

OUTLOOK

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

December, 1976

CARTER'S TRANSITION TEAM
ASKS ADVICE ON EDUCATION
ISSUES: CAPE RESPONDS

Focusing on critical education issues which may require priority attention of President-elect Carter during the early days and months of his administration, the Transition Planning Group is gathering information from national education organizations. Results will be "synthesized into a series of options papers" for the President-elect and HEW Secretary-designate, reports Dr. Sharlene Hirsch, Coordinator, Education and Human Development Group.

Responding for the Council for American Private Education (CAPE), Dr. Robert L. Lamborn, Executive Director, recommends that public policy should reflect firm commitment to the protection of the right of parents to determine the education their children will receive and to the maintenance of the educational options assured by the existence of strong public and private education. He suggests that a systematic search be made for a constitutionally acceptable method of providing tax aid to parents whose children attend nonsegregated private schools, and to providing such aid once an acceptable method is found.

There should be, he believes, a systematic search for a constitutionally acceptable and administratively feasible method for providing federally-funded education services on an equitable basis to children attending nonsegregated private schools, and to providing such services once an acceptable method is found. Also, legislation should be enacted which will assure the systematic acquisition and appropriate dissemination of adequate, regularly updated information concerning private schools so that it may be used in making relevant public policy decisions.

He recommends, further, that there be created specialist offices on the staffs of the President and the Secretary of HEW (or the Department of Education, if one is created) and of Deputy-level offices in the Office of Education, the National Institute of Education, and the National Center for Education Statistics. The positions should be filled by knowledgeable private school people, preferably ones having extensive professional experience in them.

TEN PERCENT IS RELEVANT
STATISTIC IN ASSESSING
PRIVATE EDUCATION'S ROLE

The public schools of the "Great Cities" serve approximately 10 percent (5 million) of the students enrolled in the country's elementary and secondary schools, public and private, reports Sam Husk, Executive Director of the Council of Great City Schools. U.S. Office of Education (OE) figures show, coincidentally, that this is also true of the nation's private (nonpublic) schools, which OE reports enroll 5.3 million.

The 10 percent statistic is a good rule of thumb in gauging the role of private schools. According to government reports, 9.3 percent of the schools (20,250) are private, 10.9 percent of the teachers (272,000) are in private schools, 10.7 percent of the students (5.3 million) attend private schools, and 9.4 percent of the annual expenditures for school operation (\$6.5 billion) are made by private schools. In most years, the private school percentage of capital expenditures is also of about this magnitude.

AGUIRRE DISCUSSES PRIVATE
SCHOOLS AT OE-CAPE EARLY
CHILDHOOD/PARENTING TALKS

"It is a serious concern of mine that you not lose your individualism, your independence, and your freedom," said U.S. Commissioner of Education Dr. Edward Aguirre, speaking informally with private school representatives at a U.S. Office of Education (OE) conference designed to inform private school leaders about Federal developments in Parent/Early Childhood Education. "It would be a social tragedy if we did not have private schools," he remarked. I am "philosophically in tune" with those who believe in the importance of multiple educational opportunities.

Aguirre stressed the central role of classroom teachers in the education process, the importance of bringing parents "back into education," and the necessity of defining the roles and responsibilities of parents and teachers. "Whatever decisions I make," said the Commissioner, will be made in terms of the support that will be brought "to the classroom teachers, to the parents, and to the community."

Acknowledging that it might be "a bad rap," Aguirre cautioned the group that private schools are sometimes perceived as a "place for the wealthy or those who want to get away from desegregation." To the extent that the perception is wrong, you must work to correct the perception--and to the extent that it is right, you must work to correct the condition.

Several CAPE directors attended the December 13 meeting: Dr. Al H. Senske, CAPE President (Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod); Donald A. Vetter (The American Lutheran Church); and Dr. David R. Weinberg, (American Montessori Society). Others in the group represented the Friends Council on Education; the National Association of Episcopal Schools; the National Association of Independent Schools; the National Catholic Educational Association; and the National Society for Hebrew Day Schools. Underscoring their recognition that historically most preschool services have been provided by the private sector, the Federal officials reiterated their desire to work closely with private school people.

Among topics discussed were Family Living and Related Programs, Education for Parenthood/Exploring Childhood Programs, and the Teacher Corps Programs.

REP. SIMON REPORTS PRIVATE
SECTOR SUPPORT, URGES MORE
CONTACT FROM "BACK HOME"

My colleagues and I on the Education and Labor Committee in the House, and our counterparts in the Senate, want to "help nonpublic education, within constitutional constraints," Representative Paul Simon told a group of Lutheran education executives recently. We are particularly eager to do so when private education serves special social needs. Where schools meet such needs and provide quality education, "they ought to be helped," Simon stated.

Instead of supporting education through real estate taxes, which he believes is unsound policy, Simon sees gradual increases in Federal assistance as a way to meet a variety of desperate social needs including, in addition to those of education, poverty and unemployment. Movement will be slow, "there will be no giant steps, but "we cannot be walking by on the other side," he said.

He told the national conference of Missouri Synod Lutherans, who met in Washington December 5-8, they should initiate letters to people in Congress from people "back home." National education leaders cannot be effective alone, he said. There must be a combination of interest from the "grass roots" as well as from national leadership. The 25 hurdles a bill must surmount before it becomes law were outlined by Lynn Stalbaum, Legislative Representative for the National Milk Producers Federation and former U.S. Congressman from Wisconsin. Father John F. Meyers (National Catholic Educational Association) and Monsignor Olin J. Murdick (U.S. Catholic Conference) spoke of the implications for Lutheran education of the findings of the recent National Opinion Research Center study, "Catholic Schools in a Declining Church" (The Greeley Study).

FIRST AMENDMENT READING
OF LANDMARK SCHOOL CASE
ADVANCED BY LEGAL SCHOLAR

The First Amendment to the Constitution gives the right of individual consciousness to be free of government coercion. This right applied to schooling would assure parents freedom of educational choice whenever values or beliefs are at stake, says Stephen Arons, Assistant Professor in the Legal Studies Program at the University of Massachusetts. He suggests a First Amendment reading of Pierce v. Society of Sisters, believing that the present state system of compulsory attendance and financing of public schools may not adequately satisfy the principle of government neutrality toward family choice in education.

The effect of the Oregon legislation which gave rise to Pierce, the landmark 1925 U. S. Supreme Court case that guaranteed both religious and secular private schools their right to do business, was to prohibit parents from patronizing private schools. But the Court unanimously upheld the right of private schools to exist and the rights of parents to "direct the up-bringing and education of children under their control."

According to Arons, writing in the Harvard Educational Review (Feb. 1976), all education is value-laden. A secular system cannot be value-neutral. He cites as examples wars over sex education, content of science textbooks, sex roles as portrayed in textbooks. Decisions on these opinion differences affect what values are to be communicated to children in the process of teaching particular skills.

In almost all struggles over the content, structure, and methods of public schools, underlying agreement among the combatants, Arons says, has been that majoritarian political control of the school system is appropriate; however, a First Amendment reading of Pierce makes it clear that it is the family and not the political majority which the Constitution empowers to make such schooling decisions. All parents, in accepting the public school system are forced to accept a value structure; it may or may not be consistent or compatible with theirs. Because present state financing schemes for education fail to make school funds available outside public schools, poor families must forfeit their First Amendment rights of free choice in exchange for a free education.

Compulsory education may have to be revised, Arons argues, to eliminate its economically discriminatory nature and to preserve freedom of belief for families in search of what they view as desirable education for their children.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIANS PLAY
LEADING ROLES IN GROWTH OF
BAPTIST DAY SCHOOL MOVEMENT

Because church and home should be held accountable to God for the spiritual nature of children, churches should operate their own schools, believed W. B. Harvey, pioneer in the Baptist Day School Movement and founder of the First Christian Day School in Compton, California. Harvey opened the school in 1947 for 85 children in grades 1-6. Two years later grades 7 and 8 were added and enrollment jumped to 170. Other schools opened the same year showed similar increases. Cochran Avenue School grew enough to build a full playground after using a small inner court-- "hardly big enough for Farmer in the Dell"--for two years. Today, approximately 7,000 children are enrolled in Baptist schools across the country.

Most Baptist schools are in California, where the movement began and where, for "many, many years," admissions policies have been racially nondiscriminatory. The Department of Baptist Day Schools, established within the Los Angeles Baptist City Mission Society in 1947 and currently headed by Rev. C. Rowan Lunsford, encourages and assists churches in the operation of schools. Even though the range of Baptist groups operating schools is wide (American Baptist, Conservative Baptist, Southern Baptist, the Baptist General Conference, and the General Association of Regular Baptists) and philosophical differences exist, there is community agreement on goals of educational excellence and on reasons Baptist schools should exist. No national body speaks for the group.

JEWISH GRADUATE STUDENTS
AID OLDEST LUTHERAN SCHOOL
IN MEETING MINORITY NEEDS

A Lutheran school in New York City calls upon Jewish doctoral students to counsel its student and parent body, which is predominantly black. St. Matthew Lutheran School, in operation since 1752, is the oldest Lutheran school in continuous operation in the U.S. Seventy percent of its students are black, 18 percent are of Hispanic origin, and 12 percent are Caucasian. Two years ago, because of serious problems arising from the mix of cultures, life styles, child rearing patterns, and values, St. Matthews turned for help to its neighbor, Yeshiva University.

Students from the Graduate School of Counseling and Educational Psychology of Yeshiva serve St. Matthew as school psychologists. They identify behavioral and academic difficulties among students; operate a referral system with community agencies; set up communications between parents, school, and agencies; and train teachers to interpret problems.

OREGON'S GOV. STRAUB SETS
"PRIVATE EDUCATION WEEK"

It is a democratic tradition that private, parochial, and independent schools be allowed "to flourish" along with public schools "in every state of the Union," says Bob Straub, Governor of Oregon, proclaiming January 16-22 "Private Education Week" in the state. Governor Straub urges all Oregon educators to make "every possible effort" to establish exchange programs between public and private school students and teachers in order to further mutual understanding. In his proclamation he states, further, "it is proper" that all citizens join him "in saluting the dedicated men and women who work in and support private schools in this state." Oregon private schools enroll 23,000.

COORDINATED DISSEMINATION-
DIFFUSION SYSTEM GOAL OF
HEW DIVISION OF EDUCATION

The dominant thrusts of many widely scattered dissemination-diffusion efforts can be drawn together in a coherent system, if all those involved "buy into the vision," says an HEW Division of Education report. The report is authored by the Dissemination Analysis Group (DAG), a task force of the Dissemination Policy Council, which is charged with clarifying and establishing dissemination policy for the entire Education Division. The Council was created by Dr. Virginia Y. Trotter, Assistant Secretary for Education, with the support of the Commissioner of Education and the Director of the National Institute of Education in a cooperative effort to improve educational dissemination throughout the country.

The DAG recommends ways to increase the "fit" between the many activities at the Federal level and to bring about a "fit" between Federal activities and the "numerous discrete developments that states, local districts, and private groups" are undertaking to improve their dissemination efforts. DAG maintains that eventually all efforts should "fit" into a nationwide system.

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