

cape Council for American Private Education outlook

"Voice of the Nation's Private Schools"

April 1998 • Number 234

Council Members: American Montessori Society • Association of 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 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 30 States

Top Policymakers Take Part In CAPE Conference



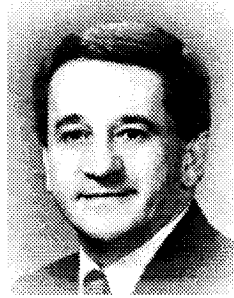
Richard Riley

Let's Work Together

Highlighting the Clinton Administration's efforts to secure services for students in private schools, Education Secretary Richard Riley proposed that the private school community and the Department of Education "work closely together" to secure programs and benefits that would "really mean a lot" to students in private schools. Speaking at a White House briefing in the solemn and historic Indian Treaty Room, the Secretary assured attendees at CAPE's annual conference that he and officials at the Department "stand ready and willing to work with you as we have in the past."

The Secretary's remarks were clearly intended to convey the message that the Administration values the role played by private schools. He noted that in his recent State of American Education address he had made a point of emphasizing the importance of private education. In that speech, delivered in Seattle on February 17, the Secretary said he is "a strong supporter of private

Continued on page 3



Pat Forgione

Just the Facts

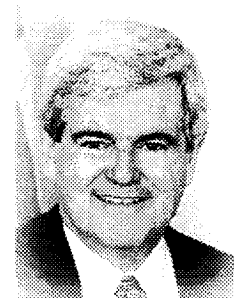
The collection of national-level data on U.S. public and private schools has a long and respectable history. As Pascal (Pat) Forgione tells it, even the nation's first education commissioner, Henry Barnard, was determined back in 1867 to collect and disseminate useful information "on the condition and progress of public and private education."

Nowadays the responsibility for assembling, analyzing, and reporting education information — in a society with a seemingly insatiable appetite for it — rests with the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Forgione is the Center's current commissioner.

In his keynote address at CAPE's annual conference last month, Forgione shared his vision for NCES and said he is determined to see that data collected by the agency during his watch is marked by "predictability, quality, usefulness, and timeliness."

Making a compelling case for continuing the cooperation that exists be-

Continued on page 2



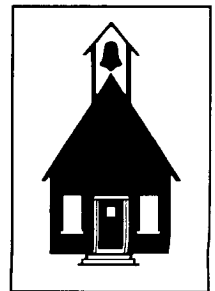
Newt Gingrich

We Want Your Advice

Examining the effect an education bill would have on private schools should be "a routine part of how we check off legislation," House Speaker Newt Gingrich told a delegation of private school officials attending CAPE's legislative conference last month. He then quickly set in motion the establishment of a "direct relationship" between CAPE and House staff to bring a private school perspective to the process of reviewing legislative initiatives in education.

In his signature nonstop style, the Speaker reviewed key elements of his *Goals for a Generation* proposal and asked the private school community for ideas, advice, and suggestions on various specific components. Regarding the development of education programs to

**Continued
on page 2**



Continued from page 1

tween the private school community and NCES, Forgione told the audience of private school officials, "You can be sure that we will be your partner." He called the partnership valuable and said the collection of private school data "makes us smarter" and "more healthy in our breadth." The private school projects at the Center are consistent with its mission, Forgione said, because NCES is concerned with "the condition of education in America, and that's all children, all schools, in our whole community."

Saying his "door is always open," Forgione, who is at the halfway mark of his initial term as commissioner, invited the private school community to offer suggestions regarding types of data NCES might collect. What is the "one more piece of information that would be helpful to you?" he asked. What do you want included "in our nonpublic profile?"

In the course of his remarks, the commissioner identified a number of key issues for which policymakers want

education research and statistics — the sooner the better. His job, he said, is not to get "slavishly caught up in policy debates and become politically driven," but neither can he afford to "ignore the policy environment" that pushes the need for data. "It's a balance," he said. "Policy people want it quickly, but serious statistical studies take time." In addition, NCES must remain objective in the policy swirl. Like Sgt. Joe Friday of *Dragnet*, its job, said Forgione, is to gather "just the facts."

Coincidental with Forgione's keynote address was the presentation of CAPE's Educational Leadership Award to his predecessor at NCES, Emerson J. Elliott. During Elliott's tenure and as a result of his leadership, the collection of private school data was expanded and regularized with the creation of the Private School Universe Survey (PSS) and the Schools and Staffing Surveys (SASS). Forgione called Elliott, "an individual of substantive merit who resurrected and institutionalized the high-quality national education data agenda America has today."

Continued from page 1

assist in realizing a "drug-free, safe America," the Speaker asked private school officials for advice based on their situations and students. He similarly solicited suggestions on better ways of helping students with disabilities, while announcing that Republican legislators are exploring ways to realize full federal funding for IDEA. Gingrich also encouraged private school educators, who have "the agility and flexibility to do interesting things," to examine incentive-based learning and to provide advice on how to design and articulate such an approach. He suggested that students should be able to realize some immediate, tangible reward for, say, mastering calculus by ninth grade.

Perhaps the Speaker's most ambitious overture to the private school community was his request that private schools work with him in developing a "seven-day a week, 24-hour a day learning system" supported by information-age technology. He talked of the need to get portable computers into the hands and homes of students and teachers, to give them all access to the Web, "the largest database in the history of the world," to expand distance-learning opportunities, and to make computers a true tool for investigating and learning about the world. "I'd love to work with you on that," he said.

As a concrete expression of his interest in working with private schools on technology-based instruction, the Speaker said that if the private school community could "wire enough schools together," he'd be glad to do an hour-long live tutorial for students on the job of the Speaker. The teleconference could be transmitted via satellite to private schools across the country.

If you have innovative ideas or programs you'd like to share with the Speaker that relate to special education, drug-prevention education, technology-based education, or incentive-based education, please send a one-page description to CAPE at <cape@impresso.com>. Also let us know if you would like to, and have the technology to, participate in the private school teleconference the Speaker has proposed.

New Private School Data Released

Last month, NCES published its latest report on core demographic data for private schools. Established in 1989 and conducted every two years, the *Private School Universe Survey* provides basic information about the number of private schools, students, and teachers.

The March 1998 report, which is available on the Web at <www.nces.ed.gov>, covers the 1995-96 school year. The survey showed there were 27,686 private elementary and secondary schools in the United States, enrolling 5,032,200 students. In 1989-90 there were 26,712 schools and 4,838,497 students.

The chart provides data for certain categories of private schools, with percents reflecting the share of national private school enrollment.

NCES Private School Survey					
	1989-90		1995-96		
Type	Students	%	Students	%	
Catholic	2,637,473	54.5%	2,519,205	50.1%	
Conservative Christian	528,236	10.9%	705,547	14.0%	
NAIS	427,059	8.8%	524,271	10.4%	
Lutheran	211,158	4.4%	220,230	4.4%	
Jewish	153,722	3.2%	172,794	3.4%	
CSI	86,014	1.8%	94,242	1.9%	
Episcopal	83,314	1.7%	89,748	1.8%	
Montessori	52,356	1.1%	73,468	1.5%	
Adventist	77,242	1.6%	63,981	1.3%	
Friends	16,846	0.3%	22,289	0.4%	

Continued from page 1

and parochial education,” and added, “These schools have existed since the founding of this nation and they continue to represent a vibrant source of strength today.”

Still, amid his attempts to accent the positive and his calls for cooperation, the Secretary candidly acknowledged there are divisive issues between the Administration and the private school community around which there are strong differences of opinion. “Let them take their natural course of action,” he said. In the meantime, he proposed that both sides “work closely together” on those issues around which there is agreement. “I would offer our offices to work with you in any way possible,” he said.

As examples of ways the Administration has reached out to students in private schools, the Secretary cited successful efforts to get the Supreme Court to allow Title I services on the premises of religious schools. “There’s no question that the President and the Justice Department and all of us working together really helped get that done,” he said. He also listed private school inclusion in professional development initiatives, technology grants, and the E-rate. “The FCC and we were all involved to make sure private schools were included in the E-rate,” he said.

With respect to the Administration’s

new initiatives for education, the Secretary said, “We have tried in many ways to make sure that private schools and parochial schools were considered in those programs.”

During another part of the briefing, Michael Cohen, the President’s senior assistant for education, showcased the Administration’s new education proposals and outlined how private school students would be included in many of them. He noted the following:

- A program to improve teacher quality would include private school teachers.
- Private schools in education opportunity zones would be eligible to receive teacher and administrator training programs as well as materials and information.
- Eligible private school students would be able to participate in the High Hopes initiative, thereby receiving support and encouragement to attend college.
- Private school teachers would receive equitable benefits under a new technology training program.
- Private school youngsters would be eligible to participate in public school after-school programs funded under the 21st Century Learning Centers initiative.

Cohen also said that with respect to pending legislation aimed at helping

youngsters in the early grades learn to read, the Administration would “continue to work with the Congressional sponsors to make sure that private schools are able to participate in partnerships and that eligible private school students are able to participate in the tutoring efforts as well.”

Summarizing the proposals relating to private schools, Cohen said, “They are initiatives that are designed to provide benefits to students in private schools and to teachers in private schools as well as those in public schools. They are consistent with the way we have approached these issues in previous years and in other programs.”

Michael Cohen on the Administration’s View of Private Schools

“Private schools are very, very important in this country. They provide an element of diversity; they provide opportunities for parents who want particular kinds of education that are not provided by public schools; they provide support to religious values and religious beliefs in this country, and mainly do a very good job of educating students. We have always felt that private schools are an important part of the whole fabric of education in this country and need to remain so.”

Apply Now for BRS Application Packet

Ever wish your school’s outstanding record of success was more widely recognized? Well, the U.S. Department of Education’s Blue Ribbon Schools Program (BRSP) provides an opportunity for just such recognition.

CAPE is proud to be the organization designated by the U.S. Department of Education to manage the private school component of the BRSP. The 1998-99 elementary cycle is just getting underway and is open to K-8 schools as well as middle schools that end with grade 6 or lower. (Other middle schools, junior high schools, and high schools must apply in the 1999-00 secondary cycle.)

You can request an application packet from CAPE by sending an e-mail request to cape@impresso.com. Your message should look like the sample on the right, with each item of information on a separate line. Please use the two-letter postal code for your state, and be sure to provide your zip+4. If you do not have certain information (e.g., a fax number), put NA.

Sample E-Mail Request

Please send a BRS application packet to:
 Dr. Thomas Gibney
 Principal
 New Hope Academy
 1354 Marlo Street
 Albany
 NY
 12938-5687
 202-867-9087 (phone)
 202-867-9876 (fax)
newh@aol.com (e-mail)
 ACSI (national affiliation)



capenotes

• Ending a bitter filibuster of the Coverdell-Torricelli **A+ Accounts** bill, Republican and Democratic leaders have agreed to allow the proposal to be brought to the Senate for debate on April 20 and for a vote the next day. The compromise allows Democrats to offer 12 amendments to the bill on issues ranging from school construction to after-school care. Republicans will be able to offer five amendments, including one by Sen. Slade Gorton (R-WA) on block grants. Contention over the nature and number of allowable amendments had been frustrating attempts to bring the bill to a vote. The scheduled debate is shaping up to be the central showdown in the Senate on the education programs of both parties.

• USDE officials advised a group of urban school district staff people last month that the new **IDEA** requires public school districts to serve special education students in private schools only

up to the proportionate federal subsidy, the equivalent of about \$642 per student. According to an article in *Education Daily*, the announcement appeared to come as a surprise to some school district officials, suggesting that private schools may be the target of efforts to reduce services in cases where districts had been doing more than what IDEA requires. When asked how districts might cut back on services without causing an “uproar” from parents, officials were told by Tom Hehir, director of the Department’s Office of Special Education Programs, “Those are local political issues and ones that the federal government has no interest in getting involved in.” Hehir also advised that school districts, while not required, were permitted to provide services beyond those funded by federal dollars. “As long as you meet the federal minimum, there’s no reason why you can’t do more,” he said.

• “[S]uch schools potentially undermine public education by siphoning off tax dollars, as well as the brightest students from public schools.” Sound familiar? But wait. The word “schools”

in this quote refers to **charter schools**. *The New York Times*, reporting recently on how support for charter schools is gaining ground among black and Hispanic parents frustrated with failing inner-city public schools, decided to balance the report by citing the arguments sometimes used by public school teachers and administrators who oppose the movement. One influential member of the NYS Legislature’s Black and Hispanic Caucus offered this pro-charter sentiment: “If charter schools are allowed to work, they can create a demand for change in other schools.”

Meanwhile, in Congress a number of Senators are seeing charter schools as a less controversial alternative to other school reform initiatives. At a Senate hearing last month, Sen. James Jeffords (R-VT), chairman of the Senate labor and Human Resources Committee, said, “I like the charter school concept because it doesn’t have the emotionalism of other proposals.” Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-CT) added, “[T]here is a quite revolution occurring with charter schools.” Such schools, he said, “have provided and created political common ground.”