

**The Private Elementary
and Secondary Education**

OUTLOOK

A report from the Council for American Private Education, Washington, D.C.

September, 1976

PLATFORMS RENEW NATIONAL
PARTY COMMITMENTS TO AID
PRIVATE SCHOOL CHILDREN

The national party platforms include provisions which, if effectively implemented, would be significant to private school children and their families.

The Republican plank proclaims that "diversity in education has great value," maintains that "public schools and nonpublic schools should share in education funds on a constitutionally acceptable basis," and favors "consideration of tax credits for parents making elementary and secondary school tuition payments."

The Democratic plank: "The Party also renews its commitment to the support of a constitutionally acceptable method of providing tax aid for the education of all pupils in non-segregated schools in order to insure parental freedom in choosing the best education for their children. Specifically, the Party will continue to advocate constitutionally permissible federal education legislation which provides for the equitable participation in federal programs of all low and moderate income pupils attending all the nation's schools."

OE-CAPE CONFERENCE LAYS
GROUNDWORK FOR SYSTEMATIC
PUBLIC POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Told by Commissioner Terrel H. Bell in his keynote address that cooperation and communication between public and private education at every level can do more for American education "than anything else in the world," nearly 200

participants at the first national conference on private precollegiate education laid the groundwork for a continuing effort to develop and implement a body of informed public policy concerning the role of private schools in American society.

Participants at the June conference, which was jointly sponsored by the U. S. Office of Education (OE) and the Council for American Private Education (CAPE), included public and private school leaders, executive officers of professional associations and charitable foundations, executive personnel from Congress and administrative agencies, trustees, and research scholars. Major addresses by Dr. Bell; Dr. Otto F. Kraushaar, President Emeritus, Goucher College; Dr. Donald A. Erickson, Professor of Education, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, B. C.; and Honorable Albert H. Quie, U. S. Representative, First District, Minnesota, and Member, House Committee on Education and Labor, provided, respectively, historical, social, and governmental perspectives which served as the starting points for large and small group discussions. These conclusions emerged from the conference:

- Private elementary and secondary schools have played a varying but always significant role in American education and American society throughout the nation's history, serving the concerns of parents for their children and those of the republic for its citizens.
- While some aspects of the role of private schools have been well documented, the documentation is uneven, only rudimentary efforts have been made at consolidating such documentation as is available, and no sophisticated attempt has been made to plan for the acquisition of the data needed to develop a solidly-based and definitive statement on the historical impact and current status of these schools. Provisions should be made to correct these shortcomings.

- Development of sound public policy requires at least four types of information relevant to private schools and their clienteles: demographic data, descriptive data, research findings on social impact and institutional performance, and constitutional analysis. Provisions should be made to accumulate such information.
- Given the necessary basic data, there should be a carefully conducted national study of the implications of that data for public policy.
- Once a public policy position has been developed on the basis of solid data, organized efforts should be made to gain wide public acceptance and implementation of that policy.

OHIO SUPREME COURT RULINGS
FAVOR PARENTAL RIGHTS, AID
TO PRIVATE SCHOOL STUDENTS

Recent Ohio Supreme Court rulings protect the rights of parents with regard to their children's education and support legislative provisions for the public financing of auxiliary services for children attending private schools. In one decision the court ruled that a person's right to religious freedom takes precedence over standards set by the state board of education, provided that person's religious beliefs are "truly held" and he can show that state standards "infringe upon" his right to free exercise of religion. In a second, it dismissed all objections to the Ohio Auxiliary Services Bill, clearing the way for implementation in the 1976-77 school year.

In "The Tabernacle Christian School Case," the court overturned the convictions of a small band of western Ohio parents who refused to take their children out of school when the state charged the school did not meet minimum education standards. The decision said some of the standards "at least indirectly hamper the right of appellants to freely exercise their religious beliefs through the medium of the educational institution which they have established expressly for that purpose." It said, further, that the application of the standards could result in "absolute suffocation of independent thought and educational philosophy and the effective retardation of religious philosophy."

Under the provisions of the Auxiliary Services Bill, approximately \$175 per pupil will be available this year according to Rev. Richard Jebson, Principal of the Trinity Lutheran School of Marysville and CAPE State Representative for Ohio. Allowable items are non-divertable textbooks and instructional materials, health services, therapeutic and remedial services, testing and scoring services, and field trip transportation.

NCES TO REGULARLY COLLECT
PRIVATE SCHOOL STATISTICS

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is undertaking regular collection of descriptive statistics concerning private schools beginning this school year. Data acquired from the survey will be used to reestablish a nonpublic school data base to be made available to educational planners, managers, and researchers. There are some 20,250 schools to be surveyed.

According to Robert L. Lamborn, CAPE's Executive Director, "Decisions are made daily by representatives of Congress, the Administration, the courts, federal agencies, the media, and others, which vitally affect the well-being of the nation's nonpublic schools. It is crucial," he said, "that people making these decisions have adequate data upon which to base their judgments." Marie Eldridge, Administrator of NCES, authorized the announcement of the NCES data collection decision at the recent OE-CAPE sponsored conference on private precollegiate education.

National Catholic Educational Association is handling the collection of Catholic school statistics through its NCEA Data Bank, under the direction of Rhoda Goldstein. CAPE is responsible for gathering all other private school data. Both are under contract to NCES.

PATTERNS OF EXCELLENCE
IN BLACK EDUCATION LONG
ESTABLISHED SAYS SOWELL

Instead of a remote possibility to be reached only by "futuristic experimental methods," black educational excellence was achieved "decades ago," writes Thomas Sowell in "Patterns of Black Excellence," published recently in The Public Interest. Sowell, Professor of Economics at UCLA, studied six black high schools chosen from a number of successful ones throughout the country. The list, compiled by the late Horace Mann Bond and published in The American Negro Reference Book, shows those black high schools with the largest number of alumni who received doctorates from 1957 through 1962. Sowell also studied two black elementary schools chosen because of their outstanding performance by other indices. Test scores were examined in the eight schools as well as such things as atmosphere and school-community relations. Of the schools studied, five are public; three, Catholic.

A very few institutions in a few urban centers have produced a disproportionate share of black pioneers and high achievers, Sowell found. Four of the high schools he studied produced a long list of black breakthroughs, including the first black state superintendent of schools (Wilson Riles, from McDonough 35), the first black Supreme Court Justice (Thurgood Marshall, from Frederick Douglass), the discoverer of blood plasma (Charles R. Drew, from Dunbar), a Nobel Prize winner (Martin Luther King, Jr., from Booker T. Washington), and the only black Senator in this century (Edward W. Brooke, from Dunbar).

While teaching methods, plant, and personnel varied "enormously" in the schools Sowell studied, some characteristics were almost always present. The most basic, "educational law and order." Principals were dedicated educators of strong character, some of "heroic dimensions." Ability grouping was a feature of most of the schools. Social settings were also significant. All the schools were in cities which had concentrations of "free persons of color" in the antebellum era. Schools, usually private ones, existed there 50 or 100 years earlier. Apparently the great bulk of black children who benefited from the schools studied were not descendants of "free persons of color" or of middle class Negroes; but the "knowledge, experience, and values of the more fortunate segment of the race became their heritage," Sowell said.

The schools studied: Booker T. Washington High School (Atlanta); St. Paul of the Cross (Atlanta); Frederick Douglass High School (Baltimore); McDonough 35 High School (New Orleans); St. Augustine High School (New Orleans); Dunbar High School (Washington, D. C.); Xavier Prep (New Orleans); and P. S. 91 (Brooklyn).

NEW MEXICO PRIVATE SCHOOL
ORGANIZATION FLOURISHING

"We have really grown," reports Sister Evelyn Booms, president of the New Mexico Association of Nonpublic Schools (NMANS) and Superintendent of Schools, Archdiocese of Santa Fe. "From a beginning membership of nine schools last fall, we now have 42." Baha'i, Catholic, Christian, independent, Lutheran, Methodist, and Presbyterian schools are represented in the group, one of 20 such state groups across the country.

The association's purposes are to defend and promote diversity in education; to help parents maintain free choice among schools; to provide communication among private schools, between private and public schools, and between private schools and the State Department of Education and other state and federal agencies; to encourage public commitment to excellence in education and public awareness to the fact that public and private schools share in carrying out the educational responsibility of the state; to encourage the maintenance of standards appropriate to the purpose of each institution; to promote sound management of all education funds; and to use well all state educational resources.

Other officers include: vice president--David Burgett, principal, McCurdy School; secretary--Brenda Raschel, principal, Cedar Grove School; and treasurer--Thomas King, principal, El Rancho de los Reyes School.

CAPE RECEIVES \$100,000
FORD FOUNDATION GRANT

The Ford Foundation has approved a two-year grant of \$100,000 to CAPE for "partial general support to assure organization stability." CAPE, established in 1971 and a full-time agent for private precollegiate education since 1973, will use the funds primarily for further development of broadly representative state-level private school organizations, strengthening the Council's communications capabilities, and pursuing the public policy objectives identified at the June OE-CAPE conference.

DECLINING PUPIL POPULATION
IMPACT ON PUBLIC, PRIVATE
SCHOOLS UNDER NIE STUDY

As part of a larger study of the impact the decline in student population has upon the nation's schools, CAPE recently completed a study of enrollment trends in U. S. private schools from 1965 through 1975. The study, directed by Donald Erickson, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, B. C., is one of several parallel investigations being conducted by the National Institute of Education (NIE).

Erickson reports that private school enrollments were 6,300,000 in 1965 and dropped to 4,500,000 by 1975. He warns, however, that composite figures are misleading, since children in Catholic schools constitute about 75% of the private school total. Over the period, Catholic enrollments declined sharply; all other segments of private education resisted or ran counter to this trend. In Pennsylvania, for instance, Catholic enrollments decreased by 35%; all other private school enrollments increased by 45%. Erickson believes these relationships would hold in many other states. They do in the nation-- Catholic enrollments declined 39% while those of other private schools increased by 49%.

Catholic schools, Erickson stresses, unlike any other private school group, were struck with a "stunning combination of profound challenges," each reinforcing the negative impact of the others. They faced, among other problems, rapid shifts in philosophical outlook, massive city-to-suburbs migration, and dwindling supplies of teaching nuns, priests, and brothers, necessitating the hiring of salaried lay teachers. Catholic education has responded to these challenges. Percentage losses in Catholic enrollments for 1974-75 and 1975-76 are only slightly greater than those for public schools (1.5% versus .8 and 1.1% versus .8, respectively). Predictions are for a continuation of this parallel trend.

Schools that have grown most rapidly, Erickson found, are those motivated to establish a clearly defined "values climate," maintain a no-nonsense academic rigor, preserve the ethnicity of their constituency, provide a more humane operation than the "sharp-cornered social structures" of the public schools, and protect institutions once local in orientation against the perceived "takeover" by distant government officials. We are inclined to think, Erickson concludes, that a clear, well articulated reason for being is the most generally applicable factor in determining the vitality of private schools.

Co-investigators were: Bruce S. Cooper, Dartmouth College, and Richard L. Nault, Washington University, St. Louis.

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