

# Statement on President Obama's Speech to Nation's School Children

On Wednesday, September 2, the White House announced that President Obama will deliver a national address to the students of America on Tuesday, September 8 at 12 p.m. According to the White House, the President is scheduled to speak for 15-20 minutes and will "challenge students to work hard, set educational goals, and take responsibility for their learning."

It is believed that this will be the first time that an American president has spoken directly to the nation's school children about persisting and succeeding in school.

Since news of the address was first reported, the Catholic Center and several Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Baltimore have been contacted by parents, teachers and others expressing a desire that parents be given the opportunity to request that their children be excused from viewing the address.

Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien, Archbishop of Baltimore, acknowledges the historic significance of the President's speech and is fully supportive of the educational messages the White House says the President will deliver. However, he agrees that parents should ultimately have the right to choose whether their child views the address and will ask Catholic schools in the Archdiocese to communicate this to parents.

"We respect the rights of our parents to decide what's best for their children in this matter and our schools will be asked to make arrangements for children not watching the program in an alternate venue in order to offer an opportunity for discussion about the role and responsibilities of the presidency and the value of education," the Archbishop said.