

CAPE OUTLOOK

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Why Private Schools Work

At a recent day long seminar on "What Works in Education" sponsored by the Senate Republican Policy Committee for members of Congress and Congressional staff, CAPE's Executive Director spoke of four ingredients of private schools which are essential to making them work well.

Freedom to operate in accord with their own best professional judgment and purposes and without intrusive regulation is the first necessary condition for a private school's effectiveness. Federal laws regarding racial discrimination in education are an important exception. Private schools almost universally support them.

Mr. Smith went on to say that the ability to freely pursue the development of student values and intellectual excellence is a second key to the success of private schools. Because the two are ultimately inseparable, the capacity to enhance teaching and learning at this very heart of its curriculum is always directly at hand in the private school.

A third essential strength of private schools is their unhampered ability to create and develop the school's ethos and traditions. A school community based on shared goals over a period of time provides the school with an identity for students, teachers and parents. At a time when most societal institutions are growing impersonal and inaccessible, the private school can provide continuity, stability and intimacy - all important in developing maturity, confidence and goals in students.

The fourth characteristic of private schools which makes them "work" is a fool-proof system of in-house quality control. Parents paying tuition to private schools, like any other purchaser of services, want and assume they will get their money's worth. And because paying for their child's education is probably one of

the largest and easily the most emotionally charged bill parents annually pay, their level of cost consciousness is high all school year long. A private school which cannot meet the intangible, omnipresent quality expectations of parents will be in quick and continuing trouble. Nothing in the form of state regulations nor any amount of teacher credentialing, both popularly associated with school quality control, can possibly ever equal this unremitting, unforgiving fact of private school life in keeping a school on its toes.

In response to a question whether "what works" in private schools is transferable to public schools, Mr. Smith said that although the two are necessarily different, providing a large measure of school autonomy in public education could be very helpful. Schools which have a feeling their destiny is in their own hands have a strong hold on the conditions which make schools better. The tensions between autonomy and accountability, a major issue in the school improvement effort, is one about which private schools have had years of experience.

DE Plans Statistical Overhaul

One of the most ambitious proposals of the Department of Education's new Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) is a plan for overhauling its statistical database to provide nationally representative, timely and comparable data on public and private elementary and secondary schools and foster "close working relationships" with data providers. The plan includes a cognitive skills test administered annually that would estimate students' academic progress, changing the role of the National Assessment of Educational Progress. The redesign would enable the Department for the first time to study relationships between student characteristics, family background variables and school policies on student achievement. Public and private school administrators, teachers, students, school districts and parents would be surveyed annually. The questionnaires are being designed to limit administrative burdens on respondents.

According to a report released late last year, the Department's current system lacks comprehensiveness, integration, accuracy, comparability, representativeness and timeliness. The level of funding for OERI will determine how quickly the new system can

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Are Private Schools Resting On Their Laurels?

Private schools have become "complacent." They are not using their substantial educational advantages as a "starting point." In fact, they show "limited educational imagination."

That is the conclusion of Arthur Powell, Director of the Commission on Educational Issues at the National Association of Independent Schools and author of the *Shopping Mall High School*.

Speaking at a recent conference on private school research at Catholic University in Washington, D.C., Powell observed that studies of schools over the last half decade had been, in general, exceptionally critical of the way public schools are performing and "sympathetic and positive" about the work of private schools. Although previous research had confirmed that private schools possess the very characteristics which are lacking and needed in public schools, Powell said that the research done for *A Study of High Schools* shows that "classroom instruction and organization of school time did not differ appreciably between public and private schools", that "the day-to-day life" of students in both types of schools did not differ much, and that the things that could be done by teachers and by the schools to reach "goals more complicated than performance on conventional tests and decent behavior" were not being done.

That this could be true of private schools is surprising in view of the many educational advantages they can rely upon. For example, because each private school is "bought into" by its parents, there exists consensus about values, school goals, programs and most factors that parents and schools deem important.

Powell concluded that advocates of private schools should be concerned with these findings because "the central historic justification for the maintenance of a strong and independent private sector in schooling" is "that independence allows ambition and experimentation to flourish, and thus in the long run provides models and ideas that serve all youth, not just private school youth."

Statistical Overhaul at DE (continued from page 1)

be implemented. Preliminary cost estimates of a complete overhaul are \$20 million. Congress this year is likely to freeze OERI's appropriation even though the Administration requested a \$10 million increase.

At present, the director of OERI, Dr. Chester Finn, is consulting with CAPE and other private and public school groups on its Working Paper outlining its Redesign of the Elementary and Secondary Data Collection Program.

Exxon Fine Builds Conservation Funds

Schools may benefit from a \$2.1 billion fine the Exxon Corporation has been ordered to pay for overcharging on the price of crude oil. It is the largest amount any company has ever paid as a result of a crude oil overcharge enforcement case brought by the Department of Energy. The money has been paid to states for use in five federal energy conservation programs. Each state's share is in proportion to the volume of petroleum products consumed in the state during the period covered by the Exxon overcharges.

The programs include weatherization of dwelling units, particularly those where elderly or handicapped low-income persons reside; primary and supplemental state energy conservation plans; reduction of energy consumption or use of alternative energy sources in schools and hospitals; promotion of energy conservation by small business and individual energy consumers; assistance to low-income households for payment of residential heating and cooling costs.

Private schools are eligible to participate in the conservation program for schools and hospitals. Some states have received sizeable allocations and it may be in the interest of private schools to contact their Governors regarding the apportionment of the funds among the five programs and to obtain information on application procedures and deadlines. These funds may provide an opportunity for schools to receive some funding for implementing energy conservation activities over the summer.

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A coalition of 15 national organizations serving private schools (K-12)

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Legislative Update

On April 8, Congress returned from its spring recess to work on budget, tax and foreign policy issues. Appropriations subcommittees in both the House and Senate continued hearings on fiscal 1987 appropriations. The House Appropriations Committee faces a June 10 deadline for reporting all fiscal 1987 funding bills. Markup of the tax reform bill continued in the Senate Finance Committee.

Recent Action...

Gramm-Rudman Balanced Budget Act — On April 23, the Supreme Court will hear arguments in a suit challenging the constitutionality of the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings budget control law. In February, a lower court struck down the Comptroller General's role in the automatic deficit reduction process. (However, the decision did not delay the fiscal 1986 4.3% across-the-board cuts which took effect on March 1.) The Justice Department and 12 Congressmen have filed briefs supporting the opinion of the lower court. The ruling in the case, *Bowsher v. Synar*, is expected to be issued in July.



Fiscal 1987 Budget— On April 10, by a vote of 72-34, the Senate resolved that a final agreement on the fiscal 1987 budget should be reached before the Senate takes up tax reform legislation. The resolution was aimed at getting the budget measure reported in March by the Budget Committee to the Senate floor. (Under the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act, the Senate had an April 15 deadline for adoption of a budget resolution.) The Committee bill would fund most education and child nutrition programs at FY 1986 levels except for a 20% cut in Chapter 2 and would add

limited funding to a variety of domestic programs including Head Start and Chapter 1. The bill also includes \$18.4 billion in additional taxes. The House is committed to wait and see what the Senate comes up with before it announces its plan.

Child Nutrition— Conferees began meeting January 29 on the School Lunch and Child Nutrition Amendments of 1985, H.R. 7. The staff of the conferees have reached tentative agreements on the issues but negotiations are stalled. Rep. Augustus Hawkins (D-CA), Chairman of the conference, has urged Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC), Vice-Chairman of the conference to return to the conference table to resolve outstanding issues. If a resolution is not reached in a timely fashion, Rep. Hawkins is prepared to move the bill to the floor without a formal agreement by the Conferees.

Higher Education Act Reauthorization — On March 19, the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee unanimously approved a bill, S. 1965, which would reauthorize up to \$9.7 billion in funding for higher education in FY '87, \$2 billion below the current authorization of \$11.7 billion. The bill is ready for Senate floor action.

Both the Senate committee bill and the House passed bill contain key provisions related to determining need for purposes of student financial assistance. The House bill provides a single need analysis system for both Pell Grants and campus-based programs. The Senate bill retains current law providing separate systems for Pell Grants and campus-based programs. The important consideration for families of private school students is the specific treatment given to educational expenses for children enrolled in private schools. The unified need analysis provided in the House bill includes an allowance for unreimbursed tuition and fees not to exceed the national average per pupil instructional cost published annually by the Department of Education. The Senate bill follows the House provision for campus-based programs but it does not place a limit on the allowance for Pell grants. The House-Senate differences will have to be solved in conference.

Reauthorization of the National Institute of Education

The Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee approved an amendment to the Higher Education Act Reauthorization to continue for 5 years the Education Department's Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), formerly NIE. The measure would codify what has been done through Secretary Bennett's reorganization. However, the Committee defeated the Secretary's proposal to drop the requirement that grants and contracts to the Department's regional labs and centers fund work that they themselves propose. Thus, regional labs will continue to set their own research agendas. The House-passed Higher Education Reauthorization bill does not include an extension but a proposal is being reviewed in preparation for the House/Senate Conference on the higher education omnibus legislation.

Capenotes

On behalf of its constituency CAPE ...

...congratulated Rev. Vincent J. Duminuco, S.J., President of the Jesuit Secondary Education Association for the past nine years and a valued member of Washington's private school community, on his appointment as Secretary of Education for the worldwide Society of Jesus (Jesuits). He will be based in Rome beginning in January 1987 after completing his term at JSEA this summer. His successor will be Rev. Charles P. Costello, S.J., Maryland Province.

...at a recent meeting in St. Louis of the district superintendents of schools of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, CAPE's Executive Director spoke about the Chapter I voucher bill and home-schooling. 49 states now allow home-schooling through decisions of State courts, state superintendents, state attorney generals or a combination thereof. Texas remains the lone-star state.

...received an announcement of upcoming opportunities with the United States Information Agency for the 1987-88 Fulbright Teacher Exchange program open to elementary and secondary school teachers and college faculty currently employed with three years teaching experience. The program offers one-year and summer direct exchange of positions with teachers from abroad. Applications are due by October 15, 1986. To request information write to the Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program, USIA, 301 4th St., SW, Washington, D.C. 20547.

... extends its best wishes to Bruno Manno on his appointment as Director of Planning in the Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement. While the private school community will miss Bruno's expertise as Director of Research at

NCEA, we look forward to working with him in his new capacity.

... has available copies of its first annual Directory, *Private Schools of the United States*, which lists over 15,000 CAPE member organization schools. Schools are listed alphabetically by state and indexed by school name, grade level and school association. Information includes data on individual schools, statistical profiles of private schools nationally and by state, and accreditation and evaluation policies and practices. Copies are available at cost for nonprofit organizations (\$30 each) and for \$75 for commercial organizations. Orders should be accompanied by checks payable to CAPE (1625 Eye St., NW, Suite #822, Washington, D.C. 20006).

...welcomes Janna Harrop of Brigham Young University to our staff as an intern. She will be joining us on April 28th as part of the University's Washington Seminar Program.

Illinois Forms State CAPE

On March 18 the Board of Directors voted unanimously to accept the application for CAPE state association status of the Illinois Advisory Committee on Non-Public Schools (IACNPS). Like CAPE, IACNPS is composed of a wide range of private school associations and has served the broad interests of non-public schools for a number of years. Mr. Alvin Vanden Bosch, the representative of Christian Schools International on the IACNPS Board, is currently Chairman.

Illinois is the 25th state whose private school associations have joined together to form state CAPE organizations and to maintain an informal tie to CAPE.

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