

# CAPE OUTLOOK

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## Bennett's Landmark "Making It Work"

On April 26 Secretary of Education William Bennett presented to the President his report on the current condition of elementary and secondary schools, *American Education: Making It Work*. (CAPE attended the White House ceremony and the Department of Education briefings accompanying the release.) The Secretary's conclusion is that American education has progressed since 1983 and *A Nation At Risk*, but there is still much room for improvement in terms of what students know, what schools teach, and success in reaching disadvantaged and minority students. He notes that an "ethos of success is missing from too many American schools. Our teachers and principals are too often hired and promoted in ways that make excellence a matter of chance, not design." Part I of the study assesses "How Far We Have Come," and Part II recommends "What We Need To Do."

The report bases its finding as to what students know on ACT, SAT, and NAEP results. (NAEP, National Assessment of Educational Progress, tests all academic disciplines with the exception of foreign language.) Many more students are taking Advanced Placement courses and exams, and minority participation in A.P. has doubled since 1980.

The Department of Education compared 15,000 transcripts of 1982 high school graduates with the same number of 1987 graduates for the purpose of assessing the demands of the curriculum. *Nation At Risk* proposed the following set of "New Basics": four years of English; three years of science, math and social studies; one-half year of computer science, and two years of foreign language for the college-bound. In 1982 less than two percent of the sample had completed such a curriculum, whereas in 1987, 12.7 percent had done so. When computer science and foreign language were excluded from the basics list, 13.4 percent of the 1982 and 30 percent of the 1987 graduates had studied this core curriculum. In those same five years "general track"-placed students dropped by half, from 35 percent in 1982 to 17 percent in 1987. Despite this very significant increase in enrollment in academic courses, however, students have not made corresponding gains in achievement.

There is one direct reference in the study to private schools, made on this topic of academic course work. "Compared with public high schools, private and parochial schools still do a somewhat better job of ensuring that their students take the 'New Basics'...."(p. 16-17)

Drug use, "the most dangerous and crippling distraction from learning," appears to be markedly down, although the report is cautious in its optimism. Marijuana use any time in the previous 12 months reported by high school seniors between 1980 and 1987 fell from 49 to 36 percent, and there has been "a significant drop in cocaine use." Discipline policies have tightened, although teachers report a high rate of dissatisfaction with student behavior.

Secretary Bennett makes five recommendations for education reform. First, strengthen content. "Most students have a fair grasp of rudimentary skills, but many of them have not learned to build upon those skills—to master tasks requiring more complex reasoning, advanced literacy and problem solving." Additionally, schools have the task of supporting parents in children's character development, moral decision-making and sense of personal responsibility. For the non-English speaking, the learning-disabled and the otherwise handicapped, traditional tracking can be a mistake. Too often the student leaves school without fundamental skills. Bennett has no specific solutions, but applies the principle that "All children should have access to a rich common curriculum." "If one student, for whatever reason, cannot learn algebra and geometry in two years, then he should be given the additional time and help he needs."

Second, "ensure equal intellectual opportunity." "A wealth of recent research suggests that what a student studies in high school—regardless of race or family background—is the best predictor of educational success." "Too often we have not provided disadvantaged students with the first class elementary and secondary education they deserve." "I believe that quality education is the central civil rights challenge facing us today." Bennett argues that the demographic changes predicted in "apocalyptic analyses" pose challenges, but not unprecedented obstacles. After all in 1909, 57.8 percent of school children in 37 large cities were either foreign-born or first-generation according to the U.S. Commission on Immigration, "yet our schools educated them." "Too many school leaders blame color, class or family background as the reason for educational failure."

Third, "establish an ethos of achievement" with clear goals and high standards in an orderly school teaching basic moral principles and encouraging solid work habits. Bennett enumerates those moral principles in detail, arguing that there is a consensus on morality in this country that can and should be conveyed through our schools. The list includes basic positive human traits like honesty, fairness, self-discipline, kindness and courage.

Fourth, "recruit and reward good principals and teachers." His recommendations follow those of the Carnegie Forum and the Holmes Group, and recognize the achievements made by several states in opening up the profession, rewarding success, granting autonomy and assessing competence.

Finally, "institute accountability" by spending wisely, providing parental choice of schools, monitoring outcomes and rewarding success.

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## UBIT—A Substantial Issue

The House Ways and Means Oversight Subcommittee, in search of needed new sources of federal revenue, has stepped up its focus on income earned by non-profit organizations from unrelated business activities. In a jam-packed hearing on May 9 under Chairman Pickle (D-Tex.), 10 "discussion options" drawn up by the Committee to tighten up the present law were given an airing.

Since 1952 tax-exempt organizations have been required to pay taxes at commercial rates on income-producing activities that are not "substantially related" to their charitable purpose. The key issue is whether that vague but long useful description is still serviceable after 35 years. The tax-exempt community said essentially yes and that abuses can and should be taken care of within the confines of present law. The small business community pointed to what it considers major abuses by some non-profits and said that whatever their scope, "a little unfair competition is still unfair competition." IRS said that its field agents are poorly served by the "very subjective" substantially-related test and it favors new "industry by industry" standards.

Some of the major abuses cited are travel and tour services offered by non-profit groups at costs over 20 percent less than those charged by the industry, and museum mail order and jewelry sales.

With lawyer-like caution and careful hedging, the Treasury Department's chief of tax policy, O. Donald Chapoton, gave support to most of the 10 proposed options, but said the proposed change from "substantially-related" to "directly-related" as a test of an activity's relationship to the charitable sponsor would "not change the uncertainty" now existing about interpretation. He seemed to favor the development of an "activity by activity" standard along the lines favored by IRS. In his only direct reference to private schools, he observed that there should be a way of telling whether a check written to a private school (presumably by a parent or relative) is for tuition or a gift (e.g. whether it's deductible or non-deductible.)

To the obvious delight of committee members, the hearing revealed that UBIT (the unrelated business income tax) revenue had increased by 50 percent between 1985 and 1986, a period which spans the committee's announcement that it would be looking into whether the law should be changed. Projections of revenue increases resulting from the proposed changes went from under \$500 million estimated by the non-profit organizations to as high as \$5 billion by Mr. Chapoton. Small business community witnesses emphasized that the issue for them wasn't as much revenue raising as fairness in the marketplace.

Veteran watchers of the tax law-making process feel this issue could end up in House legislation this term. Chairman Pickle is

well-known as a doer. However the chances of the Senate following suit this term are considered slim.

In a small survey CAPE made last year of unrelated business income generated by member organization schools, we learned from nearly all of the schools surveyed that only a small minority of private schools are involved with it, that it seldom exceeds 2 percent of a school's operating expenses and that it comes mostly from property rentals of classroom space, tennis courts and swimming facilities.

Although it is the view here that the proposed changes per se do not appear to adversely affect our schools, the unintended and unforeseeable consequences of any changes in tax policy for non-profits as well as the danger that other forms of taxation may be proposed give us cause for serious concern. With other members of Independent Sector, the major umbrella organization of the non-profit community, we favor curbing abuses within the present structure of the law. We will continue to follow the issue closely.

## Committee For Education Funding

CAPE is a member of the Committee for Education Funding (CEF), a coalition of about 100 national public and private elementary, secondary and post-secondary educational organizations which work to assure that federal education programs which have become law get funded. CEF began in 1969, when the education community saw many programs initiated in the Lyndon Johnson years being eliminated. The Committee claims several members in its ranks who have worked on Congressional staffs. Congress relies heavily on CEF for information on the issues, and CEF publishes an annual *Education Budget Impact Alert* to explain federally funded education programs and who benefits from them.

In the 100th Congress CEF has met as a group to exchange concerns with Congressman Augustus Hawkins, Chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee and Senator Claiborne Pell, his Senate counterpart. It has also met with Congressman William Natcher, Chairman of the House Appropriations subcommittee on education, and his Senate counterpart, Senator Lawton Chiles, who is also Chairman of the Budget Committee.

CEF closely monitors both the budget and appropriations processes, speaking with Congressman and their staff, and sharing information with its "fields." The work of the Committee brings praise from Congress. Senator Ernest Hollings attributed passage of the Hollings-Stafford Amendment raising the education budget for 1984 to the efforts of CEF.

This year CEF's goal is for Congress to commit itself to its spoken priority for education, bringing it to just over two percent of the total federal budget.

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

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## CEF Hears From Dukakis

Both Presidential candidates have been invited to speak and exchange views with CEF on the federal role for education in the new Administration. On May 3 John Dukakis, the son of Governor Michael Dukakis, came to speak and to listen. John had served on Senator Kerry's (D-Mass) staff as the education legislative aide before joining the campaign, and in that capacity had worked with some of CEF's members.

Confessing that the campaign of the past several months had not allowed him to focus on a concrete education agenda for the Democratic platform, Dukakis used our meeting as an opportunity to hear the concerns of the education community. He was careful not to make promises or predictions, maintaining that budget priorities for 1989 still hinge on the events of the next seven months.

"The first thing we can do is to have a Secretary of Education who is less of a social critic," he began. After a few other general remarks which included the hope that his father come to be seen as the education candidate, the floor was open to questions. The Director of Government Relations for the American Association of University Professors, an advisor to past Democratic Presidential candidates asked how education figures into the 1988 Democratic platform. Dukakis answered that so far there are three priorities: a National Teaching Excellence Fund, adult literacy, and the opportunity for a college education for every high school graduate. He elaborated only on the National Teaching Excellence Fund. The goal is to spend \$250 million in the first year to improve the teaching profession by instituting several specific programs. Students would earn scholarships and loan forgiveness by committing themselves to becoming teachers. A National Teachers' Corps along the lines of Peace Corps/VISTA would recruit teachers. Centers for Teaching and Learning would be established for teacher development. A Retiree Network would attract retired professionals from other fields into teaching, particularly math and science. The work of the National Teaching Standards Board would be supported and encouraged.

A representative from the American Association of School Administrators, echoed by his counterpart at the National Education Association and by several other CEF members asked that education be Dukakis' top priority. John Dukakis assured us that it would be a top priority, but that other issues such as the nation's economy including full employment, fair wages, worker training and trade compete for top billing. The representative from the National Association of State Boards of Education suggested that just as President Reagan had promised to make Defense the number one item in his administration, and succeeded, so could our new President back education with the same conviction and result.

One final suggestion was offered by the National Council of Educational Opportunity Association: that the one federal education program named for a black male, the Ronald McNair Program, authorized in 1986 and appropriated, be funded.

## Capenote

*American Education: Making It Work* is available from the U.S. Government Printing Office, 710 N. Capitol St., N.W., Washington, DC 20402 for \$3.25. Ask for Document No. 065-000-00330-9, and identify the report by name.

## Making It Work (continued from page 1)

Secretary Bennett's report has received generally low marks from public school organizations. They find it less than supportive of their teachers and administrators who have succeeded in bringing about a small measure of improvement in outcomes, ignoring the need for increased federal funding to help pay for the remedial steps he acknowledges are needed for disadvantaged learners, and "tendentious."

Although their criticism may not be unfounded, CAPE finds far more here to commend than to quibble over. It is clear, crisp and cogent, a well-documented and usefully organized account. A worthy successor to *A Nation At Risk*, it's much more about what we should do and where we should go than about what's wrong and why. Most important, the heart of this report, informing everything it says, is a commitment to intellectual learning for every student. This may be the Secretary's final major educational report. He will be remembered for clearly articulating this noble theme, one which reaches back in our history to the days of Jefferson and which is far too rarely heard in the land since.

CAPE's criticism of the report centers on the fact that improving education is a very slow, long-term agonizing business. A nation obsessed with instant success, quick fixes and easy answers needs to be reminded of this in no uncertain terms. We didn't find it expressed in any terms at all.

## Legislative Update

**Hawkins/Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments (P.L. 100-297)**—was signed by the President on April 28, authorizing H.R. 5 through 1993.

**S. 2329**—A bill to amend the Toxic Substances Control Act was introduced by Senator Dale Bumpers (D-Ark). The bill would extend deadlines for LEAs to submit management plans to state governors and begin implementation, and would require a sufficient number of accredited contractors and laboratories.

**H.R. 4495**—A bill to amend the Toxic Substances Control Act was introduced by Congressman Doug Bereuter (R-Neb). The bill would extend the deadline for submission of management plans and provide financial assistance to states for such plans.

## 1988 Exemplary Schools Announced

On May 17 Education Secretary William Bennett announced that 57 private elementary schools had been chosen as exemplary by the National Review Panel in the 1987-88 National School Recognition Program. They will be honored in a White House ceremony in early September for all private and public schools selected.

This year's program for private elementary schools, again managed by CAPE, involved 219 entries from nearly every sector of private education.

Selections were based on how well the schools were meeting their own goals and eight criteria developed for the year's program. They are the outcome of peer reviews of four different panels meeting from December through May.

The selected schools, not surprisingly, come from eight different educational associations. Each school is chosen for its particular strengths and thus no two are closely alike. Most are located in urban and suburban areas. In several instances they are the elementary counterpart of previously recognized secondary schools. (continued on page 4)

## Exemplary Schools

### ALABAMA

Mars Hill Bible School, Florence  
Saint Ignatius School, Mobile

### CALIFORNIA

Nueva Learning Center, Hillsborough  
Saint John the Baptist School, El Cerrito

### CONNECTICUT

Bi-Cultural Day School, Stamford

### FLORIDA

Miami Country Day School, Miami  
Pine Crest Preparatory School, Fort Lauderdale  
Saint Gregory School, Plantation  
Saint Patrick School, Miami Beach

### GEORGIA

Saint Thomas More Catholic School, Decatur

### ILLINOIS

Anshe Emet Day School, Chicago  
The Avery Coonley School, Downers Grove  
Holy Angels School, Aurora  
Immanuel Lutheran School, Palatine  
Saint Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr School, Chicago

### IOWA

Central Catholic Elementary School, Mason City

### LOUISIANA

Isidore Newman Lower School, New Orleans  
Saint Anthony of Padua School, New Orleans  
Saint Bernard Elementary School, Breaux Bridge  
Trinity Episcopal School, New Orleans

### MARYLAND

Hebrew Academy of Greater Washington, Silver Spring  
Saint Jane de Chantal School, Bethesda  
TRI-Services Center School, Chevy Chase

### MASSACHUSETTS

The May Institute, Inc., Chatham  
The Meadowbrook School, Weston

### MICHIGAN

Grosse Pointe Academy, Grosse Pointe Farms  
North Christian School, Kalamazoo  
Saint Francis Elementary School, Traverse City

### MINNESOTA

Breck School, Minneapolis

### MONTANA

Sussex School, Missoula

### NEW JERSEY

Mustard Seed School, Hoboken  
Sacred Heart School, Trenton  
Saint Paul's School, Jersey City

### NEW YORK

The Astor Learning Center, Rhinebeck  
Friends Academy, Locust Valley  
Hebrew Academy of the Five Towns and Rockaway, Lawrence  
Hillel Academy of Broome County, Binghamton  
Our Lady of Mercy School, Hicksville  
Our Saviour Lutheran School, Bronx  
Saint Isidore School, Riverhead  
Saint Thomas of Canterbury School, Cornwall-on-Hudson

### OHIO

Gesu Catholic School, University Heights  
Nativity School, Cincinnati  
Our Lady of Perpetual Help School, Grove City  
Saint Gertrude School, Cincinnati  
Saint James White Oak School, Cincinnati  
Saint Michael School, Worthington  
Saint Paul Lutheran School, Napoleon  
Urban Community School, Cleveland

### OKLAHOMA

School of Saint Mary, Tulsa

### PENNSYLVANIA

Villa Maria Academy, Immaculata

### TENNESSEE

Saint Jude School, Chattanooga

### TEXAS

Saint Elizabeth Catholic School, Dallas

### WASHINGTON

Saint Edward School, Seattle  
Saint Paul School, Seattle

### WISCONSIN

Immanuel Lutheran School, Wisconsin Rapids  
Saint Margaret Mary School, Neenah

### Capenotes

(continued from page 3)

\*The National Endowment for the Humanities published a reading list, "Summertime Favorites," compiled from recommendations of recognized public and private schools from every state. The pamphlet listing these 400 books is free from NEH, Office of Publications and Public Affairs, room 406, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20506.

\*The *Summary of Findings from National Children and Youth Fitness Study II* reveals that today's children are in far worse shape than their counterparts 20 years ago. For a free copy of the report write to Katherine Armstrong, ODPHP, room 2132, Switzer Bldg., 330 C St., S.W., Washington, DC 20101.

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