

# cape outlook

COUNCIL FOR AMERICAN PRIVATE EDUCATION

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## PRIVATE SCHOOLS TAKE MEASURE OF REFORM MOVEMENT

How is the public school reform movement affecting private schools? This question recently brought together over 100 private and public school educators at a Washington conference sponsored by the Department of Education, the Council of Chief State School Officers and CAPE. It was the first opportunity on a national scale to clarify the dramatically different experiences of private and public education with forces for improvement which are powerfully active in public schools.

Through panels and discussion the conference probed well beyond some widely recognized facts: that to private school educators education reform is bringing troubling problems and some potentially severe ones. On the other hand, to public schools and to state legislators and governors it is bringing new, positive educational energy. Neither sector is much aware of or concerned about what's happening to the other. For many present, a major asset of the conference was its success in confronting this indifference.

Private school representatives, while frequently acknowledging the value of the school improvement effort, described a sizeable number of problems it brings. Most serious and intractable is the growing gap between teacher salaries in the two sectors as public schools hike them dramatically to attract and reward good faculty. The classic private school advantage in retaining teachers, an attractive congenial school, now has far less sticking power against the lure of increasingly respectable salaries.

Initiatives in some states to tighten certification requirements and mandate curricular changes are bringing predictable private school reactions. "At what point (do) some of our goals have to be sacrificed for the state education department's goals?" queried a New York State private school representative in

commenting on his state's Regents plan. A Pittsburgh Catholic School educator lamented that a collaborative program to enhance science teaching funded by the corporate sector, bringing together the best science teachers from area private and public schools, ended with half the private school teachers signing up to teach in public schools.

He went on to observe that "reform has had an impact on our enrollment and has caused us to look at our programs. We need to be a lot more attentive to the fact that we need to be constantly improving."

Improve your schools. That also was the centerpiece message to private school leaders from Checker Finn, the former Assistant Secretary. Citing national test data showing that private schools as a whole are now only slightly ahead of public schools in student achievement (an edge which could be attributed to family background), he said reform is making public schools more like private schools, and if it continues and makes for better schools it will "dilute the advantage that private school attendance now confers on its students."

In response to a question about what private schools could do as improved public schools creep up on them, he said "I think the name of the game is cognitive learning and I think private schools can be stronger by doing a more rigorous job of it. It is my impression that private school kids today aren't being required to learn enough and aren't being taught enough."

So endeth a sobering lesson. And although the conference heard other messages, including one from Secretary Cavazos who said that "we all have the same goal and must work together," most private school representatives left the conference with a renewed sense of the irony that the challenges they face derive from a movement which is improving the great majority of the nation's schools.

## ANSWERS FROM WASHINGTON

Leading education spokesmen and women were asked to air their solutions to "Education 2001: Coping With Change," a five-part series of the television talk show "Ask Washington," broadcast live from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in late October. [Ask Washington airs daily at 9 a.m. ET on 40 national stations and on Cable's Learning Channel.] CAPE's reporter covered the series from the studio's audience.

The first day's guests were Secretary of Education Lauro Cavazos, and Undersecretary Linus Wright. The host of the program, Lee Thornton, posed hard hitting questions, like who is responsible for motivating students. Every citizen is responsible, according to Cavazos: the government, parents, teachers and the youngsters themselves. He stressed the familiar theme of parental involvement in schools and schooling. He said that today's teachers are the best prepared ever, but we must reassess what can realistically be accomplished in a school year. Japan, after all, doesn't have the drug and poverty problems we have, and has a longer school year. Extension of the American school year might be one possible solution, but more days of unsatisfactory education solves nothing. Mr. Wright reminded the viewers that the federal priorities in education center on offering equal access to disadvantaged students and pre-schoolers, and 95 percent of the federal education budget goes to those priorities. One caller commented that the Reagan administration's constant reassertion that increased spending doesn't correlate to better results was nonsense. Wright answered that proving the correlation is difficult, but he didn't dismiss the caller's message. Another caller asked about magnet schools, to which Wright claimed that "Magnet schools and community colleges are this century's best innovations." He estimated that 500 of

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## ANSWERS FROM WASHINGTON

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the nation's 15,000 school districts have magnet schools. When asked about teaching values and whether parents are passing the buck, Mr. Wright asserted that the primary role of the school is to "teach children to become self-disciplined citizens to live in a democracy" which values "honesty, integrity and the work ethic."

### A New Workforce

The second day's panel consisted of Lynne Cheney, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities; Dr. Richard Berendzen, President of American University and Pierce Quinlan, Vice President of the National Alliance for Business. The focus was the relationship of American education today to worker preparedness now and into the next century. Ms. Thornton asked how education had fallen into its current state (her view). Dr. Berendzen offered that we expect less and less of children but have raised our sights for productivity. He also pointed out that in the United States we attribute poor student achievement to teachers, schools and genes and not to discipline (presumably learned at home). Too much class time is unproductive. He concurred with Linus Wright that the Socratic method of student-teacher engagement is under-employed and that 35 percent of class time in this country is wasted on disciplining. Consequently, Mr. Quinlan reminded viewers, business spends \$25 billion a year on education that should have taken place before high school graduation. When asked what industry needs from school in order to maintain a competitive workforce, Quinlan replied with the usual "basics" answer, but added a worker readiness component which is attitude. And Berendzen noted that the most important classroom is the family dinner table.

## Ernest Boyer

Another guest on the Ask Washington series was Ernest Boyer, President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, who posed thoughtful social insights. He began by listing all the advances in American education he has witnessed. "I don't remember any period in our history more interested in public education." He described a "youth problem" in our country of alienation and anonymity. Too many youth are isolated from adults or even alone, attending factory-like schools. "They drop out because no one even knew they'd dropped in." They are living unconnected to their neighborhoods, which are also unconnected. "If I could wave one wand it would make every high school student know one adult who could serve as a mentor or role model." Schools fail to motivate kids because of mismatched, archaic curricula irrelevant to the lives of too many. When the Carnegie Foundation surveyed 22,000 teachers, one-half reported that they were seriously concerned about their students' welfare because too many of them are unfed and troubled. They are physically neglected and abused. Children turn to gangs to meet their needs. And teachers cannot enforce discipline that doesn't originate at home. Boyer has many answers to these problems, but appeared most interested in prenatal care and preschool education as a first solution. A lack of attention to that age group results in lower I.Q.s. Another answer is developmental grouping as opposed to age grouping in the first four years of school. And the emphasis must center on language development. Boyer maintained his optimism. "Our country cares about our children and our schools."

## CAPENOTES

\***The National Teacher Exam** taken by 200,000 teachers annually and required by 30 states for licensing, will be replaced by a new examination process early in the 1990's. The Educational Testing Service will issue three separate exams to new teachers at three different phases of their preparation. Candidates will be tested as college sophomores in basic skills. As seniors they will be tested in their subject area. After they have taught they will be tested on teaching skills. Testing will include the use of interactive computers allowing the candidate to respond to problem solving. Each state will decide what the tests should measure.

\*The National Endowment for the Humanities announces its **1989 Summer Seminars for School Teachers**. Sixty seminars will be offered on college campuses across the country in all disciplines of the humanities. Groups of 15 teachers will study together for four to six weeks. Each participant will receive a stipend of \$2,000-\$2,750. Seminars are designed for secondary teachers, but all teachers may apply. Deadline is March 1. Write NEH, Division of Fellowships and Seminars, SSST-room 316, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20506.

\*"Rethinking Curriculum: A Call for Fundamental Reform" suggests a basis for selecting a curriculum to combat student apathy and promote greater mastery. Send \$5 to the National Association of State Boards of Education, 1012 Cameron St., Alexandria, VA 22314.

\*The National Geographic Society invites schools to participate in their **Geography Bee** in May. Each registered school will hold its own bee the week of January 9. The first prize in the national contest is a \$25,000 scholarship, second prize, a \$15,000 scholarship and third, \$10,000. Schools must register by December 20. Write National Geography Bee, National Geographic Society, Dept. 1629, Washington, DC 20036.

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

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# STATE CAPE MEETING ACCOMPLISHES GOALS

State CAPE and state private school representatives met in Washington from Saturday, October 21 through Monday, October 24 in order to formulate an agenda for private education in the 1990's. The theme was set by Al Vanden Bosch, State CAPE Coordinator and member of CAPE's Board of Directors, and Bob Smith, Executive Director of CAPE.

On Saturday night the 20 representatives gathered to share each of their state's most pressing concerns. State requirements for teacher licensing, mandated curricula, Chapter 1 delivery services, parity issues with public schools and the future of child care legislation were probably the subjects most talked about. Perhaps the highlight of the evening was Pedro Negron's message in Spanish that these problems were so familiar to him that he could have been back home in San Juan.

On Sunday night four people were invited to present their own views of the future direction of private education. Frank Monahan and Pat Canan of government relations of the U.S. Catholic Conference discussed the Washington legislative scene; David Zweibel, government relations of Agudath Israel of America presented a more philosophic view centering on parental versus governmental control of education; Kellen Flannery Canavan of the National Association of Independent Schools portrayed the status of relevant tax laws and Bob Brown, a professor at St. Thomas College, former Minnesota state senator, past education lobbyist and

advisor to the Bush campaign rallied the private school representatives to become active in state and national government.

Equipped with their shared concerns from Saturday night, and a national picture from Sunday night, on early Monday the state private school people reconvened in four groups for a workshop. Their task was to make a list of requisite activities for CAPE at both the state and national levels to present to the Board of Directors meeting on that same day, to make sure that CAPE would work to address their needs. Their priorities in order of importance are to:

1. Showcase the non-public schools story to the American public
2. Create an awareness of parental rights and responsibility to educate their children
3. Promote equal access to government programs for all students
4. Aggressively develop leadership within the non-public school community
5. Develop non-public school partnerships with business, industry and other educational entities, and
6. Define the legitimate role of government in non-public education.

CAPE's Board was most receptive to this new agenda for the 1990's, and immediately began taking it on.

*Outlook* is starting a monthly state CAPE column in December. Please call the editor when you want to submit an article. CAPE is committed to supporting its state affiliates and to encouraging the formation of new state organizations. We were most pleased with the success and turnout of October's annual meeting, and left much enriched from the experience.

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The 100th Congress adjourned at 3:16 a.m. on Saturday, October 22. The 101st Congress will convene on January 3, but legislative activity will not begin until January 19 in the House, and January 23 in the Senate. The following bills passed in the final hours of the session.

**1143H.R. 5210**—On October 22 the omnibus anti-drug bill passed both houses. The bill allows the federal death penalty for major drug traffickers and new penalties for drug dealers and users. It creates a cabinet-level drug czar position, and provides for higher spending levels for drug treatment and drug education programs. The courts will exercise discretion in assessing civil fines and denying some federal benefits to those convicted of drug-related offenses including possession. A National Commission on Drug-Free Schools will be established to draw guidelines for handling student offenses. All recipients of federal funds will be required to establish policies forbidding drugs in the workplace and to punish employees who violate these policies. Increased penalties will be imposed on those involving children in drug transactions. Two billion dollars was authorized for use over several years, and \$500 million was actually appropriated for fiscal year 1989. (Appropriations is normally a separate process.) The Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act was authorized an increase of \$100 million; teacher training on substance abuse, \$7 million; programs to prevent and reduce drug-related gang activities, \$15 million and other youth-community-activity programs, \$40 million. The President is expected to sign by November 18.

**P.L. 100-647 (H.R. 4333)**—Tax code corrections of the 1986 tax reform law were passed. The bill extends until Dec. 31, 1988 the exclusion of \$5,250 in employer-paid education benefits from income tax. This exclusion does not apply to courses leading to a post-graduate degree. It allows tax-free interest on U.S. Savings Bonds intended to finance a child's education for families now earning up to \$80,000. This becomes effective on January 1, 1990. Beginning on January 1, 1989, parents will no longer be able to declare dependency exemptions for children aged 24 and older who are full-time students. The bill will also prevent the IRS from taxing such non-elective deferred compensation as unused sick leave and vacation time.



**H.R. 4416**—reauthorizes the U.S. Institute of Peace for 5 years. It also authorizes \$5 million to help underwrite the creation of a network of geography study centers to provide teacher training, model curricula, etc. to strengthen geography teaching in elementary and secondary schools.

**P.L. 100-537 (H.R. 4939)**—is designed to reduce lead in drinking water. It requires states by August 1, 1989 to help schools detect and remedy lead contamination in drinking water. States must see that contaminated water sources are repaired, removed or replaced by February 1, 1990. EPA is also required by February 1, 1989 to publish a list of lead-containing water coolers, to require manufacturers to repair, replace or recall them, and to ban their sale.

**P.L. 100-551 (S. 744)**—amending the Toxic Substance Control Act to direct EPA to identify high radon concentration areas, test a sample of schools in those areas and provide guidance and services for remediation.

**P.L. 100-607**—authorizes grants to states to provide AIDS education to education personnel, and authorizes a national information campaign.

Congress has directed the IRS to improve its collection of information on Form 990 and 900 PF to find out how non-profit organizations are complying with rules governing the unrelated business income tax. Congressional interest focuses on the basis upon which an activity is claimed to be related to the organization's exempt purpose, the amount of income produced per activity, and a description of any related or unrelated activity not previously reported.

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\*Free copies of an anti-drug videotape should be sent to your school from the Department of Education. The tape features well known actors, drama and documentary. A handbook accompanies the tape. Contact Information Services, U.S. Department of Education, O.E.R.I., 555 New Jersey Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20208; (800) 424-1616.

\*ACTION, the federal voluntary service agency, is awarding grants to schools and other non-profit organization for volunteer projects which address poverty. The maximum award is \$30,000 over three years and applicants must show that the project will be self-sustaining thereafter. For application kits contact the state ACTION office or ACTION at 806 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20006; (202) 634-9424.

\***National Science and Technology Week**, "We Are All Scientists," is April 23-29, 1989. In connection its sponsor, the National Science Foundation will produce teaching materials for hands-on activities. Write NSTW, National Science Foundation, 1800 G Street, N.W., room 527, Washington, DC 20550.

\*Dow Chemical sponsors an art competition to coincide with National Science and Technology Week. The top winner receives a \$1,000 scholarship. Deadline for entry is January 13. Write the National Science Foundation for an application.

\*The Tandy Corporation will make monetary awards to the top two percent of high school students completing their junior year in 1989. One hundred outstanding math, science and computer science teachers will also be awarded \$2,5000 for their contribution inside and outside the classroom. To participate write **Tandy Technology Scholars Program**, TCU Station, P.O. Box 32897, Fort Worth, TX 76130-0001.

\***The Legislative Hotline Directory** lists the phone numbers for checking the status of a bill in state legislatures and in Congress. Send a stamped, self-addressed business envelope to Government Research Service, 701 Jackson, room 304, Topeka, KS 66603.

## RFK'S AFFECT ON THE GNP

Marian Wright Edelman, President of the Children's Defense Fund, addressed the annual meeting of the College Board in November. She quoted Robert Kennedy in reminding educators of their mission in this era of competitiveness.

The gross national product does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages, the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials. It allows neither for the justice in our courts, nor for the justness of our dealings with each other.

The gross national product measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion to country. It measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile.

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