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### Editors' Comments

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## EDITORS' COMMENTS

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The success of Catholic schools is happily no longer a secret. Newspapers, television, mainstream media outlets, and research journals like *Catholic Education* regularly report on the success of Catholic schools and the accomplishments of the students who attend them. In large part, this success is described in academic terms: how well or how much students achieve and learn.

There has been considerable discussion recently, some of it heated, on what has been described as the “eliting” of Catholic schools. Are Catholic schools becoming more and more the domain of the wealthiest and brightest in society? Does the cost of a Catholic education unfairly limit access to the Catholic school so that only the children of the upper and upper-middle classes can afford to attend? Does the focus on academic excellence and a college preparatory curriculum unfairly exclude the average or below-average student?

While this debate proceeds, *Catholic Education* is pleased to offer a focus section in this issue on educating students with special needs in the Catholic school. It is a timely theme, and one that goes to the heart of the purpose and mission of the Catholic school. Roberta Weaver, associate professor, and Fran Landers, lecturer, both of the University of Dayton’s Department of Teacher Education, serve as guest editors. They offer us a look at some of the most important questions facing teachers and administrators who make the effort to welcome students with special needs into the Catholic school. Readers will find helpful, practical advice, solidly grounded in available research. Classroom practices, parental involvement, faculty development, legal issues, and Jesus’ example all receive attention and consideration.

The guest editors and contributors to the focus section believe that educating students with special needs in the Catholic school is both possible and necessary. They tell us why it should be done, how it can work, and what such an effort requires of the school community. Their words will be especially helpful to educators currently implementing programs and challenging to administrators and teachers who resist such efforts. Gospel values are clearly at work here, as the mission of the Catholic school is defined in terms that go beyond academic excellence. We are invited to re-think our notion of the Catholic school as a place where all God’s children are welcomed, embraced, and educated.

Ronald J. Nuzzi, Thomas C. Hunt, *Co-Editors*

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