

Council for American Private Education

CAPE outlook

Voice of America's private schools

Government Report Shows Increase in Private Schools and Students

A federal report released last month shows the number of private schools is growing along with the number and share of students attending them.

The biennial Private School Universe Survey (PSS), published by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), reveals a dramatic two-year surge in the sum total of private schools in the country, from 27,223 in 1999 to 29,273 in 2001. The 2,050 increase translates to a growth rate of 7.5 percent. Measured alongside NCES's count of public schools, private schools account for 24 percent of all elementary and secondary schools in the country.

The new report, which offers a close-up and detailed look at private school demographics, shows that between 1999 and 2001 private school enrollment increased by 178,829 students, or 3.5 percent. The enrollment growth was accompanied by a slight uptick in enrollment share, with private schools in 2001-02 enrolling 10.2 percent of the total elementary and secondary enrollment in the country, up from 10.1 percent in 1999-00.

Some 5,341,513 students attended private schools in grades K-12 in the fall of 2001. Other NCES estimates put the private school enrollment closer to 6.2 million, but those estimates include nursery and prekindergarten students as well as kindergarten students in schools where kindergarten is the highest grade. The main PSS counts do not include nursery, Pre-K, or K-terminal enrollment.

Change in Landscape

Within the overall upward enrollment trend, some shifts have taken place in the private school demographic landscape over the past 10 years and even over the past two years, with some sectors of private schools losing student share, some gaining, and others remaining level (see chart on next page). Some CAPE member or-

ganizations have seen significant gains in enrollment. The Association of Christian Schools International experienced an enrollment upswing of 58 percent between 1991 and 2001. Similarly, enrollment in Montessori schools jumped 54 percent during the same period. And two CAPE organizations, the National Christian School Association and the Southern Baptist Association of Christian Schools, while not tracked by NCES 10 years ago, saw a two-year enrollment increase of, respectively, 18 percent and 17 percent. Collectively, CAPE member organizations represent about 80 percent of the private school community nationwide.

State Count

Among states, California had the highest private school enrollment (655,502), followed by New York (492,518), Pennsylvania (331,471), Florida (303,093), Illinois (293,290), Ohio (256,427), Texas (241,674), New Jersey (218,187), Maryland (153,861), and Wisconsin (141,812). Of the top ten states for private school enrollment, all but two (Pennsylvania and Ohio) have state CAPE affiliates.

Over the past two years a significant shift has taken place in where private schools are located. The percentage of students attending schools in central cities dropped from 49.2 percent to 42.6 percent, while the share of students in what the report calls "urban fringe/large town" schools jumped from 39.7 percent to 42.6 percent and those in "rural/small town"

schools went from 11.1 percent to 14.8 percent. The closing of urban schools (down from 10,825 in 1999 to 10,117 in 2001), coupled with an increase in suburban and large-town schools (from 10,359 to 10,948) and in rural and small-town schools (from 6,040 to 8,209), correlates with the enrollment shift.

NCES figures also show growth in the percentage of minority students in private schools from 22.6 percent in 1999 to 24.1 percent in 2001. The 2001 numbers include 9.7 percent black students (up from 9.4 percent in 1999), 8.6 percent Hispanic students (up from 8.3 percent), 5.1 percent Asian/Pacific Islander students (up from 4.5 percent), and 75.9 percent white students (down from 77.4 percent).

Small Schools

Private schools tend to be small. Thirty-one percent in 2001 had fewer than 50 students; 59 percent had fewer than 150 students; 82 percent enrolled less than 300 students, and 92 percent came under the 500 enrollment level. The average private school enrollment in 2001-02 was 182.5 students. Sixty percent of private schools offered only elementary grades; 9 percent offered only secondary grades, and 31 percent provided a combination of elementary and secondary.

About 30,000 additional teachers were hired by private schools between 1999 and 2001, bringing the number of full-time-

**U.S. Private School Data
1999-2000 to 2001-2002**

	Schools	Students
2001-2002	29,273	5,341,513
1999-2000	27,223	5,162,684
# Increase	2,050	178,829
% Increase	7.5%	3.5%

Source: Private School Universe Survey, 2001-2002

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CAPE member organizations:

- American Montessori Society
- Association Montessori International—USA
- Association of Christian Schools International
- Association of Waldorf Schools of N.A.
- 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 Christian School Association
- Oral Roberts University Educational Fellowship
- Seventh-day Adventist Board of Education
- Solomon Schechter Day School Association
- Southern Baptist Association of Christian Schools
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
- 28 Affiliated State Organizations

a coalition of national associations serving private schools K-12
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CAPE Board Meets with Secretary Paige

CAPE's board of directors met last month with U.S. Education Secretary Rod Paige and other top officials at the Department of Education to discuss an array of issues ranging from Title V to IDEA to the role of private schools in America. The meeting was friendly, fruitful, and offered a glimpse of the secretary's views on how education has changed in recent years.

Mr. Paige thanked the private school community for its contribution to American education and went on to locate that contribution within the civic enterprise of public education. He described the concept of public education as broader than it is popularly conceived. While most people equate the term with what takes place in public schools, the secretary defined it to mean the education of the public. That, he said, is an enterprise carried out in a variety of institutions, including private schools.

The secretary reported that the Department's priorities for next year include high school reforms, the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, and smoothing out a few wrinkles in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

Mr. Paige touted the success of NCLB. He said all 50 states plus Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia now have Department-approved accountability plans in place. What's

more, student performance has improved.

Prior to the secretary's arrival at the meeting, the board discussed Title V with Raymond Simon, assistant secretary for elementary and secondary education. They conveyed the private school community's alarm about two recent actions in Congress: the decision by the Senate Appropriations Committee to eliminate Title V and the decision by the House to cut the program from \$297 million to \$20 million. Mr. Simon said the program is important to the White House and the Department of Education.

During the discussion, the CAPE group also made the case for equitable benefits for private school students and teachers in other federal education programs.

Regarding the pending reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the group offered specific suggestions to Troy Justesen, acting deputy assistant secretary in the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, on how the legislation could be changed to improve services to private school students with special needs.

The board also presented Department officials with CAPE's new brochure on why private schools are good for students, good for families, and good for America.

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equivalent (FTE) teachers from 395,317 in 1999 to 425,406 in 2001. Forty-eight percent of private school teachers taught in elementary schools during the 2001-02 school year; 16 percent taught in secondary schools, and 37 percent in combined schools. Dividing the number of private school students in 2001 (5,341,513) by the number of

FTE teachers (425,406) yields an average student/teacher ratio of 12.6 to 1.

The grade-level enrolling the most private school students in 2001 was kindergarten, with an enrollment of 508,906. At the other end of the K-12 spectrum was the grade enrolling the fewest students: grade

12, with an enrollment of 293,305.

Bundled within the report are a few other

statistical tidbits. For example, in 2001-02 the average length of the private school year in days was 180, and the average length of the school day in hours was 6.7. The male/female student ratio was 50.4 to 49.6 percent. Nearly 96 percent of private schools were coed schools; 1.9 percent were all-girls schools, and 2.4 percent were all-boys schools. Finally, high schools reported in the

2001-02 survey that the previous year's (2000-01) high school graduation rate was 98.1 percent.

"Characteristics of Private Schools in the United States: Results From the 2001-2002 Private School Universe Survey" is available online at the NCES Web site at [http://](http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2005305)

% of Private School Students in Types of Private Schools

Type of School	1991	1999	2001
Catholic	53.0	48.6	47.1
Nonsectarian	14.8	15.7	16.9
Conservative Christian	12.0	15.0	15.4
Baptist	5.8	6.1	5.9
Lutheran	4.4	4.4	4.1
Jewish	3.4	3.3	3.7
Episcopal	1.8	2.2	1.9
Adventist	1.5	1.2	1.1
Calvinist	0.9	0.8	0.7
Friends	0.3	0.3	0.4

nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2005305

Forum Focuses on Market Education

What factors must converge to form a true marketplace in education? What would that market look like, and what effects would it have on American education? These were some of the questions addressed by panelists at a recent policy forum sponsored by the Cato Institute, a public policy research foundation located in Washington, D.C. This article covers two of the presentations, both of which called for a relatively unregulated education market.

John Merrifield, professor of economics at the University of Texas, believes the marketplace should include a broad array of schools covering a variety of specializations. He regards specialization as a catalyst for major reform.

For Professor Merrifield, the essential ingredients of a competitive education industry (CEI) are minimum regulation of providers, a reduction of barriers (generally price barriers) that keep customers out of the market, a mechanism to keep consumers informed and mobile, and the elimination of price controls. Excessive regulations can discourage entrepreneurs from starting new schools and can stifle specialization. Eliminating price barriers means not discriminating against families that choose private providers. "In other words, fund children equally," Merrifield said. Customer mobility allows families to flock to good schools and avoid bad ones, though they need information to help tell the difference. Finally, price controls produce inefficiencies and eliminate incentives. As Merrifield sees it, "The market's not going to work with price controls in play."

Specialization is the Key

But specialization is the key to school reform for Merrifield. The need for specialization stems from the fact that children are remarkably different. To meet their needs, interests, and learning styles, schools should differ on features like curriculum, subject emphasis, teaching methodology, location, size, physical setting, and even approaches to discipline.

Throughout his presentation, Professor Merrifield detailed the advantages of specialization. For starters, he said it would increase productivity in education. A tenet of Economics 101, he said, is that "the cornerstone of productivity is the division of labor." If parents were

able to match the offerings of the school with the abilities and interests of children, students would be more motivated and their output more productive. Also, with parents choosing a school for their children, rather than having the choice thrust upon them, friction between parents and teachers, one of the leading reasons for teacher turnover, would be reduced.

Merrifield also maintains that specialization would "accelerate innovation" and "pave the way for smaller schools," a reform which "virtually everyone agrees would help."

Let Parents Decide

John T. Wenders, professor emeritus of economics at the University of Idaho, offered another take on school reform, saying education would best be served if parents, rather than government education officials, made choices about what students attend what schools. "Parents have the information about what is best for their children," Wenders said. He takes a microeconomics approach, believing that decisions about education should be made "way, way down at the bottom," rather than in Washington or state capitols.

Wenders, who examines education through the lens of "regulatory economics," compared the public education system in America to the airline industry prior to deregulation. While there is a market in education, it is a government-regulated market and thus very much unlike the market that normally applies to other goods and services. The result is waste, inefficiency, and a focus on securing additional government revenue without an increase in productivity, which he defines as improved student performance.

In a regulated market, regulations, according to Wenders, quickly acquire very powerful constituencies—stakeholders who have a lot invested in maintaining the status quo. To illustrate the point, he pointed to his state education department's committee to look at the issue of rewarding high-performing teachers. The stakeholders on the committee are essentially committed to keeping things the way they are.

Video and audio archives of the entire Cato forum, entitled "Creating a True Marketplace in Education," are available for download at <http://www.cato.org>.



Prof. John Merrifield, University of Texas



Prof. John Wenders, University of Idaho

SAT Scores Go Up

The College Board recently announced some good news and bad news. Average SAT verbal scores for 2004 rose 1 point from last year to 508, but math scores dropped 1 point to 518.

Since 2003, scores among religiously affiliated private schools rose 2 points on the verbal scale to 537 and 1 point on the math scale to 531. Scores also went up for test takers from independent schools. They gained 5 points on the verbal and 1 point on the math, bringing their average verbal score to 555 and their average math score to 574.

Among SAT takers in the high school class of 2004, 1,073,241 students attended public schools (83 percent), 150,524 attended religiously affiliated schools (12 percent), and 69,336 attended independent schools (5 percent). Thus, private schools, which, according to data from the National Center for Education Statistics, enroll 9 percent of high school seniors in the country, accounted for 17 percent of seniors taking the SAT. The presence of private school students in the pool of SAT takers lifted the national average by 3 points on the verbal test and 3 points on the math test.

College Board President Gaston Caperton said that among "the most promising findings this year" were increases in math and verbal scores among Mexican American and "Other Hispanic" students. Verbal scores for Mexican American students rose 3 points since 2003, and math scores rose 1 point. "Other Hispanic" students increased their verbal scores by 4 points and their math scores by 1 point.

SAT Test Scores Class of 2004

	Verbal	Math
National	508	518
Public	505	515
Religious	537	531
Independent	555	574

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CAPE notes

★ With President Bush winning reelection and Republicans gaining seats in the House and Senate, federal education policy will surely continue in the direction of implementing the bipartisan No Child Left Behind Act. In fact, the president has proposed extending his blueprint for public school reform to secondary schools through early intervention programs for high school students, a new emphasis on math and science, and a tough exit exam before graduation. Another program the president supports is engaging faith- and community-based organizations in offering after-school programs for children. On the school choice front, the president this year signed the first-ever federally funded voucher program for K-12 students, a program that now looks likely to continue.

★ A new study concludes that high school students in Milwaukee who used vouchers to attend private high schools had significantly higher graduation rates than students attending either regular public high schools or academically selective public high schools in the city. The research, conducted by Jay P. Greene of the Manhattan Institute and sponsored by School Choice Wisconsin, found that private school voucher students in the class of 2003 had a graduation rate of 64 percent, compared to a rate of 36 percent for students attending 37 public high schools in Milwaukee and 41 percent for students attending selective public high schools.

According to the report, students in the selective public schools were likely to be more advantaged than the voucher students. To estimate graduation rates, the study compared the number of ninth grade students in the various cohorts to the number of students awarded diplomas four years later. The report says the study “helps confirm earlier research finding that choice students in Milwaukee and other cities have higher academic achievement.”

The new report, entitled “Graduation Rates for Choice and Public School Students in Milwaukee,” is available at <http://www.miedresearchoffice.org/>.

★ Teachers looking to improve their teaching skills now have a new and free resource from the U.S. Department of Education. The Department says it has brought together “some of the nation’s most effective teachers and education experts to share with their colleagues research-based practices and proven methods of using data to inform instruction.” Teacher-to-Teacher video workshops are available on-demand in streaming video at <http://www.paec.org/teacher2teacher/>. The courses, aimed mostly at elementary school teachers, are designed to “help teachers experience on-demand professional development to increase their knowledge and skills for improving student achievement.” The current 11 workshop topics include “Developing Computational Fluency in Addition and Subtrac-

tion,” “Beginning to Write,” “Reading in the Content Areas,” and “Differentiated Instruction.”

★ Sixty-five outstanding elementary and middle school administrators were honored last month as 2004 National Distinguished Principals by the U.S. Department of Education and the National Association of Elementary School Principals. The NDP program was established in 1984 to recognize public and private school principals who make superior contributions to their schools and communities. Private school honorees are selected by a special committee that CAPE helps organize.

CAPE salutes all award recipients, including those from private schools: Dennis E. Gehrke, St. Peter Lutheran School, Arlington Heights, IL; Nancy L. Genzel, Resurrection Catholic School, Lakeland, FL; Marian Hobbie, St. Patrick School, Chatham, NJ; Ghada G. Huleis, Salem Lutheran School, Glendale, CA; Connie C. Lawrence, Portsmouth Christian Academy, Dover, NH; Clarice Peninger, St. Andrew’s Catholic School, Fort Worth, TX.

★ Correction: An article in last month’s issue incorrectly identified the year of the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Mitchell v. Helms* as 1999. Although the high court heard the case December 1, 1999, it announced the decision June 28, 2000.