

# cape

Council for American Private Education

# outlook

"Voice of the Nation's Private Schools"

April 1991 Number 170

**Council Members:** American Montessori Society • Association of American Military Colleges and Schools of the U.S. • Christian Schools International • Evangelical Lutheran Church in America • 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 • **Affiliated state organizations in:** Arizona, California, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Oregon, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin

## CAPE Celebrates 20 Years with Legislative Conference

Commemorating 20 years as the "voice of the nation's private schools", CAPE sponsored its first legislative conference and Capitol Hill reception last month. Regarded as a huge success, Joyce G. McCray, CAPE executive director said the events "gave appropriate recognition to our past and thoughtful, optimistic guidance for the many years ahead."

### Founders' Vision

Founded in 1971 to provide a coherent voice for private schools in the educational community, CAPE was born out of

a meeting of national elementary and secondary private school association representatives. It was the vision of those individuals that the private education community have a unified voice in Washington. The founding board members, who met in the William Penn House on Capitol Hill on December 1 to formally launch CAPE, included Edward R. D'Alessio, of the U. S. Catholic Conference, Cary Potter of the National Association of Independent Schools, Al H. Senske, of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, and Rev. C. Alfred Koob of the National Catholic Educational Association.

D'Alessio recalled that first meeting in which the founders finalized plans for the organization, as well as the next day's activities which included "the first truly ecumenical testimony on education tax credits before Wilbur Mills' Ways and Means Committee."

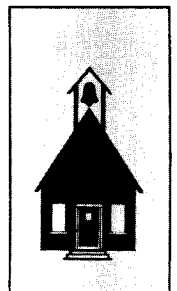
From that point, CAPE has grown to include its current makeup of 14 national organizations and 28 state affiliates, representing 70% of the 5.3 million students in private schools.

### Conference to Celebrate

With the help of a steering committee of Washington-based CAPE organization representatives, a spring legislative conference and 20th anniversary reception was planned with the two-day meeting beginning Tuesday, March 19. In December, a wide array of private school educators were invited by McCray to participate in this first ever legislative conference. "With the growing debate on education reform and the need for private education to be visible on Capitol Hill", McCray wrote that the conference's aim was to bring "the rich diversity of [CAPE's] members to Washington in support of private education." Representatives from all CAPE organizations par-



*CAPE Board president Bretta Weiss visits with CAPE founder and former NAIS president Cary Potter at the 20th Anniversary reception March 19 (This photo and those appearing on pages 2 and 4 are by Bruce Reed).*



*continued from front*

ticipated in some part of the activities.

The conference was called to order by CAPE board president Bretta Weiss, who introduced the CAPE board to the 100 luncheon guests and conference participants. The conference began with an "insider's view of Washington" by Eleanor Clift, chief Congressional correspondent for *Newsweek* magazine. A frequent guest on the syndicated television news roundtable show, "The McLaughlin Group", Clift entertained and informed the conference audience with a variety of stories.

Following the luncheon speech, legislative information and briefings on issues of importance to private schools were given by McCray, Greg Kubiak, assistant executive director of CAPE, Jack Sanders, vice president of the National Association of Independent Schools, Sherry Kolbe, executive director of the National Association of Private Schools for Exceptional Children, and Pat Canan, assistant director of the office of government liaison with the United States Catholic Conference.

Conference participants were then bused to the White House where a briefing was prepared for them by the offices of public liaison and economic and domestic policy. After a welcome to the Old Executive Office Building by Bobbie Greene Kilberg, Deputy Assistant to the President for Public Liaison and a private school

parent, participants heard William J. Gribbin, Assistant to the Vice President for Legislative Affairs address education concerns and activities of Vice President Dan Quayle. Following his remarks, Lynne Cheney, Chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities talked to the CAPE group about the deficiencies in liberal arts education today and NEH's attempts to address them. Also briefing participants were Ted Sanders, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Education and Roger B. Porter, Assistant to the President for Economic and Domestic Policy.

### Capitol Hill Reception

With its rich burgundy red drapes and carpet and the newly regilded ornate, gold-leaf ceiling, the Russell Senate Caucus Room was the elegant and stately setting for the reception honoring CAPE's 20th anniversary. The room, previously witness to several historic Congressional events including the McCarthy, Watergate, and Iran-Contra hearings, accommodated over 200 honored guests and conference participants. The evening reception, billed from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., drew dozens of House and Senate staff members, White House and Department of Education officials, as well as CAPE founders and former directors.

Shortly after 7:00 p.m., Weiss called for the attention of attendees to recognize

the contribution of Cary Potter, an original CAPE founder. As waiters distributed glasses of champagne for a toast to CAPE, Sr. Catherine McNamee, CAPE board member and president of the National Catholic Educational Association, spoke briefly on the composition and history of CAPE. Finally, National Association of Independent Schools president and past-president of the CAPE board John C. Esty, rose to toast the future of CAPE, in its continued mission as the voice of the nation's private schools.

### Congress: Visited

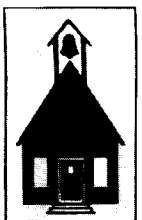
The next morning, after a continental breakfast and final briefing, Frank Monahan, director of government liaison for the United States Catholic Conference, sent participants charging to Capitol Hill to lobby Congress on the interests of private education. Stating the inherent right and obligation to communicate with Members of Congress, Monahan gave conferees numerous illustration of the power they possess to influence federal policy.

From 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., 57 participants went to Hill offices to meet with Members of Congress and staff, supplied with three position papers on issues of importance to CAPE. The first was the "choice" statement, adopted by the CAPE board at their October 1990 meeting, calling for "legislation which will provide all parents" the right to choose a school — "religious, private, or public". Offices were also informed of CAPE's support to "remove gifts of appreciated property as a preference item under the alternative minimum tax" so that private schools can "expand and enhance their fundraising efforts".

Lastly, participants distributed a paper entitled "Private Education Support of Education Funding" which stated CAPE's concern that private schools be given "equal treatment and funding opportunity" in all education programs. Specified in the brief was support for the Chapter 1 program for low income and educationally disadvantaged students, and the "89-313 program" for severely disabled students, as well as school asbestos abatement and child care block grant funding.



*John C. Esty, CAPE Board member, offers a toast at the Capitol Hill reception.*



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## Reports from the Hill

Conference participants had productive visits with Members and staff persons during that time, as they related in a debriefing session held from 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. in the Dirksen Senate Office Building. One such meeting was with House Majority Whip, Representative William Gray III of Philadelphia. CAPE board member and Friends Council on Education executive director Kay Edstene related that in her hour-long meeting with Gray, he "talked with great energy about his own urban education concerns". Edstene also pointed out that Gray understood that, more than "tax credits or vouchers", it was CAPE's immediate objective that "we in private schools are included in the dialogue" on education reform.

CAPE, in coordinating the 31 appointments with Congressional offices, assembled teams of 3 or 4 conference participants to make each visit. Teams were typically made up from various CAPE member organizations as a way of demonstrating the diversity of private education.

In another meeting, Senator Herb Kohl (D-Wisconsin), indicated to CAPE representatives that he was "very supportive of our concern on charitable giving" and might even co-sponsor the appreciated property tax bill. Additionally, conferees visited at least nine other offices at which participants left position papers and got acquainted with key Congressional staff persons.

### "On a Scale of 1 to 5"

Despite the scheduling conflicts of the busy spring season, school breaks, and overlap of three other major private school conferences within weeks of the CAPE event, McCray judged this first attempt as a resounding success. "Our evaluations seemed to be near unanimous in rating the conference as superior on a scale of 1 to 5", she said. Participants found different ways to express how they felt after the turbulent 28 hour affair. One simply wrote, "I enjoyed being a Citizen Lobbyist."

Though no formal discussion of plans for another legislative conference have yet been undertaken, the unstated sentiments appeared to mirror the comment of one conference participant who advised that CAPE "not wait 20 years to do it again."

## Private Schools Conference

The Office of Educational Research and Improvement will sponsor a spring conference entitled: The Dollars and Sense of Private Schools. The Department of Education office will hold the meeting May 9 & 10 at the Holiday Inn Capitol in Washington, D. C.

Some of the topics included will be "Private Schools and the National Reform Agenda", "Historical View of Private Schooling in the United States", and "The Impact of Law on Private Schools". A paper on "Public and Private School Collaborations", will be presented by John C. Esty, Jr., president of the National Association of Independent Schools and member of the CAPE board of directors.

For more information on the conference, call Harold Himmelbarb at the Department of Education at (202) 219-2031.

## Legislative Update:

### Alexander Confirmed and Sworn In

After a delay to allow inquiry into the personal finances of former Tennessee Governor Lamar Alexander, the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources on March 13 favorably reported his nomination to be Secretary of the Department of Education by a vote of 16 to 0, with Senator Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) voting present. The next day, waiving a required two day wait, the full Senate considered the nomination.

In floor debate prior to the Senate vote, Senator Dave Durenburger (R-Minnesota) said "we must move from talking about and discussing what needs to be done to improving education in this country and getting out there and doing it. Lamar Alexander is the leader for that job." The Senate unanimously confirmed the nomination by a voice vote.

On Friday, March 22, with the 1969 lunar module that carried man to the moon as a backdrop, President George Bush and other dignitaries witnessed the formal swearing-in ceremony for the new Secretary. With the symbolism of American ingenuity and ability to meet lofty goals

shadowing the ceremony, Bush and Alexander re-stated their resolve to achieve the national education goals by the year 2000.

### Family Leave for School

Representative Gerry Sikorski (D-Minnesota) introduced two bills March 12 to allow employees leave from their jobs to attend school activities of their children.

The "Family Education Leave Act", H.R. 1388, would allow full time employees eight hours of paid leave per school year "to enable the individual to engage in the activities of a school which is attended by a dependent of the individual," so long as the employee gives at least 2 weeks notice before taking the leave. Further, employers would be eligible for business related credits under the tax code for providing the leave.

H.R. 1387 would allow the same benefit directed to federal employees. The legislation would entitle full-time civil servants with 12 months or more of federal service to "1 day of leave in each calendar year" for parental leave for education-related activities.

Each bill, with 10 co-sponsors, has not yet been scheduled for hearings.

### Longer School Year?

The Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee approved S. 64 to establish a National Commission on a Longer School Year. The nine-member commission would be composed of three persons appointed by the President, three by the Speaker of the House and three by the Senate President pro tempore.

The charge of the panel would be to "make recommendations regarding the advisability of lengthening the schools day to a predetermined minimum number of hours and lengthening the academic year in all United States public elementary and secondary schools."

Should the legislation be enacted, the panel would be required to conduct public hearings to consider the views of various regions of the country as well as a "broad spectrum of experts and the public regarding the advisability of lengthened academic day and year."

The bill has yet to be considered by the full Senate.



*CAPE CONFERENCE (clockwise from top, left): Participants enjoy a light moment at the luncheon as Newsweek correspondent Eleanor Clift speaks. CAPE Executive Directors, past and present, posing at the reception: Richard P. Thomsen, Robert L. Lamborn, Joyce G. McCray, and Robert L. Smith. Cary Potter, CAPE founder, accepts recognition during the reception from Sister Catherine McNamee, CAPE Board member as Henry Strong, also on the CAPE Board, looks on.*



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a coalition of 14 national associations serving private schools K-12

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[ISSN 0271-1451]

Outlook is published monthly (September to June) by the Council for American Private Education. Annual Subscription is \$10.

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1726 M Street, NW, Suite 1102  
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