

# FLORIDA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

201 WEST PARK AVENUE  
TALLAHASSEE, FL 32301-7760

PHONE (850) 222-3803  
FAX (850) 205-6849  
WWW.FLACCB.ORG

MICHAEL B. SHEEDY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



May 20, 2020

The Honorable Ron DeSantis  
Governor  
400 S. Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

***Re: Please include children in Catholic schools, as the GEER fund is distributed***

Dear Governor DeSantis:

The Catholic school community is grateful to be included in the conversations, communications, and decisions regarding education in Florida during this COVID-19 pandemic. All of our K-12 schools followed the recommendation to close campuses and use remote learning for the last quarter of the 2019-2020 school year. Our superintendents and administrators were able to pivot very quickly, prepare robust instructional continuity plans, and meet the needs of our students and families. The biggest obstacle that our students faced was connectivity. Our schools loaned out devices, and assisted with WiFi connections, as much as they could.

As you consider how best to use the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER), we ask that you consider the needs of students in the Catholic schools. We estimate that the cost per child to actively participate in remote learning is \$460 per child plus approximately \$1,200 per school. These dollars would allow each student to have a device and hotspot (where needed) in alignment with the COVID-19 Education Recovery Plan from the Florida Department of Education.

As schools have evaluated this year's eLearning, administrators have noted the need to make improvements that will allow for increased video capability and sound quality that would facilitate the students' ability to interact effectively across buildings and zip codes. These improvements could include increased bandwidth, preferably fiber, as well as high quality equipment. Using federal funds to improve technology and connectivity will benefit all students. It will allow schools to make the upgrades to their systems that will aid them in reopening the campuses, as soon as possible, following the Safe. Smart. Step-by-Step. Plan for Florida's Recovery.

Your administration has continued to lead the nation in providing parents their right to choose where, when, and how their children are educated. The Catholic school community appreciates the priority given to the Voluntary Prekindergarten Program, School Readiness Program, and our scholarship programs.

In order to continue to serve all families, we ask that you include Catholic school students as the GEER fund is distributed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael B. Sheedy". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Michael B. Sheedy

cc: The Hon. Richard Corcoran, Commissioner of Education

***ARCHDIOCESE OF MIAMI - DIOCESE OF ST. AUGUSTINE - DIOCESE OF ST. PETERSBURG - DIOCESE OF ORLANDO  
DIOCESE OF PENSACOLA-TALLAHASSEE - DIOCESE OF PALM BEACH - DIOCESE OF VENICE***