



The University of St. Thomas School of Education Position Paper on Education

“There is no greater act of charity than teaching”
St. Augustine

Selected social justice teachings of the Catholic Church are used to guide the School of Education programs and can play a pivotal role in decision-making strategies in Catholic, private, and public schools of all levels. The School of Education serves in the preparation of professional educators and as a voice for public and private education in the Houston area. In a prayer written for the University of St. Thomas at its founding, Bishop Fulton J. Sheen encourages the university to be “...a mother of good counsel to the community...” In matters regarding the education of the children, adolescents, and young adults, the school of education strives to fulfill that role. In solidarity with all members of society, we exhibit a pervasive and firmly grounded understanding that the way to benefit society is to work for the benefit of all individuals.

Subsidiarity

Educational institutions should be organized and governed as much as possible by the community being served; education should only be controlled at higher levels of society when it cannot be done effectively locally.

The family is the first teacher and retains a key role with the school when students enter formal education. Educational decisions made closest to the child are most likely to be productive, but the entire system acts as the advocate for the child and intervenes by elevating the decision to the next higher level when necessary.

Subsidiarity encompasses the virtue of collegiality. Students, parents, teachers, administration, other professionals, and support staff are most productive in a supportive environment that values the contributions of all participants.

An important role for educators at all levels is to take action to ensure that the system is providing all that is needed for the students it was created to serve. It is important that both public and private schools retain their focus on what is best for the students served, above all others in the broad educational community.

Dignity and Rights of Children

Children possess full human dignity and are bearers of rights which should be recognized and upheld in the educational process. Students in early childhood through twelfth grade schools should be respected for who they are and from where they come. The role of the school is to augment the formation begun in early childhood to create successful, contributing members of society.

The full spectrum of student ability is addressed. All students deserve a highly trained teacher, and all teaching is a ministry. The nobility of teaching is in providing the students with the education that meets their instructional needs. All children deserve a high quality learning experience. There is systemic accountability for all people working in education to continuously improve in their work. This accountability is both self-directed and externally validated.

People Have a Right to an Education

All people have a responsibility, for the good of society, to contribute to and foster education. For the good of the individual and the good of society, no person should be excluded from the educational process.

For everything we would like to sustain or improve in American society, education plays a pivotal role. Our educational system must be designed, funded and operated to succeed with the range of students it serves. Schools prepare students with different abilities and disparate pre-school experiences to be contributing citizens in a global information age economy.