

# Mustard seed grants help schools secure future

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Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Baltimore are getting help establishing or growing their endowments thanks to a newly launched initiative called the Mustard Seed program.

Using a portion of funds raised in the “Embracing Our Mission – Securing Our Future” capital campaign, the program offers \$1 for every \$2 raised by Catholic schools. Archdiocesan elementary schools are eligible to receive up to \$75,000 in matching grants, with archdiocesan high schools eligible for up to \$100,000.

Independent Catholic schools operating in the archdiocese are also participating in the program and are eligible for maximum matching grants that top out at a slightly lower level than archdiocesan schools.

James Sellinger, archdiocesan chancellor of Catholic schools, noted that 43 schools have participated in the program since it debuted at the end of last year, with “several hundred thousand” dollars raised. The program runs through the end of 2015 and is operated through the archdiocesan development office.

“We’re early in the game,” he said, “but the early returns are good.”

Sellinger said endowments are “critical” to the sustainability and future of Catholic schools since they help lessen dependency on tuition.

“It’s no different from saving for retirement,” he said. “You are saving for the future.”

Although endowments have been utilized by most high schools in recent years, he said, they are somewhat new to many elementary schools.

Many schools are raising money through annual appeals, the chancellor said, and matching grants give them the impetus to redouble their efforts.

“Many schools have their annual appeals already in motion,” he said. “They can go back out now to their constituencies and explain the matching-grant opportunity. It’s a great return on the investment.”

Sellinger strongly encouraged schools to take advantage of the program.

“The Department of Schools and the Development Office are ready, willing and able to help any school that needs assistance in helping to raise dollars to establish and grow these endowments,” he said.

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