



**SUPERINTENDENT FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

**DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH**  
**SECRETARIAT FOR EVANGELIZATION AND**  
**CATHOLIC EDUCATION**

www.diopitt.org

111 BOULEVARD OF THE ALLIES  
PITTSBURGH, PA 15222  
(412) 456-3108 FAX (412) 456-3101  
e-mail: budplan@diopitt.org

**To:** Elementary and Secondary Principals  
Early Childhood Program Administrators

**From:** Dr. Michael Latusek

**Subject:** 2016-2017 Student Aid Application and Process

**Date:** January 2016

Enclosed are some paper copies of the 2016-17 Student Aid Form. An interactive PDF of the form is also posted on the diocesan website that parents can download and complete. Simply go to the home page and click "Catholic Education" and then "Catholic Schools." As a third option, the following link will allow parents to use an online interface to apply: <http://www.psas.org/PITT.aspx>

Parents must complete the applications with all required signatures and attachments along with a \$28 fee to Private School Aid Service (PSAS), our financial need evaluators, no later than **March 15, 2016**. Directions are on the form or website if applying online. Families should complete only one form even if their children attend different Catholic schools within the diocese. Once completed, the family will be considered for all applicable aid funds (noted on the form and below). Families who apply will receive a letter from the diocese regarding their grant. Each school will receive a report of all applicants with their grant amounts and other pertinent information.

**A. Aid Funds**

1. Bishop's Education Fund (BEF)

This grant program, with funds first disbursed in the 1995-96 school year, is for Catholic students in grades K-12 attending eligible schools and registered in eligible parishes. A list of the parishes and schools is included. Catholic families applying for this fund must have a pastor signature on page 4 or as directed on the website using a supplemental form. As noted, parents using a paper application may ask their pastor to sign a partially completed form that does not contain their financial information. A pastor's signature only confirms that the family is Catholic based on the following canonical criteria: a) the child is baptized; b) the family is registered in the parish; and c) the family attends Mass regularly and uses parish envelopes. Signing the form does not commit a parish to any financial obligation for aid.

2. Scholastic Opportunity Scholarship Program (SOS)

This program, established by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania with funds first disbursed in the 2002-03 school year, is open to any student, Catholic or non-Catholic, in grades PK to 12 residing in Pennsylvania and attending any eligible Catholic school in the Diocese of Pittsburgh. The list of eligible schools is enclosed. There are also specific income guidelines noted on the form entitled "Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) Supplemental Form." Although application to the fund does not guarantee an award, we make every effort to help as many families as possible.

### 3. Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit (OSTC)

This program of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, began in the 2013-14 school year. Only families with students residing within the attendance boundaries of low-achieving schools, as determined by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, are eligible. Instructions are contained in the application and grants will depend upon the amount of donations received.

## **B. Administrative Details**

### 1. 2016-2017 Tuition Rates

K-12 rates will be communicated directly by this office to PSAS based on an annual spring tuition survey. Parents can, therefore, leave the tuition information blank for these programs. Pre-school tuition rates are entered by the principal on the supplemental form itself. If children attend any other schools charging tuition (e.g. college) the rate should be noted.

### 2. SOS/EITC Applicants with Special Needs Students

Families applying to SOS with a special needs student will be considered eligible using more generous income guidelines. In order to take advantage of this, the Special Education Supplemental Form must be completed. As indicated above, eligibility does not guarantee a grant

### 3. School Reports

Reports will be sent by the diocese to each school in late May or early June with the grant amounts for each student along with the family's expected contribution and their need. No parent income information will be shared. This information can then be used to award local tuition assistance funds.

### 4. Communication with PSAS

All communication to PSAS must be done through the Diocese (with the exception of certain high schools who have individual contracts). PSAS will contact parents directly when the application is incomplete. If you have specific questions on procedure or have other concerns, please contact the Department for Catholic Schools at 412-456-3090.

### 5. Emergency Aid

Emergencies (e.g. death/illness of a parent, job loss, etc.), will be evaluated on an individual basis. A letter or email outlining the emergency nature of the situation must be sent by the parent or guardian to Dr. Ronald Bowes, Department for Catholic Schools, 111 Boulevard of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA 15222 ([rbowes@diopitt.org](mailto:rbowes@diopitt.org)).

CC: Regional Vicars  
Father DiNardo  
Dr. Naccarati  
Dr. Bowes  
Mr. Cartier