



MOST REVEREND JOSEPH R. KOPACZ, D.D., PH.D.
CATHOLIC DIOCESE of JACKSON

January 19, 2018

Dear Members of the Mississippi Legislature,

On behalf of the students, teachers, and school community of the Catholic Diocese of Jackson, we write to urge your support for an expansion of the Special Needs Education Scholarship Account (ESA) program to include nearly all students in Mississippi.

The Catholic Church teaches that parents are the primary teachers of their children and that public support should empower their choice to send their children to schools that fit their conscience. Expanding eligibility for the ESA, while prioritizing those students with special needs and from low-income families, will allow parents a real option in choosing an education that best fits their child's learning needs.

The Catholic schools of Mississippi have long served the neediest students and communities, educating Catholics and non-Catholics across income-levels and racial groups. Our schools have offered a well-rounded education to Mississippians for generations, and we stand ready to give an opportunity to the families who would benefit from an expanded ESA.

Your service to our state is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joseph R. Kopacz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

+Joseph R. Kopacz
Bishop of Jackson

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Catherine D. Cook". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Catherine D. Cook
Superintendent of Education