

Superintendent looks to future of schools at financial summit

Archdiocese of Baltimore School Superintendent Barbara McGraw Edmondson recently met with leaders of 26 dioceses and archdioceses to explore innovative solutions to the financial challenges Catholic schools face. The meeting took place during the National Catholic Educational Association's Financial Summit on Catholic Schools at Loyola University, Chicago.

"The goal of the summit was to encourage Catholic leaders to think of innovative ways we can sustain and strengthen our schools," Edmondson said. "It was a substantive exchange of ideas and a great launching point. Ultimately, we must continue the conversation as collaborative leaders with a common mission."

The summit drew Catholic bishops, chief financial officers, and school superintendents from Catholic school systems across the country with enrollments of 20,000 or more students.

In two panel presentations, Catholic educators shared their success stories. A "Finance" panel included Scott Jensen, senior strategist at the American Federation for Children, who discussed expanding access to Catholic schools through school choice; John R. Erickson, Diocese of Paterson, N.J., schools superintendent, who talked about benefits and challenges of centralized financing in Catholic schools; and Dr. Michael J. Fedewa, Diocese of Raleigh, N.C., schools superintendent, who gave a presentation on "From Cost-Based to Parochial: One Size Does Not Fit All."

A "New Ideas" panel featured Dr. Kevin Baxter, Archdiocese of Los Angeles elementary schools superintendent, who looked at innovation and growth; Anne P. Battes, president of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Ohio, Catholic Education Collaborative, who talked about how the collaborative unites communities for excellence; and Jeffrey L. Hausman, founder and executive director of the Jesuit Virtual Learning Academy, who discussed the role of technology as a renewal tool for Catholic schools.