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## **Grant Process to Help Catholic Schools Educate Students with Special Needs Kicks Off During Catholic Schools Week**

(Kensington, Maryland) – Where there’s a will; there’s a way. The Catholic Coalition for Special Education (CCSE) officially is opening its 2015-16 grant proposal cycle this week, during Catholic Schools Week, to help expand programming at Catholic schools for students of all faiths with special needs.

Many Catholic schools would like to serve all their families and educate all their children, but don’t think they have the resources or staff to educate students with developmental or intellectual disabilities. For the past ten years, CCSE has been there to help fill the gap, granting nearly \$750,000 to 24 schools in Maryland.

“All parents are searching for the same thing for their children’s education: a quality, uplifting, academic program and a safe learning environment. Many families also want their faith integrated into the curriculum and community. In other words, they are looking for a Catholic education that helps each and every child reach his or her potential,” said Francesca Pellegrino, founder and president of CCSE.

Through CCSE’s Believe in Me! Program, Catholic schools located in Washington, D.C. or Maryland may receive seed grants to expand or create sustainable programs enrolling two or more students with cognitive disabilities. Funding may be used to hire and train special educators, purchase equipment and materials, or provide appropriate accommodations and modifications to the curriculum.

Schools also are encouraged to apply for Technical Assistance Visits or Grants for help in raising disability awareness among staff, establishing a peer mentoring program, guidance in creating new policies on grading or standards, assistance in implementing appropriate modifications, and more.

CCSE also provides scholarships to Catholic school teachers to attend professional development and training classes.

Final Letters of Intent to determine a school’s eligibility are due by March 27 with the Request for Funding Application due by April 30 for eligible schools. Additional information may be found at <http://www.ccse-maryland.org/schools.html>. Schools with questions may call 301-933-8844 or email [grants@ccse-maryland.org](mailto:grants@ccse-maryland.org).

*The mission of the Catholic Coalition for Special Education is to ensure that children with special needs are able to attend and receive an appropriate education in their local Catholic elementary schools and high schools. In the words of Pope Benedict XVI “no child should be denied his or her right to an education in faith, which in turn nurtures the soul of a nation.” CCSE provides grants and technical assistance to help Catholic schools in Washington, D.C. and Maryland achieve this goal.*