

# CAPE Council for American Private Education outlook

"Voice of the Nation's Private Schools"

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**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 Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Oregon, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin

## Harried Second 100-Day Agenda Anticipated

The frenetic atmosphere on Capitol Hill during the first 100 days of Republican control, when House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-GA) was dedicated to passing the "Contract With America," has given way to a palpable quiet. The House is in recess until May 1 and the Senate until April 24. For those concerned about the future of education, this period of calm is merely the "eye of the storm." Many are predicting that the second 100 days will be more chaotic, more frenzied than the first.

Without the Contract to rally around, the unity and coherence within the majority party, crucial to the success of meeting the 100-day deadline, will be more difficult to maintain. Chairmen will rush to compete for attention on major legislation that has languished in their committees while all attention was given to Contract items. And the budget and appropriations processes will be even more contentious than normal as the GOP attempts to balance the Federal budget by 2002.

On the finance front, educators will be most concerned about three items that loom on the horizon, all scheduled for action soon after Congress returns. The first is completion of the bill which cuts funding for the current year. (See *Legislative Update for details*). The House and Senate are far apart on how the two bodies would trim Federal spending for the current fiscal year. Work in the conference committee will probably not

begin in earnest until the second week of May, after House Democrats and Republicans return from separate retreats where they'll be planning their strategies for the upcoming months.

Republican members of the House Budget Committee return to Washington a week before the scheduled return of the full House to begin work on their plan for the FY 1996 budget resolution. The product of the week-long working session will be a central topic of the GOP retreat in early May. According to a majority staffer, Chairman John Kasich (R-OH) is committed to producing a detailed plan for achieving a balanced budget by 2002—above and beyond the budget plan required for fiscal year 1996.

The budget resolution, an internal document used by the House and Senate Appropriations Committees which sets maximum spending levels in broad categories, is the second item of concern for educators. It is predicted that spending levels in all domestic discretionary categories will be 7% - 10% below current levels. The tentative schedule has action on House and Senate versions of the resolution finished by Memorial Day. CAPE and other members of the Committee for Education Funding (CEF) will be working to ensure full funding for education.

Finally, the appropriations process for FY 96 spending will be complicated by

*Continued on page 2*

## Boyer Plans for 'Basic School'

Unknown to them at the time, Dr. Ernest Boyer treated guests at the CAPE Education Leadership Award Dinner in March to a preview of a new Carnegie Foundation report on improving American education that focuses on the early years of the child. *The Basic School: A Community for Learning* was released April 10 and includes many of the themes Boyer spoke about in accepting the CAPE Education Leadership Award.

"The focus must be on the early years," Boyer writes. "School failure starts very early, and if all children do not have a good beginning, if they do not receive the support and encouragement needed during the first years of life, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to compensate for the failure later on."

The report is based on years of study, visits to elementary schools around the U.S., national surveys of teachers and principals, and an international survey of children, teachers, and parents. Its recommendations are developed around four central priorities:

• *The school as community.* The school should be a place with a clear purpose, that is communicative, just, disciplined, caring, and

*Continued on page 2*



## Harried Second 100-Day

*continued from page 1*

the delay in approving a budget resolution. Ideally, the appropriations process should follow the directions provided by the completed budget resolution. However, because of the need to get 13 appropriations bills completed by the beginning of the fiscal year — October 1 — FY 96 appropriations debates will proceed simultaneously with the debate on the budget resolution this year.

While the total Federal funding for education is expected to be 7% - 10% below the FY 1995 level, it could be difficult to predict how the funding will be allocated. Some idea of the shape the education funding bill will take can be gleaned from the rescissions bills currently pending in Congress.

“CAPE will work closely with the CEF as Congress begins to sift through all the funding legislation before it,” CAPE Executive Director Joyce G. McCray said. “We will need the assistance of our members, though, to impress upon their representatives in Congress the importance of education to American children and the nation as a whole. Friends of American education — public and private alike — should be prepared to come to its defense.”

## Boyer Planned.....

*continued from page 1*

celebrative. Building community, Boyer says, requires “teachers as leaders,” and “parents as partners.”

• *A curriculum with coherence*, with primary emphasis on the basic learning tools — English, mathematics and the arts. “Language is, without question, central to all learning,” Boyer writes. In *The Basic School*, however, language is broadly defined to include not just words but also other symbol systems like mathematics and art. Boyer emphasizes the importance of including in this coherent curriculum a linkage to the broader context of the world and the basic, essential experiences shared by everyone — “core commonalities.” Among the eight themes around which subject matter is taught are the life cycle, membership in groups, connections to nature, and living with purpose.

• *A climate for learning*. The report recommends a teacher-pupil ratio of 1 to 17 and calls for schools to be no larger than 300 to 500 students. In regard to teaching resources, the *Basic School* draws on “low-tech” — books, art supplies, and links to the neighborhoods — as well as “high-tech” — computers, videotapes, and CD-ROMs. Every classroom should have a television set, VCR, at least one computer for every five students, and a telephone.

• *A commitment to character*. The report urges that every Basic School affirm its own commitment to character and suggests seven potential virtues to be followed: honesty, respect, responsibility, compassion, self-discipline, perseverance, and giving.

Boyer’s report may be obtained for \$10, plus shipping, from California Princeton Fulfillment Services, 1445 Lower Ferry Road, Ewing, NJ 08608; telephone 800-777-4726 or 609-883-1759.

## Legislative Update

• **Senate education cuts for 1995 much less than House.** A week of negotiations among Senate leaders resulted in a bipartisan agreement to limit the cuts in education for fiscal year 1995 to \$427.75 million — significantly less than the \$1.68 billion in education cuts approved earlier by the House. The National Diffusion Network, targeted for a \$2.7 million cut which would effectively terminate the Private School Facilitator Project, escaped unscathed in the Senate version of the bill.

The record \$17 billion rescissions bill passed by the House was nearly matched by the \$16 billion rescissions bill approved unanimously by the Senate. The two versions of HR 1158, however, achieve their savings from very different sources. For example, the House has targeted the Safe and Drug-Free School program for a \$471.9 million cut, whereas the Senate leaves the program untouched. State grants under the GOALS 2000 law would take a \$142 million hit in the House version of the bill; the Senate cut the program by only \$6.3 million. A conference committee will meet in early May to iron out the differences (*see related story on page 1*).

• **Safeguards for private schools included in block grant legislation.** As reported in last month’s edition of *Outlook*, the House debated comprehensive welfare reform legislation, including language safeguarding private school children’s participation, during the week of March 20. Private school advocates had been concerned that replacing statutory programs — like the school breakfast and school lunch programs — with block grants to states, as envisioned in the original bill, would result in states excluding participation by private school children. The safeguarding language was retained in the final version of the bill ultimately passed by the House on March 24.

• **Low-income choice demonstration legislation introduced.** Long-time school choice proponents Sens. Daniel R. Coats (R-IN) and Joseph Lieberman (D-CT) recently introduced legislation for 10-20 school choice demonstration programs. Similar to legislation Coats has introduced before, S. 618 would provide vouchers to eligible low-income families in the selected areas which could be used to choose from among public, private, and parochial schools.

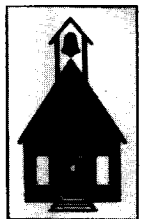
“Up until now, only those families who can afford to send their children to private schools have had that option,” Coats said in introducing the bill. “Senator Lieberman and I believe that all families should have the opportunity to choose where their children will be educated.”

The demonstration projects would last three years. The bill authorizes \$30 million in the first year and “such sums as may be needed” in the last two years.

Only children eligible for free and reduced price lunches under the National School Lunch Act would be allowed to participate. According to the legislation, priority in selecting demonstration areas would be given to those areas with the highest number of children from low-income families.

The bill also calls for an annual evaluation of the program to determine how well it is functioning.

“[W]e are not here to protect a particular system,” Coats said. “Our bottom line is to provide the best educa-



*continued on page 3*

tion opportunities to American children.”

► **House passes tax credit for children.** In the waning days of its self-imposed 100-day deadline, the House passed the last plank of its Contract With America, a tax break for the middle class. The measure offers a tax credit of \$500 for each child under age 18 to families earning up to \$200,000. While not targeted specifically for education purposes, the credit could be used by families to offset the cost of enrolling children in private schools.

Critics charged that the bill was too generous in considering families with incomes up to \$200,000 as “middle class.” Others said that the bill’s estimated 5-year price tag of \$189 billion was too costly at a time when efforts should be concentrated on reducing the deficit and balancing the budget.

The measure passed the House on April 5. A provision was added, however, that requires Congress to pass a plan, which must be certified by the Congressional Budget Office, to balance the budget by 2002 before the tax cuts can go into effect.

It is expected that the Senate will dramatically alter the tax-cut legislation. Key members of the Senate, including Finance Committee Chairman Bob Packwood (R-OR) and Budget Committee Chairman Pete Domenici (R-NM) have expressed skepticism about passing tax cuts when the GOP’s emphasis has been on reducing the deficit.

## State CAPEnotes

► Representatives from 13 State CAPE’s met before the CAPE Legislative Conference and discussed various issues of concern in their individual states. Several reported on school choice legislation being considered at different levels in their state legislatures. In **Illinois**, the state Senate has already passed a choice demonstration project and members of the Illinois private school community were scheduled to meet with House Speaker Lee Daniels in mid-March to discuss the measure’s chances in that chamber. Choice/voucher initiatives have also been introduced or are expected in **Arizona, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Wisconsin.**

► A budget shortfall between of approximately \$750 million and recent degradation of bond ratings have forced the **District of Columbia** City Council to consider drastic measures to improve the city’s fiscal health. One measure would repeal the property tax exemption currently enjoyed by non-profit organizations and institutions. Richard Roth, president of the DCCAPE affiliate recently testified before the city council, joining a broad range of organizations opposed to the measure. “These tax exemptions were and are now accepted as part of the social contract embedded in the Constitution, court decisions, and legislation since 1787 for the compelling reason that educational institutions serve the public good,” Roth told the Council. After outlining the in-kind and financial benefits that accrue to DC from the presence of private schools, Roth concluded: “We believe that once you have considered all of this proposed legislation’s ramifications, including the diminution of economic development in the city, you will conclude that this proposal should not go forward.” DC CAPE and the Association of Independent Schools of Greater Washington continue to work with other concerned organizations opposed to the this legislation.

► A technology task force of the **Florida** Council of Independent Schools has recommended a preliminary design for a computer network of independent schools in that state. The preliminary design would establish five regional servers in Tallahassee, Jacksonville, Clearwater, Fort Lauderdale, and Miami, all linked with the FCIS state office through the Internet. Task force participants agreed on the importance of making the resources of the Internet available to all FCIS faculty and administrators through FCIS SchoolNet.

## Time to Renew

The school year will wind to a close in another month or two, and with it *Outlook* will take its customary two month respite as well. (*Outlook* is published 10 times a year, September through June.) Make sure not to miss any CAPE news when *Outlook* returns in the fall. Watch for your renewal notice, which will be mailed during May, and return it as soon as possible!

## CAPEnotes

► **Free radon testing information available.** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is offering free workbooks to school officials who may be planning radon testing for their facilities. The Radon Measurement in School: Self-Paced Training Workbook (EPA 402-R-92-014) offers school officials a no-cost approach to training. It’s purpose is to provide training in planning a radon test, interpreting test results, implementing quality assurance during testing, and documenting a testing program for a school building. Upon completing the exercises in the workbook, participants will be prepared to plan, execute, document, and evaluate a radon testing program. This is not a new mandate imposed by the EPA, but rather, a tool designed to assist schools to meet the requirements of previous EPA-set standards with respect to radon.

To obtain a free copy of this workbook, write to the US EPA Public Information Center, 401 M Street SW (Mail Code 3404), Washington, DC, 20460. Please include your name, address, document title, and EPA document number (listed above).

► **Cultural Resource Training Directory available.** Creative teachers looking for new ways to breath life into a history or social studies class may wish to explore the training opportunities presented in *The Cultural Resource Training Directory: January - December 1995*, published by the U.S. Department of the Interior. The directory identifies workshops, courses, seminars, and other short classes in cultural resource topics like heritage education, folklife, oral history, and anthropology. For example, the directory lists an 8-day course to be offered during the summer which is described: “How to do research in historical records, create classroom material from records, present documents in ways that sharpen students’ skills and enthusiasm for history, social studies, and the humanities ...” Training opportunities are located in 43 states and the District of Columbia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the Czech Republic. Copies of the directory are available by calling 202-343-



Continued on page 4

9561 or by writing: Ms. Bevitt, National Park Service (424), P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127.

► **Education and the Culture of Peace.** The Friends Council on Education, the Friends Association for Higher Education, and Haverford College are jointly sponsoring a conference on "Education and the Culture of Peace: Teaching, Learning, and Decision-Making," to be held at Haverford College, Haverford, PA, from June 22 to June 25. Workshops and presentations will be offered on the peaceable classroom, conflict resolution, cooperative learning, and consensual decisions-making. The distinguished list of presenters include David Mallery, educational consultant to the National Association of Independent Schools; Mary Rose O'Reilly, author of *The Peaceable Classroom*; and Michael J. Sheeran, S.J., President of Regis University and author of *Beyond Majority Rule*. For more information, contact Helene Pollock, President's Office, Haverford College, 370 Lancaster Avenue, Haverford, PA 19041. Call 610-896-1020. e-mail: [hpollock@haverford.edu](mailto:hpollock@haverford.edu)

► **Phillips Environmental Partnership** grant applications available from CAPE.

Elementary and secondary schools looking for assistance in completing an environmental project in their community are urged to apply for a Phillips Environmental Partnership (PEP) grant. Awards are available in amounts of \$500 to \$5,000. Special consideration will be given to innovative programs and ideas that can be completed within one year. Application deadline is September 15, 1995. Winners will be notified by Phillips Petroleum Company by January 31, 1996. Interested schools should submit a written request to CAPE.

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## Conference Success Reflects Sponsors

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The tremendous success of CAPE's recent Legislative Conference and the CAPE Education Leadership Award Dinner could not have been achieved without the generous support of dedicated friends, CAPE, and all who took part in the conference and the dinner, are grateful to those whose sponsorship helped make it all possible:

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