

# Venture aims to strengthen relationship with Catholic schools, colleges

ROCHESTER, N.Y. - The Rochester-based Catholic Education Foundation, an organization that provides scholarships nationwide to Catholic high school students, has announced a new effort to expand and strengthen the relationships that Catholic elementary and secondary schools have with Catholic colleges.

The venture is a joint effort with the Cardinal Newman Society, a national organization based in Virginia that works “to help renew and strengthen Catholic identity in Catholic higher education,” as its mission statement says.

One issue the new venture plans to address is how Catholic colleges can support the work of Catholic elementary and secondary schools through a program called “Interdependence Project,” which would pair Catholic high schools and colleges.

The venture also is initiating a program to help Catholic grade schools and high schools assess their Catholic identity. To facilitate this, the Catholic Education Foundation said it will offer a diagnostic tool called the “Catholic School Identity Assessment” to help them spot their strengths and weaknesses.

The foundation’s announcement also said another aspect of the venture will be an awareness campaign to educate the public “on how many tax dollars Catholic schools save the government-supported education system.” The campaign will include bumper stickers and signs that can be displayed in front of schools to indicate the amount of money the school saved taxpayers per year.

The foundation said the campaign’s ultimate goal is to see legislation passed to provide vouchers, tax credits or “some other instrument to reduce the financial burden” on parents who want to send their children to Catholic schools.

As part of the new venture, a panel has been put together whose members include Cardinal Sean P. O’Malley of Boston; Franciscan Father Michael Scanlon, chancellor

of the University of Steubenville, Ohio; Dominican Sister Elizabeth Anne Allen, vice president for academic affairs at Aquinas College, Nashville, Tenn.; William Thierfelder, president of Belmont Abbey College in North Carolina; Sister Marie Pappas, a Sister of the Resurrection, who is the New York Archdiocese's associate superintendent for mission effectiveness; and author Kenneth Whitehead, a former U.S. Education Department official.

"The Catholic Education Foundation has done outstanding work toward renewing and strengthening Catholic elementary and secondary education," Patrick Reilly, president of the Cardinal Newman Society, said in a statement. "We are thrilled to support this good work and the important cooperation of faithful Catholic colleges with our Catholic schools."

Father Peter Stravinskis, executive director of the Catholic Education Foundation, praised the society for its support and noted that the foundation is trying to do for elementary and secondary Catholic schools what the society has been promoting for Catholic higher education since it was founded in 1993.

Besides offering scholarships, the foundation also coordinates teacher-development with college programs and assists in recruiting and training of qualified teachers.

*More information about this new venture is available at [www.catholiceducationfoundation.com](http://www.catholiceducationfoundation.com).*