consultation.
- Child find/evaluation costs are separate and may not be charged against the required proportionate share.

COMPLIANCE CONCERNS

- The LEA cannot explain how the proportionate share was calculated or spent.
- Significant funds remain unused while identified needs go unmet.
- The LEA treats one service model as non-negotiable rather than a consultation topic.

WHAT SHOULD A PRIVATE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL DO?

1 DOCUMENT
Keep emails, referrals, meeting notes, rosters, service records, and funding information.

2 ASK QUESTIONS
Request the child-find process, proportionate-share calculation, expenditures, and service options.

3 REQUEST CONSULTATION
Ask for follow-up consultation when important issues remain unresolved.

4 ESCALATE IF NEEDED
Private school officials may file a consultation complaint with the SEA and may appeal an adverse SEA decision to the U.S. Secretary of Education.

OUR COMMITMENT

Equitable Education Services, LLC (EES) empowers private schools with the knowledge, tools, and advocacy they need to ensure equitable access to federal IDEA services for their students.

Learn more about our trainings, tools, and resources at

equitableeducationservices.com

Key authorities: IDEA § 612(a)(10)(A); 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.129–300.144, especially §§ 300.131, 300.133–300.136.
Federal reference: U.S. Department of Education, OSERS, Aug. 3, 2026 California IDEA appeal decision; OSEP QA 22-01 (Feb. 2022).