



A CALL TO TEXAS CATHOLIC LEADERS TO SUPPORT PARENT EMPOWERMENT AND ESAs

KEY POINTS

- Parents have both the responsibility and right to educate their children.
- The State's role is to support parents, not replace them.
- ESAs empower parents and increase student achievement.

IN PRACTICE

Empowering parents helps children. For example, in 1998, Florida's low-income students ranked #34 in the nation on reading and #27 in math. With choice, today they are #1. In the words of one graduate:

"Hard work paired with a strong moral foundation makes education powerful. My family's success wouldn't have been possible without school choice, which gave us access to that environment."

Hera Varmah,
A Florida Choice Alumni

A PARENT'S ROLE AS EDUCATOR

According to Texas law, "parental involvement in the school is essential for the maximum educational achievement of a child."¹ Catholic teaching takes this a step further:

[Parents'] role as educators is so decisive that scarcely anything can compensate for their failure. It devolves on parents to create a family atmosphere so animated with love and reverence for God and others that a well-rounded personal and social development will be fostered among the children. Hence, the family is the first school of those social virtues which every society needs.²

Accordingly, parents have both the responsibility and the right to educate their children.

THE STATE'S ROLE IN EDUCATION

According to the Catholic teaching of *subsidiarity*, the state should empower and respect parents.³ As Pope Francis teaches:

The State offers educational programs in a *subsidiary* way, supporting the parents in their indeclinable role; parents themselves enjoy the right to choose freely the kind of education—accessible and of good quality—which they wish to give their children in accordance with their convictions. Schools do not replace parents but complement them.⁴

A CALL TO EMPOWER PARENTS

We believe that Texas parents should be empowered with greater transparency, quality,

respect, and choices in their child's education. Education Savings Accounts (ESAs) are a key program that does so.

ESAs have funds that allow parents to pay for tuition at any accredited school of the parent's choosing, as well as for tutoring, books, transportation, or other approved educational expenses. Thirty-one states have similar programs and 14 have ESAs.

Please pray for Texas and for our legislators, that they may pass laws which strengthen families and recognize that parents are their children's primary educators. You can learn more at txparentsmatter.com/ESAs.

Learn how parent empowerment is resulting in a renewal of Catholic education in Florida.



Endnotes

1. Texas Edu. Code § [4.001\(a\)](#).
2. John Paul II, [On the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World](#) § 36.
3. CSDC § [185-188](#); Pius XI, [On Reconstruction of the Social Order](#) § 79.
4. Pope Francis, [On Love in the Family](#) § 84.



"Hard work paired with a strong moral foundation makes education powerful. My family's success wouldn't have been possible without school choice, which gave us access to that environment. Without my parents being blessed with the choice of which school to send us to we would not be where we are today. My three older brothers have graduated from college with their bachelor's degree. I graduated from Florida A&M University with my bachelor's in Food Science and Technology. So, when people say that school choice doesn't work, I simply show them my family."

-HERA VARMAH (FLORIDA)



"My daughter is almost six. She's had an Empowerment Scholarship Account (ESA) since she was three years old. She is autistic, has a speech delay, occupational therapy needs, and a short attention span. Having the ESA opened many doors for my daughter to be able to learn in different ways. We homeschool her with a Christian curriculum called My Fathers World. I love that we get to prioritize Jesus Christ in my daughter's education and in her life. She also gets to go to weekly swim classes, dance classes, and equine therapy for social interaction with other children. All families should be able to choose the right education for their child because parents know what is best for our child."

-BRENNA MANGANO (ARIZONA)