

# 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 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

## School Choice: One Step Backward, Two Forward

### Voucher Veto

President Clinton last month vetoed the first pre-college voucher bill ever passed by both houses of Congress. The legislation would have provided scholarships enabling about 2,000 low-income students in the District of Columbia to attend the public or private school of their parents' choice.

In a terse statement accompanying the return of the bill to Congress, the President declared the program "would pay for a few selected students to attend private schools, with little or no public accountability for how those funds are used." Repeating the insupportable position held by school choice opponents throughout the D.C. voucher debate, the President said the program would "draw resources and attention away" from public schools. Funding for the scholarship bill would have been in addition to the regular appropriation that Congress makes for D.C. schools.

In a letter to the President after the veto, Larry Callahan, Catholic school superintendent in the Archdiocese of Washington, wrote: "What a shame that you have chosen to veto

### Voucher Fund

Investor Theodore J. Forstmann and Wal-Mart director John T. Walton announced on June 9 their plans to establish a \$200 million Children's Scholarship Fund (CSF) to help poor children in cities across the country attend private schools. The project is by far the largest K-12 scholarship program ever.

The two men will contribute \$100 million of their own money to the fund, with another \$100 million to be collected in matching contributions from local communities. Matching partners have been secured so far in five cities: New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Washington, and Jersey City. In September another 30-50 cities will be named after local partners are identified. The scholarships will be awarded through lotteries in the spring of 1999.

At the program's launch in New York City, Forstmann said, "John and I

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### Voucher Decision

In what the Associated Press called "the biggest legal victory yet for the nation's school-choice movement," the Wisconsin Supreme Court on June 10 upheld the constitutionality of providing state-funded vouchers to allow children to attend religious and other private schools. The landmark ruling permits the Milwaukee school choice program, which currently covers some 1,500 students in nonreligious private schools, to expand to include up to 15,000 students who will now be able to attend religious schools. The expansion had been on hold pending the court decision.

"A bright new day just dawned for youngsters from low-income families," said Clint Bolick of the Institute for Justice, who was a key part of the litigation team.

John Huebscher, executive director of the Wisconsin Catholic Conference, observed, "The Court has opened the door to a new era of cooperation and partnerships between parents and schools, public and nonpublic alike."

Opponents are expected to appeal the decision to the U.S. Supreme Court. "We welcome an appeal," Bolick said. "Giving parents a choice does not violate the Constitution."



### May 1998 Voucher Poll of D.C. Residents

*Do you favor or oppose using federal money in the form of vouchers to help send low-income students in the District to private or parochial schools?*

	All	Blacks	Whites	Parents of Public School Children
<b>Favor</b>	56%	60%	43%	67%
<b>Oppose</b>	36%	32%	49%	29%

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Source: The Washington Post, 5/23/98

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legislation that would have given hope and support to needy families....It could have meant fundamental change in the lives of 2,000 young people....It would have been a sign of respect for parents. It would have served as a clear signal that children come first."

Three days after the President rejected the voucher program, *The Washington Post* published the results of a poll that showed a sizable cohort in the District supports using federal funds to help low-income children attend private schools. Fifty-six percent of all residents, 60 percent of African-American residents, and an astounding 67 percent of parents with children in public schools said they favor the idea.

As the *Post* noted, "Support among District residents for federally funded vouchers was in sharp contrast to the views of elected city leaders...."

Virginia Walden, whose son attends a private school in D.C., helped explain the "sharp contrast" in an opinion piece she wrote in the *Post* the day after the poll was published: "I am a lifelong Democrat, and I am not sure when the Democrats decided that siding with the poor and the needy is no longer part of their platform. School choice empowers parents, and I don't care who is behind it, Democrats or Republicans."

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and all our partners across the country are thrilled to be helping out children who have so far been deprived of equal opportunity in education. We have found that there is a huge demand for access to quality education, and we hope that our support will help encourage a more competitive educational environment to benefit all of America's children."

In a letter supporting the program, President Clinton praised CSF for "helping to widen the circle of educational opportunity....Too many of our young people grow up in environments that offer them little or no encouragement to conceive, pursue, and achieve their dreams. By reaching out to low-income families and supporting their investment in education, CSF assists some of our country's neediest children."

Mayors Rudolph Giuliani of New York City, Bret Schundler of Jersey City, Richard Daley of Chicago, and Richard Riordan of Los Angeles also endorsed the program along with Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott and House Speaker Newt Gingrich. Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan said, "This unprecedented initiative will bring hope and opportunity to tens of thousands of low-income... students across America and change the educational landscape from this day forward."

# A+ Report

## Accord Reached; Vote Imminent

The conference committee charged with resolving differences between the House and Senate versions of the A+ Accounts legislation agreed June 10 on a compromise bill that strategists hope will maximize the chance of presidential approval and minimize the chance of a Senate filibuster.

Negotiators dropped provisions in the Senate version that would have established block grants and prohibited national tests, but they retained provisions for a reading literacy program, tax-free state prepaid tuition plans, and an extension of current tax-free benefits for employer-provided education. Of course, the core of the bill, which raises the limit on annual contributions to an education IRA from \$500 to \$2,000 per year and allows the accounts to be used for K-12 expenses, remains intact.

By deleting the block grants and the national test ban, negotiators lessen the possibility of a filibuster in the Senate because they bring aboard a number of Democrats who support the basic A+ bill but dislike those particular provisions. (House and Senate leaders have said the test prohibition will be included in some other piece of essential legislation this year.) By retaining the reading literacy program negotiators believe they have sweetened the pie for the President — though it may still be too bitter for his taste.

Senate and House floor votes on the compromise legislation could take place soon, perhaps as early as the week of June 15.



## New Non-Public School Web Page

USDE's Office of Non-Public Education just launched its new Web page, providing "extensive information about private education and federal programs that serve private school students." The address:

[www.ed.gov/offices/OIEA/NonPublic/](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OIEA/NonPublic/)

### Office of Non-Public Education

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lic comment on the reauthorization of Title I. The Department intends to submit its reauthorization proposal for the program early in 1999 and is looking for suggestions from the field on what its proposal should look like. One of the questions on which the Department is seeking advice is, Are there changes to Federal statutes that would improve the effectiveness of the provisions addressing the participation of private school students and teachers in Title I? Comments must be received at the Department before July 17, and may also be submitted at regional meetings to be held as follows: July 8 - Los Angeles; July 10 - Chicago; July 13 - Boston; July 15 - Atlanta. The complete Federal Register notice, which contains detailed information on how to respond, may be found under the "June 2" heading at <http://ocfo.ed.gov/fedreg/other.htm>.

• A dangerously high number of students — 13.6 percent of those in public schools and 4.4 percent of those in private schools — say they know another student who brought a gun to school. This according to a new report from the **National Center for Education Statistics**. *Students' Reports of School Crime: 1989 and 1995* examines the responses of students age 12-19 to questions about victimization at school, drug availability, street gangs, and guns. A copy is available on the Web at [www.nces.ed.gov](http://www.nces.ed.gov).

*E-Rate* Update

At the time *Outlook* went to press (June 11) the FCC had still not made some key decisions about the E-rate. Under pressure from Congress, long-distance carriers, and consumer groups, the Commission was grappling with how much money it would collect from telecommunications companies to fund the program. During the initial filing window, some 30,000 schools and libraries applied for E-rate discounts totaling \$2.02 billion.



## Blue Ribbon Schools Named

U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley last month named the 124 public and 42 private schools selected as Blue Ribbon Schools for 1997-98. "These schools prove that teamwork, commitment and hard work among parents, teachers, administrators and students can lead to outstanding achievements," Riley said.

CAPE, the proud coordinator of the program for private schools, joins the nation's education community in congratulating all winning schools. Quite naturally, we especially want to recognize this year's class of private school winners:

- Academy of Holy Angels, Richfield, MN
- Academy of the Holy Cross, Kensington, MD
- Allentown Central Catholic High School, Allentown, PA
- Archbishop Hoban High School, Akron, OH
- Assumption High School, Louisville, KY
- Benilde-St. Margaret High School, St. Louis Park, MN
- Bishop Gordon Middle & High School, Tyler, TX
- Bishop Lynch High School, Dallas, TX
- Blanchet High School, Seattle, WA
- Boylan Catholic High School, Rockford, IL
- Catholic High School, Baton Rouge, LA
- Central Catholic High School, Toledo, OH
- Chaminade College Preparatory, Chatsworth, CA
- Convent of the Sacred Heart High School, San Francisco, CA
- Coyle & Cassidy High School, Taunton, MA
- Cretin-Derham Hall, St. Paul, MN
- Fort Worth Country Day -Upper School, Fort Worth, TX
- Green Vale School, Glen Head, NY
- Immaculata High School, Sommerville, NJ
- Jesuit High School, Portland, OR
- Judge Memorial Catholic High School, Salt Lake City, UT
- Marian High School, Omaha, NE
- Mercyhurst Preparatory School, Erie, PA
- Mother Cabrini High School, New York, NY
- Mount Carmel Academy, New Orleans, LA
- Mount Saint Joseph Academy, Flourtown, PA
- Providence High School, Burbank, CA
- Queen of Peace High School, North Arlington, NJ
- Ramona Convent Secondary School, Alhambra, CA
- Regis Jesuit High School, Aurora, CO
- Roncalli High School, Indianapolis, IN
- Sacred Heart Academy, Louisville, KY
- Sacred Heart High School, Muenster, TX
- Santa Margarita Catholic H.S., Rancho Santa Margarita, CA
- St. John Vianney High School, St. Louis, MO
- St. Mary's Academy, Portland, OR
- St. Peter's High School, Mansfield, OH
- St. Scholastica Academy, Covington, LA
- St. Thomas More Catholic High School, Lafayette, LA
- St. Ursula Academy, Toledo, OH
- Thomas More High School, Milwaukee, WI
- University of San Diego HS, San Diego, CA



## capenotes

• Suppose you could raise money for your school without having to sell candy, wrapping paper, or raffle tickets. Well, **Target** is offering a simple, no fuss way for schools to raise funds. Anyone with a Target GuestCard (charge card) can designate any school to receive a donation equal to one percent of all their purchases. Target takes care of everything and provides the school with a check twice a year for



red donations. Parents, teachers, neighbors, grandparents, and friends everywhere in the country can select your school as the recipient of their one percent. With a large cohort of shoppers, the money adds up fast. For more information about this program and other ways Target supports education, call 1-800-316-6142 or check out Target's Web page at [www.target.com](http://www.target.com).

• In the aftermath of the disturbing national news about students killing students, some benefit and perspective

might be gained by examining the considerable good going on in American schools. The **National Center for Education Statistics** reports on the surprisingly high number of 1992 high school seniors who said they had performed community service during the previous two years:

% of 1992 H.S. Seniors Who Had Performed Community Service (by type of school)	
Public	42.0
Catholic	66.7
Other Private	56.7

• On the same topic, a new study conducted by the **National Association of Independent Schools** entitled *Community Service and Service Learning Initiatives in Independent Schools* notes, "It is standard policy for independent schools to involve their students in service to the community." The study offers a number of practical recommen-

dations for improving the quality of community service programs in schools. For more information, contact NAIS at 202-973-9700.

• In the year following the 1994 reauthorization of Title I, the participation of private school students in the program "declined in about one-third of all districts and in over half of the largest districts." In the following year, "participation continued to decline in over half of these districts." So says a just-published study on Title I services for private school students. Commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education and conducted by **Policy Studies Associates**, the study also notes "district administrators of programs report more concern on private school representatives than the representatives seem to experience. Further, "Large numbers of private school representatives report that they do not know about many aspects of Title I services to private school students...."

• The June 2 edition of the **Federal Register** includes a request from the U.S. Department of Education for pub-

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