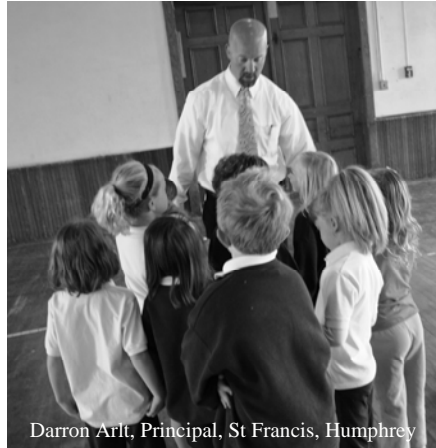


# Parent Advocate

## Our investment in our children will reap dividends

“Because I have this platform, I want to acknowledge who is really responsible for the magic of our Catholic schools. It’s about teachers. I am honored to be the leader of an incredibly dedicated and selfless cohort of teachers at St. Francis, many of whom are here tonight. It’s the professional and personal relationship between teachers and students. Rigor, relevance, and relationships make Catholic schools special. Would all in attendance who are current or former teachers in any of our schools in the Archdiocese stand so we can say thanks to all of you, for sacrificing so much to bring Jesus to children and children to Jesus. I also need to acknowledge and recognize any religious sisters here tonight. Without religious sisters, our Catholic schools would be a shell of their current selves.

The richness of our Archdiocese is extravagant! Although our expenses are incredible. 73 schools educating 21,700 students. It would cost the public system over \$200,000,000 to educate the students in our Archdiocese. Of course we accomplish this at a much smaller cost but it still is staggering the amount of money needed in our



Darron Arlt, Principal, St. Francis, Humphrey

Archdiocese to run our schools. So yes, our expenses are tremendous. But our wealth is immeasurable. How can you appraise the value of a student educated in a vibrant, dynamic, rigorous, faith-based Catholic school? While there exists an incredible financial investment, some would say burden, the dividends in return put Berkshire Hathaway to shame.

During the first week of school, I was walking outside of the front of our elementary building and there was a young girl from the public school, probably about a 2<sup>nd</sup> grader who was on the sidewalk right in front of our building. She saw me and I think she thought she was in trouble for being on our campus. At any rate, she felt compelled to explain herself for being on our property. She said sheepishly .... “I go to the red school.” St. Francis colors are blue and white and Humphrey Public colors are red and white so it is a simple designation. She said, “I go to the red school. We don’t say ‘God’ there.” She understood the difference between our school and hers and that it wasn’t OK to speak God’s name in a public school. The quintessential difference is that in a Catholic school, the soul of education,

*Cont’d on page 3*

## IOWA TAX CREDIT EXPANDED TO INCLUDE CORPORATE SUPPORT

Catching up on school choice developments across the Missouri River, Iowa recently expanded of its scholarship tax credit program to allow for corporate tax credits for qualified contributions to School Tuition Organizations (“STOs”). Iowa’s STOs are authorized to disburse up to \$7.5 million for the 2009 tax year.

Now Iowans and Iowa businesses are both allowed to receive a 65% state tax credit for contributions to STOs. Formerly, only individuals could contribute to STOs and receive state tax credits for their contributions. The bill passed in May reserves up to 25% of the total annual tax credits for businesses (\$1.875 million of the \$7.5 million total).

In Iowa, ninety percent of the donations received by STOs are distributed as tuition grants to low and middle-income families who wish to send their children to accredited nonpublic schools.

Trish Wilger, executive director of Iowa Alliance for

Choice in Education (Iowa ACE), commented on the credit’s expansion: “Individual donations to STOs already constituted the largest individual tax credit program in the state. Opening this program to businesses means that Iowa children will have greater resources to attend the best school for their needs.”

**LB 67**, a scholarship tax credit bill still pending before the Revenue Committee of the Nebraska State Legislature, would create a state tax credit very similar to Iowa’s, with a \$3 million annual cap and a 65% cap on the credits available to individuals, businesses, and corporations. The bill needs at least five supporting votes of the eight Revenue Committee members in order to advance to the floor of the Legislature. Please see [www.nebcathcon.org](http://www.nebcathcon.org) for more details on this bill. We urge you to support this bill to create this valuable school choice option in Nebraska, allowing tuition grants for families of limited means, enabling them to enroll their children in private schools of their choice.

## TEXTBOOK LOAN PROGRAM FUNDING REDUCED IN SPECIAL SESSION

In a two-week special session in November, Nebraska cut \$335 million from its biennial state budget. Budget cuts included across-the-board cuts in textbook loan funding for 2009-11.

Jeremy Murphy, acting on behalf of the Nebraska Catholic Conference and the Diocesan Superintendents, provided input on the value of the textbook loan program via the new website, [www.NebraskaBudget.com](http://www.NebraskaBudget.com), which sent copies of his comments to the entire Appropriations Committee and Governor Dave Heineman. Letters in support of the program were also sent to all Appropriations Committee members urging them to minimize (if not prevent) the cuts to the program.

**LB 1**, the mainline budget-cutting bill, reduced textbook loan program funding by \$12,500 (2.5%) for 2009-10 and \$25,000 (5%) for 2010-11. The program was cut by an average of \$18,750 per year, or 3.75% of the annual funding. The funding reduction for the textbook loan program was in line with or proportionate to other across-the-board cuts to state agency funding, other similar line items of the state budget, and K-12 education spending for public schools. A separate bill, **LB 5**, cut state aid-to-public schools (see story below).

Governor Dave Heineman recommended the level of across-the-board cuts to the program and the Appropriations Committee approved

the cuts in the committee amendment, AM 12 to **LB 1**.

On November 20, the Governor signed **LB 1** into law. Governor Heineman said: "There was agreement from many agencies, school and university leaders that shared sacrifice was necessary to close this budget gap. I appreciate the willingness and cooperative spirit of those who came to the table to help address this challenge."

As Nebraska's budget picture improves, eventual restoration of the \$500,000 funding level is an objective that will be discussed by the Diocesan Superintendents of Schools, the Nebraska Federation of Catholic School Parents board, and the Nebraska Catholic Conference.

## STATE AID-TO-PUBLIC SCHOOLS REDUCED TO BALANCE BUDGET

In special session, the Nebraska Legislature passed by a vote of 40-7 and the Governor signed **LB 5**, which reduced state aid-to-public schools by \$32 million.

The new law "freezes" TEEOSA spending at \$933 million for 2009-10 (\$32 million less than expected), and keeps the spending at the same amount for 2010-11. The cuts were accomplished by slowing the projected rate of growth in the state aid formula.

The cuts were necessary according to several senators and Governor Dave Heineman in order to balance the State's budget.

Chairman Greg Adams of the Education Committee said that "We have taken on a task and it was the obligation of the Education Committee to try to find the savings within the formula. We've given you what I believe is the fairest and simplest solution."



## MICROSOFT SETTLEMENT VOUCHERS

### REDEEM MICROSOFT VOUCHERS NOW!

In 2005, a Microsoft settlement made rebate vouchers available for purchases of certain computer hardware and software. NFCSP members were encouraged to claim vouchers and transfer them to their schools or parish.

If you received one of these vouchers, and haven't redeemed it the deadline is **January 16, 2010**. For more information:

[www.microsoftproductsettlement.com/nebraska/Voucher.aspx](http://www.microsoftproductsettlement.com/nebraska/Voucher.aspx)

## CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK 2010

January 31-February 6, 2010

This year's theme highlights the many benefits of a Catholic Education-  
Dividends For Life

**"Our investment in our children will reap dividends of morals, discipline, knowledge, and faith that will give God glory."**

Darron Arlt

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS



**DIVIDENDS FOR LIFE**



**Investment Will Reap Dividends** *(continued from page 1)*

is the education of the soul. And I can speak with some authority as I attended public high school, public university and taught in public schools for 11 years.

St. Rose Philippine Duchesne said it with great eloquence in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and it still stands true today: “You may dazzle the mind with a thousand brilliant discoveries of natural science; you may open new worlds of knowledge which were never dreamed of before; yet if you have not developed in the soul of the pupil strong habits of virtue which will sustain them in the struggle for life, you have not educated them, but only put in their hand a powerful instrument of self-destruction.” Catholic schools educate the whole person...mind, body, and spirit. We give our children roots and we give our children wings.

Some feel the future of our Catholic schools is tenuous. Especially during tough economic times. How do we sustain the academic rigor, variety in curriculum, excellent facilities, the latest in technology, fair and equitable wages for teachers when public systems cost per pupil is skyrocketing past \$10,000 per student? What does the future hold for Catholic schools in our Archdiocese? Well, if I could tell you what’s next, I’d say that if we stay committed to our Catholic schools with our time, talent, and treasure, if we continue to sacrifice selflessly, if we continue to take ownership of our Catholic schools, whether we have children attending them or not, if we accept the moral responsibility to provide for the spiritual instruction of God’s children, the possibilities for the future of our Church and our communities are endless.

**Our investment in our children will reap dividends of morals, discipline, knowledge, and faith that will give God glory.** Furthermore, I believe that God will provide His providential care for Catholic schools just like He promises it for His Church. He won’t let us fail.

I’ll conclude with scripture from the book of Proverbs: Train up a child in the way they should go and when they are old, they will not depart from it.”

Darron Arlt, Principal, Humphrey St. Francis

**CONTACTING YOUR NEBRASKA STATE SENATOR**

MAILING ADDRESS:

Senator \_\_\_\_\_

District # \_\_\_\_\_

State Capitol

P. O. Box 94604; Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

You can e-mail senators through the Nebraska Legislative webpage at <http://nebraskalegislature.gov> or by using the legislator’s first initial plus their last name followed by @leg.ne.gov (example: [lheidemann@leg.ne.gov](mailto:lheidemann@leg.ne.gov)).

Dst.	Senator	Capitol #	Room	From
1	Heidemann, Lavon	471-2733	1004	Elk Creek
2	Pankonin, Dave	471-2613	2004	Louisville
3	Price, Scott	471-2627	1528	Bellevue
4	Pirsch, Pete	471-2621	1404	Omaha
5	Mello, Heath	471-2710	1206	Omaha
6	Nelson, John E.	471-2714	2028	Omaha
7	Nordquist, Jeremy J.	471-2721	1208	Omaha
8	White, Tom	471-2722	1120	Omaha
9	Howard, Gwen	471-2723	1124	Omaha
10	Krist, Bob	471-2718	1212	Omaha
11	Council, Brenda J	471-2612	1115	Omaha
12	Lathrop, Steve	471-2623	2000	Omaha
13	Cook, Tanya	471-2727	1115	Omaha
14	Gay, Tim	471-2730	1402	Papillion
15	Janssen, Charlie	471-2625	1403	Fremont
16	Rogert, Kent	471-2728	2011	Tekamah
17	Giese, Robert J.	471-2716	1118	So Sioux City
18	Lautenbaugh, Scott	471-2618	1021	Omaha
19	Flood, Mike	471-2929	2103	Norfolk
20	Ashford, Brad	471-2622	1103	Omaha
21	Haar, Ken	471-2673	1522	Malcolm
22	Stuthman, Arnie	471-2715	1101	Platte Center
23	Langemeier, Chris	471-2719	1210	Schuyler
24	Adams, Greg	471-2756	1107	York

Dst.	Senator	Capitol #	Room	From
26	McGill, Amanda	471-2610	1017	Lincoln
27	Coash, Colby	471-2632	1117	Lincoln
28	Avery, Bill	471-2633	1114	Lincoln
29	Fulton, Tony	471-2734	2107	Lincoln
30	Wallman, Norm	471-2620	1406	Cortland
31	Pahls, Rich	471-2327	1401	Omaha
32	Karpisek, Russ	471-2711	1015	Wilber
33	Utter, Dennis	471-2712	1529	Hastings
34	Dubas, Annette	471-2630	1018	Fullerton
35	Gloor, Mike	471-2617	1523	Grand Island
36	Wightman, John	471-2642	2010	Lexington
37	Hadley, Galen	471-2726	2104	Kearney
38	Carlson, Tom	471-2732	1022	Holdrege
39	McCoy, Beau	471-2885	1117	Omaha
40	Dierks, M. L. “Cap”	471-2801	2108	Ewing
41	Sullivan, Kate	471-2631	1019	Cedar Rapids
42	Hansen, Tom	471-2729	1012	North Platte
43	Fischer, Deb	471-2628	1110	Valentine
44	Christensen, Mark R.	471-2805	1000	Imperial
45	Cornett, Abbie	471-2615	1116	Bellevue
46	Conrad, Danielle	471-2720	1008	Lincoln
47	Schilz, Ken	471-2616	1202	Ogallala
48	Harms, John N.	471-2802	2017	Scottsbluff
49	Louden, LeRoy J.	471-2725	1016	Ellsworth

## BOB KRIST REPLACES MIKE FRIEND IN STATE LEGISLATURE

On Sept. 11, 2009, Governor Dave Heineman named Bob Krist to replace Mike Friend for the remainder of his term as Senator for the 10<sup>th</sup> legislative district in northwest Omaha. Senator Krist was sworn in and has already gained experience from the recent special legislative session.



Senator Krist, a Creighton Prep alum, formerly served on the Madonna School for Students of Exceptional Needs board of directors from 1992-

2008, serving as board president from 2005-08. He has a keen interest in educational issues.

Senator Krist has a distinguished military record, serving 21 years in the Air Force, including combat missions, and retiring in 2000 as a lieutenant colonel. He still is an active pilot and flying is one of his favorite hobbies.

As an appointed senator, Senator Bob Krist will attempt to retain his legislative seat in the 2010 election.

## Archbishop's Dinner for Education

The Archdiocese of Omaha held the annual Archbishop's Dinner for Education celebrating Catholic Education on September 17, 2009. Each year educators are selected for their professionalism and leadership but also for their ability to make a difference in the lives of their students. This year's honorees were:

**Administrators:** Darron Arlt, Principal, St. Francis, Humphrey and Dr. Dorothy Ostrowski, Principal, Daniel J. Gross High School, Bellevue

**Elementary Teachers :** Mary Ann Dice, Holy Ghost School, Omaha and Kristi Steffen, St. Rose of Lima School, Crofton

**Secondary Teachers:** Pamela Fallon, Cedar Catholic Jr./Sr. High School, Hartington and Jim Swanson, Creighton Preparatory School, Omaha

**Maginn Family Foundation Inner City/Special Needs:** Tony Connelly, Jesuit Middle School, Omaha and Michelle Hazuka, Ss. Peter and Paul School, Omaha

### NEBRASKA FEDERATION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOL PARENTS

Identity Unity Collaboration Empowerment

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 Lincoln NE 68509-4872

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