



# Catholic Conference of Ohio

December 18, 2009

## **Budget Bill Includes Potential Funding for Catholic School Students**

HB 318, Ohio's compromise budget bill, includes a provision to restore funds cut from programs for students in Catholic schools. The provision allows the state to transfer surplus money in the state budget to the Auxiliary Services and Administrative Cost Reimbursement Programs. These two programs provide pupil services and instructional resources for students attending Catholic and other chartered nonpublic schools.

Restored funding rests on two contingencies: (1) that at the end of each fiscal year, there is a surplus in the state budget that exceeds a designated amount; (2) that there are unexpended, unencumbered funds in the state's education budget to cover transfer of funds to the two programs.

While there is no guarantee that these conditions will occur, residual funds have remained in the state budget in past years. The Conference is hopeful that such funds again will be available in this budget and in future years.

In the midst of economically distressing times, the Conference is pleased with legislative leaders, especially Governor Strickland, Senate President Harris and House Speaker Budish, for including this provision in HB 318. We see the measure as a good first step to restoring funding for students in chartered nonpublic schools.

Funding for students in chartered nonpublic school students was cut by almost \$69 million between September, 2008 and September, 2009. These funds provide students with services and resources critical to the education of students in all schools: public and nonpublic. Through the Auxiliary Services Program, students in nonpublic schools obtain textbooks, computer software, standardized testing, and instructional materials. They also receive the services of guidance counselors, school nurses, remedial reading and math teachers, and speech and hearing therapists.

Under the Administrative Cost Reimbursement Program, Catholic schools, which are chartered by the State Board of Education and meet Ohio's Operating Standards for schools, are reimbursed for complying with certain federal, state and local requirements as defined by law.

Over 185,000 students attend Ohio's Catholic and other chartered nonpublic schools. These schools save the taxpayers of Ohio \$2 billion in educational costs that the state would pay if these students were attending public schools. On average, the state spends \$6,903 in state and local dollars to educate a student in a public school. For each student attending a chartered nonpublic school, the state realizes a cost savings of more than \$6,000. Moreover, less than 3 percent of Ohio's education budget is committed to the education of students attending Catholic and other chartered nonpublic schools.