

scholarship. If you have any questions regarding The Guardian Catholic Schools scholarship program, or would like to apply, please call the school you are enrolling your child in directly, either St. Pius V or Holy Rosary.

**Amount of Assistance:** Dependent upon funds availability and family financial need.

**Further Information:** To request additional information, please contact Guardian Catholic Schools: The Guardian Catholic Schools, 4920 Brentwood Avenue, Jacksonville Florida, 32206. Phone: 904-765-1920; Fax: 904-765-8155 or contact Merwin Denny, Development Director – mdenny@guardiancatholicschools.org

## Self-Help Planning and Saving Coverdell Education Savings Account (ESA)

**Description:** A Coverdell ESA is a trust or custodial account that may be established by any individual, including, but not limited to a parent or guardian, grandparent or other relative to be used solely to pay the “qualified education expenses” of a “designated beneficiary.” These accounts are outstanding, flexible, vehicles that may be used to fund Catholic educations in grades K through 12. Although these accounts represent an excellent opportunity to pay for Catholic school education at almost any age of the child, the utility of the accounts is augmented the earlier the age of the child beneficiary. Some parents, for instance, have found it beneficial to begin making contribution to such accounts soon after the birth of their children.

**Requirements:** (a) the account may be opened in the U.S. at any bank or other IRS-approved entity that offers Coverdell ESAs; (b) the beneficiary of the account must be under 18 years old, unless the beneficiary is a “special needs beneficiary;” (c) any individual, including the beneficiary may contribute to the account provided

the contributor meets “modified adjusted gross income” requirements; (d) the account may be used to pay qualified educational expenses at: (1) virtually any accredited public or private elementary or high school, including Catholic schools (grades K-12); and (2) virtually any accredited college or university.

**Qualified Educational Expenses:** For grade schools and high schools, these include, but are not limited to: (a) tuition and fees; (b) books, supplies, and equipment; (c) academic tutoring; (d) special needs services for special needs beneficiaries; and (e) some computer hardware and software. Additionally, if required by the academic institution, the account may be used to cover the costs of uniforms, room and board, transportation, and supplemental items and services.

**Limitations to Contributions to the ESA Account:** The current amount that any contributor may contribute annually to each beneficiary is \$2,000. If others are contributing to the same account for the same beneficiary, the total accumulated annual contributions to the account may not exceed \$2,000. This amount, however, may be reduced, depending upon the modified adjusted gross income (MAGI). At the time of this printing the maximum contribution is reduced if, for a single taxpayer, the MAGI is between \$95,000 and \$110,000, and for taxpayers filing joint returns, the contribution is reduced if the MAGI is between \$190,000 and \$220,000. The amount of reduction can be calculated by following the guidelines in IRS Publication 970.

**Tax Free Distributions:** Although Coverdell ESA contributions are not tax deductible, the distributions from the ESA account are TAX FREE, provided that the distributions are not more than the beneficiary’s adjusted qualified education expenses.

**Further Information:** This savings program is subject to federal tax laws permitting the accounts. As a creature of law, the terms and permissible contributions may change by legislative and rule-making action in the Congress. Accordingly, please refer to the IRS guidelines for these accounts. Additionally, it is recommended that you check with your financial institution to provide practical information regarding ESA accounts.

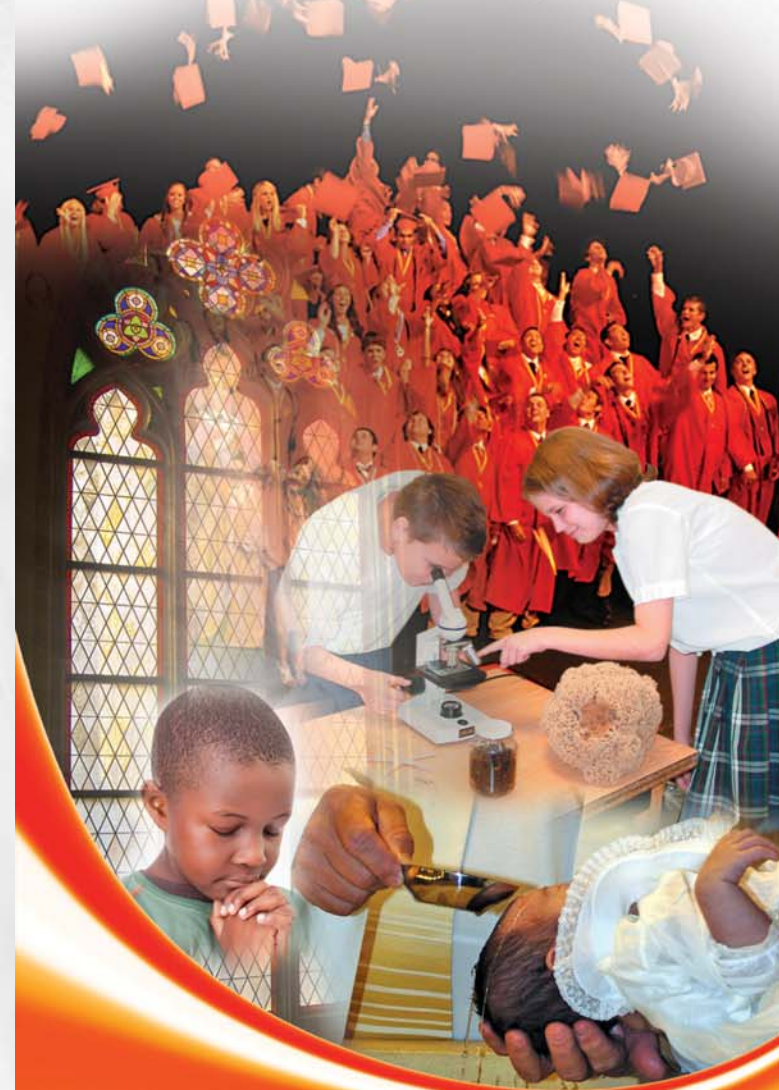


### DIOCESE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

Office of Educational Services  
Diocesan Advisory Board of Education  
P.O. Box 24000  
Jacksonville, FL 32241-4000

[www.dosafl.com](http://www.dosafl.com)

# Financial Assistance For Catholic Education



**Opportunities  
for Help and Self-Help**

A Resource Guide for Parents and Guardians





## Assembled by the Diocese of St. Augustine, Diocesan Advisory Board of Education

The information and materials provided in this brochure were obtained from the publications produced by the sponsoring agencies of the financial assistance programs described herein, and from information obtained from IRS publications. The Diocese of St. Augustine and the Diocesan Advisory Board of Education are not responsible for errors or outdated information that may be contained herein. The reader is encouraged to check on updated information from the source of the information listed for each program.

## Direct Financial Assistance Programs and Opportunities

### Florida's School Choice Programs

#### Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program

**Program Description and Eligibility:** The scholarships were made possible by corporate income tax law changes enacted by the Florida state legislature in 2001. As stated by the legislature, the purpose of this program is to encourage private, voluntary contributions to private, nonprofit, scholarship funding organizations (SFOs) in order to expand educational opportunities for children of families that have limited financial resources. The SFOs administer and distribute scholarships with funding provided through the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship legislation, and private donations to the SFOs. Eligibility for the scholarships is based upon an income formula. New scholarships are awarded on a first come, first served, funding availability basis.

**Amount of Assistance:** The amount of the scholarship provided to any child for the 2012-13 school year by all eligible nonprofit SFOs must not exceed \$4,335 for a scholarship awarded to a student for enrollment in an eligible private school.

**Qualified Educational Expenses:** For grammar and high schools, these include: (a) tuition and fees; (b) books, supplies, and equipment; (c) academic tutoring; (d) special needs services for special needs beneficiaries; and (e) some computer hardware and software. Additionally, if required by the academic institution, the account may be used to cover the costs of uniforms, room and board, transportation, and supplemental items and services.

**Eligible Expenses:** With respect to Catholic schools, eligible nonprofit SFOs must provide scholarships, from eligible contributions, to qualified students for tuition and fees, not exceeding the financial limits set forth above. Eligible expense payment will be made by check payable to the student's parent. The check will be mailed by the eligible SFO to the private school of the parent's choice, and the parent must restrictively endorse the check to the private school. The SFO must ensure that the parent endorses the check to the private school of the parent's choice for deposit into the account of the private school.

**Further Information: Step Up For Students** is the SFO handling the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program in our Diocese. Please go to [www.stepupforstudents.org](http://www.stepupforstudents.org) for more information and to seek an application. Step Up For Students may be contacted as follows: P.O. Box 54367, Jacksonville, FL 32245-4367. Phone: (866) 751-2543. Email: [info@stepupforstudents.org](mailto:info@stepupforstudents.org).

**Special Note:** Many of the students at St. Pius and Holy Rosary elementary schools are recipients of Florida Corporate Income Tax Credit scholarships.

#### John M. McKay Program for Students with Disabilities

**Source of Assistance:** Funds generated from State of Florida revenue. The Florida Department of Education has oversight of the program.

**Program Description and Eligibility:** As noted in the Florida Department of Education (DOE) materials currently available, "The McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program, originally created in 1999, provides scholarships for eligible students with disabilities to attend an eligible public or private school of their choice. Students with disabilities include K-12 students who are documented as having an intellectual disability; a speech or language impairment; a hearing impairment, including deafness; a visual impairment, including blindness; a dual sensory impairment; an emotional or behavioral disability; a specific learning disability, including, but not limited to, dyslexia, dyscalculia, or developmental aphasia; a traumatic brain injury; a developmental delay; or autism spectrum disorder" Any parent of a public school student with a disability who has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or a 504 accommodation plan may receive a McKay Scholarship, if the student meets the statutory and regulatory requirements. These criteria may change from year to year, depending upon the action of the Florida legislature. Parents should review the criteria on the web site listed below for current criteria.

**Amount of Assistance and Payment Procedure:** The specific amount of funding will depend on the legislation applicable to the school year concerned. The general rule, however, is that he

amount of the scholarship is equal to the amount the student would have received in the public school to which the student is assigned, or the amount of the private school's tuition and fees, whichever is less. The payment must be made by individual warrant (check) payable to the student's parent or guardian and mailed by the DOE to the chosen private school for deposit into the private school's account. The parent must restrictively endorse the warrant to the private school for deposit into the private school's account.

**Further Information:** Link to the Florida Department of Education McKay Program web site at: [www.floridaschoolchoice.org](http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org). You may then link to other helpful sites.

**Special Note:** The Diocese of St. Augustine participates in the McKay program. The availability of funding for the program, however, is dependent upon the State legislature passing legislation to enact and fund the program. This is an annual process. Parents are encouraged to check the website listed above and to contact their State legislators for additional information on the status of bills relevant to the program.

## Financial Assistance Available Through Diocesan Schools

**Source of Assistance:** Individual Catholic elementary schools and Catholic high schools in the Diocese of St. Augustine.

**Program Description and Eligibility:** Many of the Catholic elementary schools and all of the Catholic high schools in the Diocese of St. Augustine offer limited financial assistance, based on financial need of the family of the student.

**Amount of Assistance:** Varies with each individual school.

**Further Information:** Contact the principal's office at the individual school. Addresses and phone numbers for each of the Catholic elementary and high schools within the Diocese of St. Augustine can be found on the Diocesan Office of Educational Services web site at: [www.dosaedu.org](http://www.dosaedu.org).

## Guardian Catholic Schools

**Source of Assistance:** Private donations managed by the Guardian Catholic Schools.

**Program Description and Eligibility:** The program provides scholarships to students at St. Pius and Holy Rosary Schools. Since 1995, The Guardian Catholic Schools has granted tuition assistance scholarships to more than 1,600 students attending St. Pius V and Holy Rosary Catholic Schools. To qualify, families must demonstrate financial need and students must not receive any other