



2008 Champions of Choice Event Summary

Purpose of the Event: The *Champions of Choice* award is a way the REACH Alliance, REACH Foundation and the citizens of Pennsylvania can acknowledge those who paved the way for parental choice in education in Pennsylvania. Their actions in Pennsylvania are felt nationwide, as we strive to allow all children to attend the school that best meets their educational needs, regardless of ZIP code or financial status.

We will **gather** together to recognize our successes.

We will **honor** those visionary leaders who continue to set us on the correct path.

We will **celebrate** parents being in control of their child's education.

Honorees: **Dr. Ronald Bowes, Diocese of Pittsburgh** - Dr. Bowes has been fighting the school choice battle since 1990. He has successfully established a large network of parents, administrators, businesses and students who advocate for parental choice in education. His perseverance, knowledge and passion have been extremely instrumental in the enactment and growth the EITC Program, year after year. Dr. Bowes serves as the Assistant Superintendent of Policy and Development for the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

Senator Jane Clare Orié, Majority Whip, R-40 - Senator Orié has been a long-standing supporter of school choice and a champion of the Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program since its enactment in 2001. Sen. Orié has taken a lead role in the Pennsylvania Senate by introducing legislation calling for an expansion of the EITC Program three times. Sen. Orié currently serves as the Majority Whip in the Pennsylvania State Senate, representing District 40 – Allegheny and Butler Counties.

Representative Thomas A. Tangretti, D-57 - Representative Tangretti was an early legislative champion for school choice in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, serving as a leading voice within his party on important school choice legislation in 1991, 1995 and 1999. Since then, he has remained a strong and consistent voice in Harrisburg for parental choice in education by supporting the creation and expansion of the EITC program. Rep. Tangretti currently serves as the Chair of the House Tourism and Recreational Development Committee. He represents District 57 - Westmoreland County.

Why It's Important: Every year, there are more than 350,000 children across Pennsylvania whose parents choose the school that best fits their educational needs. Whether it's private or parochial school, cyber-charter school, homeschool or charter school, hundreds of thousands of children in Pennsylvania are benefiting from school choice.

In 2001, the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) Program was passed, allowing tens of thousands of students to attend the school of their choice. Through this program, companies paying Pennsylvania taxes send their tax dollars to organizations granting scholarships, instead of just to Harrisburg. This is just one of the many ways that Pennsylvania is leading the nation in education reform.

