

Archdiocese of Philadelphia
Office of the Archbishop
222 North 17th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103-1299

To All Pastors of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia

September 14, 2012

Dear Brothers,

Yesterday, I joined Governor Tom Corbett and Chairman of the Faith in the Future Foundation, Ed Hanway, at Archbishop Prendergast-Monsignor Bonner High School to discuss the impact of a quality education on our young people.

We were joined by student representatives from across the Archdiocese as well as state legislators who were instrumental in the creation of Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credits (OSTC) earlier this summer. I'm grateful to the Governor and members of the Pennsylvania State House and Senate for their foresight. I'm also thankful to each of you for answering the call to urge your parishioners to contact their elected officials about school choice.

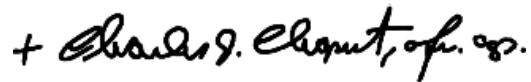
I'm asking you once again to help our young people. OSTC is an important first step in providing school choice to all students. We need to make it a landmark program in Pennsylvania and we urgently need to let people know how they can participate. That's why we're designating next Sunday, September 23, as "OSTC Sunday."

Early next week, you'll be receiving special bulletin inserts via the Office for Clergy. I'd be most grateful if you could work to make them available in the manner you choose best for your parish. You may wish to include them in your bulletins, leave copies in the vestibule of church, post them to your parish website or distribute them to parish groups. Certain parishes will also be asked to host a speaker about making OSTC work in your communities. If that's the case in your parish, you'll be hearing from someone soon with additional details.

OSTC enables business owners to divert up to \$400,000 in taxes that would have been paid to the State of Pennsylvania to an approved scholarship organization for disbursement to students in need. Here in the Archdiocese, that organization is Business Leadership Organized for Catholic Schools (BLOCS). It's crucial that all business owners understand the magnitude of the impact they can make with a contribution of any size. Recently BLOCS received an OSTC donation in the amount of \$10,000, which enabled Archbishop Carroll High School to welcome two students whose families would not have been able to afford tuition. Because of that OSTC funding, the school is now able to use \$10,000 from its own scholarship fund to assist other students. It's quite possible that up to eight students are going to benefit from the willingness of one business to take part in OSTC.

The potential to better help our young people is clear. OSTC demonstrates that many parents, with just a little extra help, can make a better choice for their child and benefit from the high quality Catholic education our schools offer. We need to encourage business owners of every size to contact BLOCS to discuss how they can support families and students who are most vulnerable -- and we need to do it now. Thank you for your continued commitment to strengthening our schools and serving those in need.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap." The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.
Archbishop of Philadelphia