

Catholic Public Policy Commission of Tennessee

Education Committee Statement of Parental School Choice

For nearly 150 years, the Church has unequivocally taught that parents have the right and responsibility to serve as the primary educators of their children. In both written word and lived witness the Church has articulated clearly that children have the universal right to an education in faith, and the state has the fundamental obligation to enable such a right.

In recognition of the principle that parents are indeed the primary educators, and that equality of educational opportunity is the birthright of every child in this country, the Bishops of Tennessee affirm their commitment to empowering parents and their children with the ability to determine the best education for their children. Public policy that provides at-risk families with the ability to select from a variety of high-quality, accountable schools will strengthen our communities, support the work of extraordinary teachers and school leaders, and empower children.

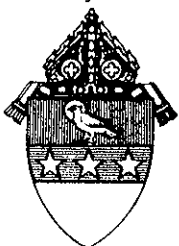
Beginning with the belief that parents are the primary educators of their children, and noting that there is no United States constitutional prohibition that prevents government support for parental choice, the Bishops of Tennessee affirm their commitment to parental choice.

While Americans have the right to choose the school they believe will best serve their children, too many Americans are prohibited from fully participating in this choice due to the location in which they reside or to the cost of private school tuition. Virtually all-low income and many middle-income families cannot exercise their right to choose the schools they want to educate their children. Sadly, lower performing schools are often located in lower socio-economic geographic areas as well.

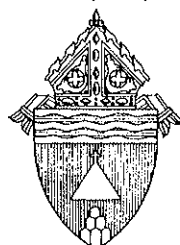
Public education is funded by revenue from taxes. Using this tax revenue in a more equitable manner to support programs such as vouchers and scholarships will ensure all parents have the financial means to select the appropriate school for their children.

We affirm the dignity and respect of every child and are committed to accountability in educational efforts and programs. We support the empowerment of parents and their children.

Diocese of Nashville



Diocese of Memphis



Diocese of Knoxville

