

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

## Changes at Department of Education Progress

As when any new administration or cabinet secretary takes over the helm of a governmental agency, Department of Education Secretary Lamar Alexander's first months in office have been marked with firings, hirings and new initiatives. In the five months since he was sworn in, Alexander has shaken the Department with personnel changes, developed sweeping legislation, and set out on a personal crusade to focus the nation on education.

### New Faces - New Jobs

On the day of Alexander's swearing-in ceremony, one week after his Senate confirmation, President Bush announced the nomination of Xerox Chairman David Kearns as Deputy Secretary to serve with Alexander. Kearns, a respected business leader and proponent of education reform, was praised weeks later in his confirmation hearing on May 9 for his decision to step down from his lucrative Xerox post. Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Massachusetts) applauded Kearns for his willingness to work in a "thinly staffed, low-prestige, mismanaged bureaucracy" to serve the interests of education.

The President also named Ted Sanders to a newly created, dual job of Chief Financial Officer and Deputy Undersecretary. Sanders served as Deputy Secretary under former Secretary Lauro Cavazos as well as Acting Secretary following Cavazos' resignation in December.

Within days of the top slot announcements, educators learned of the new Secretary's plan to fire top Department officials, including six assistant/deputy undersecretaries as well as the executive assistant for the Office of Private Education, Charles O'Mally. O'Mally, who served 10 years through the term of three Secretaries - Bell, Bennett and Cavazos - was replaced by Michelle Easton, who became acting director. Easton served as Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs under Cavazos.

CAPE representatives were involved in meetings to insure that the legislative component of the ("America 2000") strategy was reflective of private education concerns.

### "America 2000" Becomes Focus

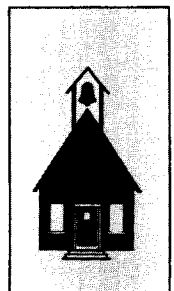
Even before he took the helm at the Department, Alexander was hard at work in developing a national education strategy for the Bush Administration. With the help of a few personal advisors, friends and education experts, Alexander's aim was to present the President with an initiative with which Bush could stake and solidify his claim to be the "education President".

In less than five weeks on the job, the President unveiled the four-part plan as a national blueprint for sweeping education reform entitled "America 2000: An Education Strategy".

In addition to CAPE's presence at the strategy's unveiling and giving general support to it, CAPE representatives were involved in meetings to insure that the legislative component of the strategy was reflective of private education concerns.

Acting Assistant Secretary of Legislation, Bill Hansen, who was responsible for developing the legislative language of the "America 2000 Excellence in Education Act", met with CAPE officials who voiced concern about the construct of the "choice" initiative grants and Chapter 1 changes in the bill. That legislation, formally presented by the Administration to the Congress in late May, was made more amenable for private schools by the openness of the Department displayed by Hansen to input from CAPE.

With the primary focus of the Department set on promotion of the highly visible "America 2000" education strategy and finalizing the necessary federal legislation to accompany it, resolution of many key personnel decisions was expected to be slow.



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## Private Education Office Concern

By the third week of July however, deep concern was raised among private school leaders when two professional staff members of the Office of Private Education were given "pink slips", leaving the office with an "acting" director, intern and special assistant. A staff researcher was re-assigned from the private education office to the "America 2000" office within the Department.

Expressing concern about the office's future, a delegation of CAPE officials arranged a private meeting with Deputy Undersecretary Ted Sanders on July 26. Joyce G. McCray, CAPE executive director, said of the meeting that "we were assured by Ted of the Department's respect for the important role of private schools in American education and the need for this unique office." McCray explained that the CAPE group also expressed their hope that the office be maintained, strengthened and that newly hired staff in the office have a strong, professional background with private schools.

The next week, a follow-up meeting with Sanders was held at which Secretary Alexander and Deputy Secretary Kearns briefly met with the CAPE delegation to express support for the office and seek help in promoting "America 2000". Those attending both meetings besides McCray were Sister Lourdes Sheehan, secretary of education for the United States Catholic Conference; Jack Sanders, vice president of the National Association of Independent Schools; and Sister Catherine McNamee, president of the National Catholic Educational Association.

Later that same day, official word was received that Michelle Easton was to be named as the permanent Executive Assistant to the Secretary for the Office of Private Education. While in her position as assistant secretary at the Department, she was instrumental in creating the "Center for Choice in Education". Easton, who has served in numerous positions within the Reagan and Bush administrations, has three children in private schools.

**Editor's Note:** One week after the last meeting with CAPE officials, Ted Sanders announced his resignation from the Depart-

ment of Education to accept the position of chief state school officer for the State of Ohio. Stating his desire to get back to "where the action is", Sanders is to take over those responsibilities on October 1.

Sanders has been a dedicated public servant for education. He has never allowed personal views nor external pressures to infringe on his ability to serve the interests of quality, equal educational opportunity in our nation's schools - public or private. CAPE commends his honorable leadership, is grateful for his service, and wishes him and his family the very best in Ohio.

## NAIS Poll Shows Support for Choice and Values

In a survey commissioned by the National Association of Independent Schools, 57% of Americans support the notion of education vouchers, up 13% from a similar poll conducted by *The New York Times* just 8 years ago.

Additionally, an overwhelming 87% of those polled say private schools are good for the country because they provide parents with a choice of where to enroll their children.

NAIS, a CAPE member organization, revealed the findings on July 23 with two Washington events. The survey was shared with the media at a National Press Club breakfast and with Congressional aides and Department of Education officials in an afternoon briefing in the Capitol Building.

The poll, covering a wide range of education issues, was conducted by the Washington-based public opinion research firm, Belden and Russonello. The study found that Americans believe 10-to-one that private schools do a better job at keeping class size small, giving students individual attention, and maintaining discipline.

By substantial margins, private schools are seen as superior to public schools in keeping out drugs and violence, preparing students for college, and employing high quality teachers. Further, three out-of-four Americans disagree with the notion that teacher certification requirements in public schools assure higher quality teachers. The only component of education in the survey that respondents said public schools did a

"better job" than independent schools, was in the category of sports and physical education.

Also revealed in the research was that 80% of Americans approve of teaching values, agreeing with the statement that "public schools should have a responsibility to help parents teach children about values." Jack Sanders, NAIS vice president, said "overwhelming public support for the teaching of values in schools tells us that independent schools are now and always have been on the right track" and the public school officials should be "very interested in the message Americans are sending here."

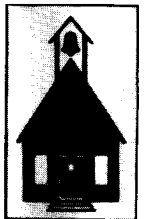
For more information on the survey results, contact NAIS director of public information, Margaret Goldsborough at (202) 265-3500.

## Labor Commission Reports on Essential Skills

A 30-member blue ribbon commission has issued a report to the Secretary of the Department of Labor on the changing demands of the workplace and how young people should be meeting those demands. The "Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills" (SCANS) reported on five basic competencies necessary for students to successfully enter the workplace today.

The commission, chaired by former Labor Secretary William E. Brock, began its study in May of 1990 on "defining the skills needed" in the workplace and "proposing acceptable levels of proficiency for them." The report was presented to current Labor Department Secretary Lynn Martin on May 31.

Six special panels of the commission were established to examine all manners of jobs from manufacturing to government employment. After receiving input and reviewing research from business owners, public employers, unions, workers, and knowledgeable experts, the message received was universal: "good jobs will increasingly depend on people who can put knowledge to



work." The commission was disturbed to find that "more than half our young people leave school without the knowledge or foundation required to find and hold a good job."

Two recent conditions have occurred to make this a reality according to the report: the globalization of commerce and industry and the explosive growth of technology on the job.

The five competencies outlined in the report represent the attributes that today's employers seek in tomorrow's employee. The commission labelled each at least as important as technical expertise for any profession. The five competencies are profiled as having the ability to master workplace: **resources** (to identify, organize, plan, and allocate resources); **interpersonal relationships** (to work well with others); **information** (to acquire and use information); **systems** (to understand complex inter-relationships); and **technology** (to work with a variety of technologies).

The commission also summarized a three-part foundation of skills that are needed for solid job performance: **basic skills** (ability to handle elemental functions), **thinking skills** (ability to think creatively, solve problems and make decisions), and **personal qualities** (ability to display responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, integrity and honesty.)

The report recommended that "the nation's schools must be transformed into high-performance organizations in their own right." It endorsed President Bush's education strategy as the remedy for our schools' "failing to develop the full academic abilities of most students" despite a decade of reform efforts.

For more information or a copy of the report, contact SCANS at the U. S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20210.

## **Legislative Update:**

### **House Hearings on 'America 2000' bill**

The House Elementary, Secondary and Vocational Education Subcommittee heard testimony on the President's education bill on July 11 from education leaders, including a member of the CAPE board of directors.

Sister Lourdes Sheehan, secretary of education for the United States Catholic Conference and member of the CAPE board, testified before the committee regarding **H.R. 2460**, the "America 2000 Excellence in Education Act". Stating the bill "may be the most significant piece of comprehensive legislation in education since the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act", Sheehan focused on the choice provision of the bill as "the very prerequisite of successful educational reform."

CAPE likewise submitted a statement to the subcommittee which countered rhetoric of choice opponents. In the testimony, Joyce McCray, CAPE executive director, explained that the President's proposed legislation merely "encourages local choice initiatives", rather than setting up a federal voucher program. Noting the variety of choice structures, McCray said that "as the 'America 2000' strategy recognizes, real reform will come from local empowerment, not from centrally prescribed Washington remedies."

Other CAPE member organizations to submit testimony to the subcommittee, chaired by Representative Dale Kildee (D-Michigan), were the National Catholic Educational Association, the National Association of Private Schools for Exceptional Children, and the National Association of Independent Schools.

### **Senate Mark-up Slows Down**

The Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee has likewise deliberated over the President's "America 2000" legislation, beginning with testimony from Education Secretary Lamar Alexander in late April. However, in an apparent move to avoid charges of politicizing education legislation, the committee put off a partisan showdown before the August recess by postponing consideration of its chairman's education bill.

On July 31, the committee was to consider an unusual parliamentary motion which would have allowed the chairman, Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Massachusetts), to modify the committee reported **S. 2** prior to debate by the full Senate. That bill was introduced at the beginning of the Congressional session in January.

Back on April 17, one day before the President unveiled the "America 2000"

education strategy, the committee passed **S. 2**, the Democrats' omnibus education bill, on a 10 to 7 party-line vote. The legislation contained provisions to monitor progress towards the national education goals, promote literacy, and provide "school based management/shared decisionmaking and flexibility incentive" grants. That bill was passed through committee and was left pending on the Senate calendar while negotiations between Congress and the Administration took place.

New legislation was introduced by Senator Kennedy in May to include provisions giving state grants for public school choice, countering the Administration's strong support for choice incentives which include private schools.

Speculation was that the parliamentary motion empowering the Chairman was a move to combine popular aspects of the "America 2000" bill with Kennedy's public school choice legislation to avoid a partisan Committee fight.

At the July 31 committee meeting, Chairman Kennedy said negotiations between Congress and Secretary Alexander would continue before expected action on an omnibus education bill in September.

### **Radon & Indoor Air Bills Advance in Senate**

The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee approved two bills by voice-vote before the August recess to provide testing and research programs for two environmental concerns.

The panel voted to reauthorize the Indoor Radon Abatement Act of 1988 which set up regional information centers to disseminate information on radon gas. The new legislation, **S. 792**, also would require federal buildings and schools in high radon level areas to be tested for the gas. In addition, the bill would provide assistance to pay for reduction programs.

The committee also passed **S. 455** to establish a research office on indoor air quality within the Environmental Protection Agency. The bill requires the EPA to issue health advisories on indoor air pollutants and provide support to state agencies with programs to address the problem.

A similar bill in the House has been referred back to the Environment Subcommittee for further study.

continued from page 3

## Thomas Nomination Hearings Set

The Senate Judiciary Committee will begin hearings September 10 on the nomination of Judge Clarence Thomas as the new Supreme Court justice replacing Thurgood Marshall.

Thomas, in an emotional statement accepting the President's nomination on July 1 in Kennebunkport, referred to the guidance provided him as a young student by his mother, grandparents and the nuns who taught him in Catholic schools - "all of whom were adamant that I grow up to make something of myself." Judge Thomas, 43, would become one of the youngest justices to ever join the Court if confirmed.

Senator Joseph Biden (D-Delaware), Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, stated his intention to move quickly on the nomination so that a floor vote could be scheduled before the beginning of the Court's term in October.

## Testing Bill Passes House Committee

On August 1, the House Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary and Vocational Education approved by voice vote H.R. 2434, a bill to expand National Assessment of Educational Progress testing.

NAEP currently conducts testing on samples of fourth and eighth grade students on reading and math skills. The legislation passed incorporates changes recommended by the National Academy of Sciences calling for testing on sciences skills and inclusion of 12th graders in the sample. Further, it would extend the program through 1994.

The results, currently ranked by state, would also include private schools students.

## Capenotes:

▶ A study by the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California at Los Angeles called "The American Freshman: National Norms for Fall 1990" revealed a slight increase in the number of college freshmen interested in teaching careers. Nine percent of freshmen surveyed in 1990 said they were pursuing careers as teachers, up from 8.2 percent in 1989. Despite the survey's disclosure that this represents an almost doubling of the 4.7 percent in 1982, an all-time low, it is still a fraction of the interest shown by students in the late sixties. At that time interest in the education field ranked as high as 24 percent.

The study by the UCLA Institute was begun in 1966 and has been conducted on

annually ever since. Copies of the report are available for \$19 from: Higher Education Research Institute, University of California at Los Angeles, Graduate School of Education, 405 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90024-1521.

▶ CAPE, through its Private School Facilitator Project, assists private schools nationwide in learning more about the National Diffusion Network. NDN is a body of over four hundred educational programs validated by the Education Department following rigorous evaluation, as educationally effective, cost-efficient and replicable.

These programs cover nearly every conceivable area of curriculum and practice. All NDN programs, some of which are for at-risk, gifted or disabled students, include in-service training and thus offer staff development as an extra benefit.

For more information, contact Dr. Charles Nunley at CAPE, (202) 659-0177.

▶ The "Estimates of Schools Statistics, 1990-91", published by the National Education Association shows the national average total per-pupil spending in public schools is \$5,208, a 4.9% increase from the 1989-90 school year. Total expenditures for public elementary and secondary day schools are \$198,435,420.



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a coalition of 14 national associations serving private schools K-12

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