



## PRESS RELEASE

**DATE** March 16, 2019

**CONTACT** Margaret Kaplow  
National Catholic Educational Association  
[mkaplow@ncea.org](mailto:mkaplow@ncea.org)  
571.206.1533

**RELEASE** **CCSE TO BE HONORED WITH THE NCEA SETON AWARD AS AN EXEMPLARY MODEL OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE**

The Catholic Coalition for Special Education is a national archetype for inclusion, support, love and hope in Catholic education.

Arlington, VA – The Catholic Coalition for Special Education (CCSE) and its president and founder, Francesca Pellegrino, will be awarded the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) Elizabeth Ann Seton Award on October 7, 2019, at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center at National Harbor, MD.

The NCEA Seton Award is named after Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton in recognition of her lifelong dedication to teaching. This award is presented annually to model individuals whose support and service impacts Catholic education and the well-being of our nation's youth. In addition, Seton honorees have a scholarship presented in their honor to a deserving Catholic school student in the local community. NCEA also hosts a symposium during the day of the [Seton Gala](#) that emphasizes sharing best practices and facilitates discussions about philanthropy programs for Catholic schools.

Called to serve the Lord in the middle of a successful 25-year government service career and prompted by her own son's personal journey, Mrs. Pellegrino founded CCSE by establishing a like-minded group of parents. She has dedicated the last 20 years of her life to creating inclusive opportunities in Catholic schools for students with disabilities in Washington, D.C. and Maryland.

"NCEA is pleased to honor Mrs. Pellegrino and the CCSE for exceptional work with students with disabilities," said NCEA President/CEO, Dr. Thomas Burnford. "The NCEA Seton Award highlights the best programs and philanthropic work throughout the country in support of Catholic education, and the work of the CCSE is a shining example of inclusivity and support for the education of all of God's children. We are excited to welcome Mrs. Pellegrino and the CCSE into the ranks of our other storied Seton Award recipients"

In 2004, Mrs. Pellegrino transformed the small coalition of parents into a nationally recognized organization dedicated to providing free services to schools and families of children with disabilities. Today, CCSE coaches, mentors and trains Catholic school

educators and administrators who provide inclusive education to students with disabilities. CCSE is funded through the generous support of individuals, foundations, corporations and sponsors who believe children with disabilities should be able to attend Catholic schools.

The organization's assistance to Catholic schools and families includes:

CCSE's **Believe in Me! Program** which supports the implementation of special education instruction and programs in K-12 Catholic Schools in Maryland and Washington D.C. by awarding seed grants to hire special education teachers and para-educators; to purchase specialized classroom equipment and supplies and for professional development for school administrators and teachers.

CCSE's **Technical Assistance** supports the implementation of special education services through professional development workshops for school administrators and teachers as well as through targeted assistance to meet the specific needs of individual schools.

CCSE's **Tuition Assistance Grants for Studies in Special Education** encourages teachers and other professionals to pursue advanced degrees in special education, thereby helping to offset the chronic and pervasive shortage of special education teachers which exists both regionally and nationally.

CCSE's **Family Advocacy and Support** helps families of children with disabilities navigate the frequently complex maze of services by providing current information on programs and community resources. CCSE also provides spiritual and practical support for parents on the journey to raising a child with a disability through its Parents Group, individualized support and other services and events.

For more information about the CCSE, please go to [www.ccse-maryland.org](http://www.ccse-maryland.org).

###

*In service of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, NCEA strengthens Catholic school communities by providing professional development, formation, leadership and advocacy.*