

Give the money back

Tom Gallagher | Jul. 31, 2009 NCR Today

While Louisiana public schools are in line for \$370 million this year in federal stimulus aid, [the story for private and parochial schools is much different](#) [1].

Special federal aid totaling about \$70,000 is being split up among 16 Catholic schools in East Baton Rouge Parish, or about \$4,400 each.

"I expected there would be more than this," said Melanie Verges, the new superintendent of schools for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Private and parochial school advocates said earlier this year they could rightly claim nearly 20 percent of the federal money but expected far less.

About 17 percent of students in Louisiana attend private or parochial schools, one of the highest percentages in the nation.

The Catholic schools ought to send the money back. This kind of treatment by state and federal officials continues a decades' long pattern of practically ignoring these truly public schools, Catholic schools. Catholic school families and Catholic schools create an educated citizenry, which in turn serves the public good, the common good. Ironically, private and Catholic colleges receive much more just treatment by state and federal programs. It's really time for change for Catholic elementary and secondary school families and institutions. Meanwhile, Catholic schools continue thier downward spiral.

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[1] <http://www.2theadvocate.com/news/52135562.html>