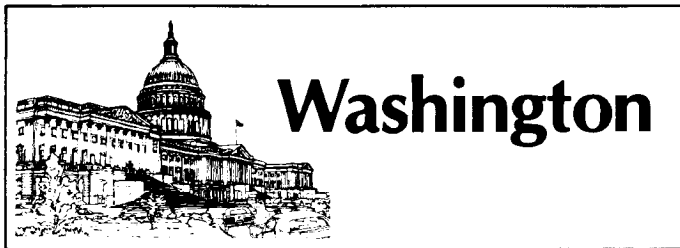


CAPE OUTLOOK



The Bishops and Honig Speak on Morals and Values

Moral learning, the vital center of the education expoused by most private schools, has recently become a key focus of leaders of public education. As California Superintendent Bill Honig recently summed it up, "There is a growing consensus in this country that unless we figure out what values are important and how to teach them, both our civic and ethical traditions are in deep trouble." For Honig, our ethical tradition involves "very consensual values: honesty, integrity, self-discipline, compassion, tolerance, moral courage; things that there is a general consensus about in our society. We would like our young people to live according to these ideals. We would like to help them do that."

A large and important offer of help in that direction has just been announced by the United States Catholic Conference. USCC's Administrative Board has recently issued a paper, "Value and Virtue, Moral Education in the Public School," which while not wishing "to impose a religious viewpoint on our fellow citizens," has the purpose of providing "our reasoned reflection on what we perceive to be a national concern."

Noting that a "renewed shared moral vision within public schools is possible... grounded in the common bond of humanity that links people of every race, creed and color,...values, virtue and moral ideals should be infused into the curriculum as well as explicit and authentic education in critical thinking." It urges teachers to be aware they are role models, students to be sensitive to the "moral impact" they have on one another and schools to see themselves as "moral communities." The statement concludes by inviting those responsible for public schools to join in on a dialogue "with their brothers and sisters across the land to address the national concern in a spirit that preserves everyone's integrity and dignity while renewing a national vision."

The statement, generous in spirit and broad in appeal, shows there's much common ground between the bishops and Superintendent Honig. But it became
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Private and Public High Schools: Differing Communities

A systematic comparison of private and public schools has never been done to anyone's satisfaction. Too few educators are familiar with both. And it's been easy to date to fluff off the job as too much of an apples and oranges matter.

In 1982 James Coleman, Thomas Hoffer and Sally Kilgore broke new ground and not a few icons with *High School Achievement* which, among many other findings, showed that private school students achieve better than their public school counterparts when allowance is made for family background.

Now, pushing ahead, Coleman and Hoffer have written another study, *Private and Public High Schools- The Impact of Communities*, which makes further comparison of the achievement of the same students two years later against a fruitful, well-considered sociology of private and public education, a study of "the school as a social unit in its social context."

Briefly stated, public schools are the instrument of a democratic society to assure that all children can get an education. Private schools, conversely, are instruments of families. Private schools are supported either by religiously affiliated families—"functional communities"—or by families whose attachment is the school's educational orientation—"value communities."

The study compares the achievement of students in public, Catholic and non-Catholic private schools in major subjects, in numbers of dropouts, in success in college and work and in the attitude and behavior toward school of parents. The study links its comparisons to the different kinds of social resources available to the schools- the functional, value and public communities- and makes statistical allowances for family background.

The result is a set of thought-provoking research findings credibly comparing those "apples and oranges"—private and public schools. A serious weakness acknowledged by the authors is that the non-Catholic sample of private education is so small that the findings about it are dubious at best.

In a word, Catholic school students achieve better than students in public schools in math and verbal skills, but not in sciences. Social resources are far more beneficial than economic resources for school achievement, although the relative weakness in science achievement in Catholic schools is attributed to their lack of money for facilities and teachers. A
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speculation: the lower achievement of the other private schools in math and science and, conversely, their strength in the humanities, is due to small classes, which has the effect of improving verbal skills but not those in math and science.

Another interesting hypothesis is that the high achievement of Catholic schools in both math and verbal skills derives from their support by functional communities which helped them withstand the popular "curriculum watering down and course content watering down" of the 1970's. This hunch gets more shaky when it goes on to suggest that support from the value community for the non-Catholic private schools did not have the same conservative effect on curriculum. The very small sample makes this guess interesting but essentially empty. Arguably a value community has as high a stake in traditional excellence as a functional one does.

Shedding new light on education's most intractable problems, the chapter "Achievement and Dropout in Disadvantaged Families" describes "proximate reasons" for the success of Catholic schools with less advantaged students and those from deficient families (c.f. *CAPE Outlook*, June 1987)

The key is the social resources available to Catholic schools, the socially integrated functional communities which support them. Thus they can exercise a high degree of control, making substantial academic demands on students and compensating for deficiencies in families. It is very doubtful that public schools which deal with significant numbers of disadvantaged students can ever develop the kind of social support which comes naturally with religious schools.

But the current interest in school plan, school autonomy, reduction in size, good leadership, parental involvement and a single-minded emphasis on academic achievement are all steps in the right direction.

The study is notable for its imagination and thoughtful use of the wide lens. Schools are heavily affected by a panoply of factors reaching far beyond them. Any measure which ignores social resources is most clearly from now on deficient. Perhaps the next dimension resourceful researchers should explore is the effect of a school's own history on its present. Like the impact of their communities, the impact of their past can be central to a better understanding of schools. Coleman and Hoffer have opened up new dimensions for educational research and all schools will benefit.

Statistics on the School Administrator

Profile of School Administrators in the United States is a new study released on January 10 by Dr. Emily Feistritzer, director of the National Center for Education Information, and funded by a grant from the Department of Education. The intention of the report is to identify who runs the nation's schools and how they think, and to compare administrators' perceptions of the quality of education in this country with the general public's. An advisory committee consisting of public and private education leaders designed a survey which was mailed on October 16 to 5,322 randomly selected administrators- superintendents, public and private school principals. The response rate was high at 3,577, and included 524 private school heads.

What does the school administrator look like? Dr. Feistritzer groups public school superintendents and principals in particular into "an old boys' club." "They are disproportionately men, white and older than their counterparts in other occupations." Ninety-six percent of superintendents and 76 percent of principals in public schools are male, whereas 31 percent of public school teachers are male. The gender breakdown in private schools weighs more favorably toward women since there are so many women Catholic school heads. And 40 percent of the inner city principals are female. Ninety-seven percent of superintendents, 90 percent of public school principals and 97 percent of private school heads are white, compared with 85 percent of the general population. (One percent of private school principals, two percent of private school teachers and six percent of private school students are black.) Clearly there exists a sizeable number of minority inner city administrators.

Only about one-third of school administrators have held full-time jobs outside of the education field, which contributes to what Dr. Feistritzer calls their "insularity." They have spent most of their working lives in schools: superintendents, 25 years; public school heads, 23 years, and private school heads, 21 years. The majority of administrators earned bachelors degrees in education and 75 percent of superintendents, 88 percent of public, and 61 percent of private school heads hold masters degrees in education. Most rate their professional preparation between "excellent" and "very good."

School administrators voted for Ronald Reagan in 1984 by a two-thirds majority. (Fifty-eight percent of private school heads, and a greater percentage of pub-

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A coalition of 14 national organizations serving private schools (K-12)

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[ISSN 0271-1451]

Outlook is published monthly (September through June) by the Council for American Private Education. Annual subscription \$10. Council members: The American Lutheran Church • American Montessori Society • Association of Military Colleges and Schools of the U.S.A. • Christian Schools International • Friends Council on Education • Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod • National Association of Episcopal Schools • National Association of Independent Schools • National Association of Private Schools for Exceptional Children • National Catholic Educational Association • National Society for Hebrew Day Schools • Seventh-day Adventist Board of Education, K-12 • Solomon Schechter Day School Association • U.S. Catholic Conference • Associated state organizations in Arizona, California, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin.

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lic school administrators said they voted for Reagan.) When asked "How would you describe your views on most political matters?" seven percent of superintendents identify themselves as liberals, 63 percent as moderates and 30 percent as conservatives. Public school principals are 12 percent liberal, 61 percent moderate and 28 percent conservative, and private school principals are 14 percent liberal, 52 percent moderate and 35 percent conservative. The general public considers itself 21 percent liberal, 38 percent moderate and 36 percent conservative, and public and private school teachers are within one percentage point on each of these categories at 14 percent liberal, 56 percent moderate and 30 percent conservative according to a 1986 CBS/New York Times poll.

In terms of salary, 60 percent of superintendents, 75 percent of public and 73 percent of private school principals feel they are underpaid. Earnings for superintendents and public school principals average about \$50,000 and \$42,000 respectively, with no figure reported for private school heads.

Most public school administrators agree that the main purpose of education is to teach basic skills and knowledge, to teach reasoning and analytical skills and to help students become good citizens. Private school heads place the need "to instill sound morals and ethical principles" slightly ahead of teaching analytical skills and reasoning. Administrators generally agree that what keeps them in the job is the opportunity to use their minds and abilities.

Concerning the reforms on the nation's education agenda, the administrators were polled on their views of vouchers and parental choice, sex education, busing, teacher preparation, the federal role, education spending and the strength of public education as compared to other developed countries. Not surprisingly, most public school administrators are not in favor of vouchers or parental choice, whereas most private school heads are. Parents and the general public are slightly more in favor of rather than against vouchers, but heavily pro-choice of local schools. On sex education all sectors- administrators, parents and the general public- are in favor, with public school administrators feeling more strongly than private school heads, but a majority favoring sex education from grade four up. Fewer than 20 percent of all school administrators favor busing, even in low-income communities. However, in the small sample of black superintendents in this study, a majority favor busing to achieve racial balance. Over 40 percent of the general public favors busing. On the question of teacher preparation, school administrators are positive about alternatives to the traditional education majors. They also support a greater decision-making role for teachers, the potential for upward mobility, and basing teacher salary on performance in addition to seniority and level of education. Eighty percent of private school heads believe in some form of merit pay.

School administrators are happy with their positions and their schools. Ninety-five percent of private

school heads, like their public school counterparts say that they are satisfied with their jobs. This is where Dr. Feistritz takes some issue. She notes from the various polls that the American public does not think that public schools are doing a good job, and that only 39 percent of private school principals think our public education compares well with other Western countries. She sees public school administrators as monolithic in their views, and too much the products of similar backgrounds, with little room for new ideas. And she is critical of their disproportionately large ranks of white, middle-age men governing what is becoming an increasingly minority population.

Legislative Update

On January 25 the one hundredth Congress begins its second session, and President Reagan delivers his State of the Union message. All 435 congressmen and a third of the senators face reelection this year, so Congress is expected to adjourn in early October for a month of campaigning. Congress will also adjourn for the Democratic presidential nominating convention in July, and the Republican, in August.

FY 1988 Appropriations—Congress reached final agreement on its budget package late in December, and the president signed PL 100-202 on December 23, approving \$600 billion for federal program expenditures for FY 1988. Education programs will receive \$20.1 billion, compared to \$19.6 billion in FY 1987. Chapter 1 will increase by more than \$384 million, setting the 1988 total at \$4.3 billion. Chapter 2 will decrease by about \$21 million to a total of \$508 million. Some of the other programs receiving increases are bilingual education, education of the handicapped, vocational and adult education.

Commodity Distribution Reform Act of 1987 (PL 100-237)—was signed by the president on January 8, 1988. It will provide nutritional assistance to schools and other institutions through distribution of surplus commodities in useful quantities, sizes and forms.

Welfare Reform (HR 1720 and S 1511)—passed the House on December 16 and is pending in the Senate. This bill would require parents receiving welfare benefits who have children aged three years and older to participate in education, training and work programs. States would be required to offer remedial education and high school completion courses.

Family and Medical Leave Act of 1987 (HR 925 and S 249)—would require employers with more than 15 employees to provide them with unpaid maternity leave, leave for newly adopted children, and for serious illness of self or family member. The House Education and Labor Committee approved the bill in November, and it is pending in other committees.

Physical Education—The Congress adopted a resolution in December to encourage school districts to provide high quality daily physical education programs for all children from kindergarten through grade 12. This measure does not require presidential approval.

Capenotes

*According to the Council for Aid to Education (as reported in *Education Daily*, December 29), 43 percent of all corporate gifts, the highest figure ever, were earmarked for education. Twenty percent of these contributions were made in noncash gifts such as equipment, land and securities. *Education Daily* also reports in January that a nonprofit research group found that "Education and the quality of the work force are the biggest concerns for the nation's businesses, attracting more time and money by major corporations than any other community affairs issue." "More than 64 percent of the firms listed primary and secondary education as their biggest concern."

*Independent Sector, the coalition of national voluntary agencies reports that national voluntary giving appears not to have been adversely affected by the recent Stock Market adjustments.

*The Department of Education offers several opportunities under its "Challenge" program to achieve Drug Free Schools by mobilizing schools and their communities. The bimonthly newsletter *The Challenge* provides up-to-date information, tips, and resources for prevention and early intervention including description of model programs. Contact Schools Without Drugs: The Challenge, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC 20202; (202) 732-4161. The Department is also seeking applications for 1988 drug and alcohol abuse education and prevention activities involving parents, school personnel, local community leaders and government officials. Private schools are eligible for these grants ranging from \$100,000 to \$200,000 for programs lasting 12 to 18 months. The deadline is February 26. Call (202) 732-3566.

*The Department of Education is inviting applications for grants to improve elementary and secondary instruction in math, science and computer learning. Call (202) 732-3566.

*The Smithsonian Institution is inviting elementary and secondary teachers to apply for a special one-week course entitled "Teaching Writing Using Museums and Other Community Resources." The

course, worth three graduate credits, will be offered in the summer of 1988 to teachers living more than 75 miles outside the Washington, DC metropolitan area. Contact: National Seminars, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Arts and Industries Building, room 1163 s.i., Washington, DC 20560; (202) 357-3049. Application deadline is March 25.

*Earthwatch Fellowships, funded by the Klingenstein Foundation will be made available to 15-20 full-time private school teachers for the summer of 1988. Teachers will join field research expeditions to study flora and fauna at sites around the world, and will be awarded up to \$1,200 towards costs. Application deadline is March 31, 1988. Contact Earthwatch Educational Grants, Box 403T, 319 Arlington St., Watertown, MA 02172, or call Mauyra Twitchell at (617) 926-8200.

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clear at a recent Koffee Klatch at the Department of Education when Father Tom Gallagher of USCC presented the paper, that exactly what to do next and how to do it within the diverse education community is not clear or easy. For many, the recognition of the problem in society and in education is at least a small step forward.

The convergence of concern about the teaching of values in schools coincides with a growing natural sense of unease about "the way we are" as a people—preoccupied with self, dominated by material acquisitions, intent on immediate satisfaction, impatient with ambiguity, infatuated with slick packaging and simple slogans, resistant to hard truths and tough realities.

Many think we could make the most headway with moral learning of the young if we better understood that education is a continuum and is for all. It's hard to see how the moral education of the young can make real headway in a society largely oblivious to its moral condition. Moral education may be our most important job, but for many school people who again are being singled out to bear another of society's pressing burdens, the job will only get done as it is shared.

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