



Catholic Schools Office
Catholic Diocese of Memphis

Dear Parents:

As most know, last Wednesday, July 13, the Court injunction that was blocking implementation of Tennessee's Education Savings Account program was lifted and Governor Bill Lee quickly announced the state would work to launch the ESA program in time for the 2022-23 school year, which will start next month.

"Today the court removed the final roadblock to getting Memphis and Nashville families additional options for high-quality education," Lee said in a statement issued after the injunction was lifted. "Starting today, we will work to help eligible parents enroll this school year, as we ensure Tennessee families have the opportunity to choose the school that they believe is best for their child."

The Tennessee Department of Education said it would make ESA resources available online quickly. Our Catholic Schools leaders are actively reaching out to state education officials to determine the process that will guide the implementation of ESA in our Catholic Schools. Our Schools have seen tremendous interest among parents seeking the many advantages of a Catholic education for their children and look forward to welcoming new students through the ESA program when classes begin next month.

Under the ESA program, which was approved by the Tennessee General Assembly in 2019, students in Kindergarten through 12th Grade who are zoned to attend Shelby County or Metro Nashville Schools can use state funds to attend participating private schools. Families in Shelby and Davidson counties who meet income and eligibility requirements can apply to receive about \$7,000 in state funds per student.

Families must live in Shelby or Davidson counties to be eligible for the program, but they can use the ESA funds to attend schools in other counties. All the Catholic Schools in our Diocese are expected to participate in the program. The state was actually processing applications for families to use the ESA funds when the program was put on hold by a court order in 2020.

The program will make a Catholic education more affordable and accessible for qualified families. Our Memphis Diocese School's goal is to make a Catholic education available to every family that wants that for their children.

If you are interested in enrolling your child through the ESA program, please contact your parish or school directly and they will instruct you further on how to apply. The state's application portal for parents and schools went live today so don't hesitate as your child's school may have limited space available.

Wishing you all the best,

Mr. Pierre N. Antoine

Pierre Nic Antoine
Superintendent of Catholic Schools