

School Choice



One of the things we treasure in the United States is our freedom. We have the freedom to choose where we want to live. We have the freedom to choose what job or career we want to pursue. We have the freedom to express our own thoughts. We have the freedom to practice our religion. Everybody has these freedoms and others. But my fear is that we are losing the freedom of school choice.

Do you know what percentage of your income goes to taxes? I don't just mean what tax bracket you're in. I'm talking about how much of your gross income is spent on all the taxes you pay throughout the year. You probably know what percent your federal tax is. But let's think about the other taxes that you pay. You pay state income tax, sales tax, social security and medicare, property tax, fuel tax, estate taxes, gift taxes, capital gains, vehicle taxes, and a host of other taxes *and* fees! I realize not all of these taxes go to support public schools. My point is that you are supporting the government at probably something close to 50% of your gross income. And generally speaking you get something back for that. You have nice roads, police protection, fire protection, parks, etc. These services cost the government money and you pay the government for them.

Most of you reading this have chosen to send your children to St. Columbkille. You have effectively released the government from the responsibility of educating your child. So it costs the government *nothing* for your child's education.

Your neighbors down the street are sending their children to the local public school. It is costing the government thousands of dollars (some of which is your money) to educate each one of their children. And guess what? If you start sending your children there, it will cost the government thousands of dollars to educate your children too.

When you look at it like that, you are doing the government a favor. What do you think would happen if all of the Catholic schools in Omaha decided to shut down and starting tomorrow thousands of new students suddenly showed up at the doors of the public schools asking to be

enrolled? I guarantee you that they would panic. First of all, they don't have room for us. Second, they don't have enough money to educate us.

A strong, thriving Catholic School System is an advantage to everyone. Your children get the benefit of a Catholic education, and the government has fewer kids to educate in the public school for the money they allocate for education spending. How many of you have ever received a "thank you" from the government or from the public school for this?

This week I will be writing to the state senator for my district. I will share some of the same thoughts and opinions that I've shared in this article. However, I plan to take it a step further and ask him to support tax credits for people who choose to educate their children in private schools. This makes it a little more fair for those of you who choose to have your children educated in a private school. You are already paying taxes to support other children's education. Isn't it time you got a little of that back to support the education of your own children?

Let's start asking our state legislators to support the freedom of school choice for those who wish to send their children to private schools. After all, you've been supporting public schools for years.

In His Service,
Jim Makey, Principal