

New report shows economic benefits of Catholic schools

A newly released report by the Sage Policy Group, Inc. has found that Catholic school students in the Archdiocese of Baltimore produce higher test scores, are more likely to graduate and are more likely to attend and graduate from college than their public school counterparts.

The study found that the presence of Catholic schools is of disproportionate benefit to older and lower-income communities, with Catholic school graduates expected to earn more money and support more jobs, income formation and business sales in the broader economy.

Catholic school graduates will contribute more to state and local government coffers than their public school counterparts, the study said, and are more likely to emerge as societal leaders and organizers.

The Sage report also noted that Catholic schools reduce state and local public educational expenses by tens of millions of dollars every year and can be a stabilizing presence in older communities.

“All policymakers and donors should be aware of the myriad benefits produced by Catholic schools and their graduates,” the report said, “and should be willing to support emerging models that are successfully building Catholic school capacity anew, including in older communities with large numbers of low-income residents and in newer communities that are yet to enjoy the benefits of being able to select a Catholic education.”

Sage analysts determined that the schools of the Archdiocese of Baltimore support nearly 5,400 jobs in the region associated with labor income of \$212 million. The report found that Catholic schools in the Baltimore archdiocese saved Maryland \$180 million in 2008-09, including \$72 million in Baltimore County and \$22 million in Baltimore City.

“Based on the average cost of supplying educational services to a public school

student in Maryland,” the report said, “the State of Maryland saved roughly \$200 million per year in expenditures due to the presence of Catholic school capacity. This equals over \$380 million total funds saved by state and local governments per year.”

Citing high Catholic school test scores, which rank above the national percentile rankings, the report said higher educational attainment translates into higher lifetime earnings.

Sage analysis showed that for every 23,100 Catholic school graduates, lifetime earnings will be \$5.2 billion more than for the equal number of public school graduates. That translates into approximately \$225,000 per graduate over the course of a working lifetime, the report said.

The report noted that in the 2008-09 school year, 82 percent of graduating seniors from Archdiocese of Baltimore high schools were preparing to attend college.

“Once one adds in data for those set to attend two-year colleges,” the report said, “the number rises to an astonishing 97 percent or more than 30 percentage points higher than the public school proportion.”