

cape Council for American Private Education outlook

"Voice of the Nation's Private Schools"

October 1992 Number 184

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

CAPE Goals and Public Policy

Private schools across the nation are well into the start of new academic years. In preparing for the new terms, principals, faculty, boards and students have most certainly reflected upon their missions and goals for the year. With education legislation and reform activities taking on a new and heightened focus in the coming year and political season, CAPE too has reviewed its goals, mission, and focus.

At their spring meeting, the CAPE board of directors refined the organization's mission statement. The coalition's aim is to speak "as one voice on behalf of its members as it: advocates the role of private schools in education, develops positions on national public policy, monitors and analyzes legislative issues, provides information to policy makers and the public, and promotes the rights of parents to educate their children in the schools of their choice."

With the upcoming reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, continual activity in environmental/safety issues and the heightened discussions on educational choice, CAPE is poised to provide strong leadership.

ESEA Revisited

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 was the landmark legislation that secured the federal government in a supporting role for the nation's schools. Private schools were

included in the cornerstone program of that act -- Chapter 1. That service to children of low-income and disadvantaged families, as well as all ESEA programs, will be reviewed by Congress beginning this year. As the authorization for its funding expires in 1993, a complete analysis of the law's value and impact will be studied.

"It's imperative that CAPE be represented in our continuous drive to protect existing programs and seek new opportunities to serve our children."

Joyce G. McCray, CAPE
Executive Director

CAPE has already begun the process of studying how private school children can continue to benefit from programs like Chapter 1, which have been drastically altered since its inception by federal court rulings. At its monthly meeting of area CAPE representatives last month, the range of private school participation in ESEA programs was reviewed. Joyce G. McCray, CAPE executive director said, "We have already been invited to provide input to Members of Congress regarding this important law. It's imperative that CAPE be represented in our continuous drive to protect existing programs and seek new opportunities to serve our children."

House education committee chairman William Ford (D-Michigan) wrote CAPE and other education organizations in recent weeks to invite their early comments as the committee will soon begin work to re-write and update the massive legislation.

The opportunities and need for CAPE's role to advocate and develop positions on other issues affecting private schools are just as crucial. McCray added that, "We have seen a growing concern and awareness for environmental issues, which are directed at schools." Legislation for funding of asbestos and radon testing and remediation are annual rituals on Capitol Hill. Further, drinking water safety and lead exposure standards programs are also areas that fall into the jurisdiction of Congress.

While the appropriations committees of each House review the programs for funding levels, the authorizing committees overseeing the Environmental Protection Agency are charged with setting standards for schools with respect to environmental standards. "The complexities of these laws require a great deal of monitoring of several Congressional committees. Fortunately, CAPE is aided by the experience of other private school representatives, like the U.S. Catholic Conference." McCray noted that frequently, CAPE members association officials will "cover" certain Congress-



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sional hearings or meetings, while CAPE attends to others.

Pledges & Politics

While the ongoing responsibilities for education, tax, and environmental legislation keep the CAPE "voice" speaking, the front burner political issue of education reform has heated discussion for private schools.

Some education and political pundits have observed that 1992's Presidential election will pit the "self-described education President against the much-ballyhooed education Governor," as stated by one political journal. Regardless of the campaign's rhetoric or tenor, education will be a more closely followed political issue than perhaps in any Presidential election.

With then-Vice President George Bush's campaign pledge in 1988 to be the "Education President", a political standard was set against which educators and voters would measure the Administration. In over three and a half years in the Oval Office, Bush has clearly raised the issue of education to a higher level on the national agenda than his predecessor and challenged the Congress to debate it more thoroughly.

In the 1989 Education Summit with the nation's Governors, President Bush set the stage for discussion and adoption of six national education goals. Even the Democratically controlled Congress, which was left out of the Charlottesville summit that fall, has concurred with the goals and helped promote them in legislation they have since passed.

However, one of the most active participants at that summit was the education reform Governor of Arkansas, Bill Clinton. It was there that Clinton served as co-chairman of the National Governors Association task force that drafted the goals.

With both candidates committed to the national education goals, setting high standards and measurements against those standards, the focus on differences has become more important in the election campaign. Not surprisingly, the biggest distinction to catch attention between the Democratic and Republican nominees for President is the issue of school choice that includes private schools.

Hard-line opposition to the recently announced "GI Bill for Children" echoed

through the Democratic Party platform at this summer's convention. The document stated the party's opposition to "the Bush Administration's effort to bankrupt the public school system -- the bedrock of democracy -- through private school vouchers."

One official with the National Catholic Educational Association linked the platform verbiage with the two most prominent and financially forceful teacher unions. "The political influence of the NEA and AFT is a powerful, entrenched force in opposition to the radical change vital to our country's educational future," said Michael Guerra of NCEA. He added that the platform "talks about change while it protects the status quo by holding the children of the poor hostage."

On the other hand, the GOP platform boasted of the President's "unprecedented leadership for the most important education goal of all: helping middle- and low-income families enjoy the same choice of schools - public, private, or religious - that families with more resources already have."

Even with the Administration's work in education, some fault the President for a late start and slow lead on education. John Chubb, respected scholar and school choice proponent told a *National Journal* reporter this Spring that "the President himself doesn't provide much leadership, and you often wonder just how seriously they [in the White House] view education in comparison with other domestic concerns."

Despite the acrimonious conflict between the two parties and among educational advocates over school choice, McCray re-iterated CAPE's advocacy posture for the new school year and changing political environment.

"Our overriding goal is to provide a coherent voice on behalf of private schools to policy makers in Washington. We believe that voices of reason will prevail over the spirited debates occurring in Congress, the media and the campaign trail. The contribution of private education earns our position in that debate."

Election Guide for Classrooms

Just in time for the country's quadrennial quest for leadership, the "ELECTION

'92 Viewers' Guide for Schools" will arrive in America's classrooms. PBS vice president for education services Sandra Welch said, "This initiative is designed to help the nation's schools meet a critical need - to inspire civic participation."

The guide spotlights four programs in the PBS ELECTION '92 line-up of programming. The specials include "Why Bother Voting?", "President's Week" and "The Choice: 1992".

Teachers are urged to use the guide to provoke classroom discussions, challenge students' perceptions, and stimulate analysis of the democratic process. Teachers are encouraged to duplicate the guides for distribution to their students and have been granted off-air recording rights for the four highlighted programs.

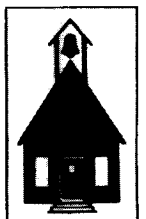
ELECTION '92 is a programming initiative of the Public Broadcasting Service and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting in cooperation with the Public Television Outreach Alliance and is designed to help viewers gain a greater understanding of the issues shaping our nation's future.

Copies of the viewers' guides for schools are being made available to educators by Prentice Hall free of charge by calling (800) 344-7501.

Gallup Poll Shows Choice Support

A poll conducted by the Gallup survey measuring public opinion on the issues of parental choice of schools and the funding of school choice was released September 17. The clear majority of 1,239 adults surveyed -- 70 percent -- indicated support for a government-funded voucher system which would provide a certain amount of money for each child so that parents could send children to public, private or parochial schools of the parents' choice.

Additionally, those surveyed were specifically asked if they would be willing to see some of their tax money now going to public schools used to fund parents' choice of all schools for their children. Three in five adults (61%) did favor the use of tax money for this purpose. An even higher



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proportion, 73 percent, of the segment of the population with school-aged children indicated support for the notion. Further, over two-thirds of Americans earning under \$20,000 indicated support for government supported choice.

The survey was commissioned by the National Catholic Educational Association. NCEA President and CAPE board president Catherine McNamee, CSJ, said that "What the Gallup survey confirms is a clear desire on the part of the American people to exercise their rights as users of education to determine where their children should attend school." The numbers supporting choice show a steady increase of Americans favoring government-funded vouchers to support parental choice, according to another NCEA official.

The Gallup survey's executive summary entitled "The People's Poll on Schools and School Choice: A New Gallup Survey" is available on request from NCEA by writing them at 1077 30th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20007.

Legislative Update:

Education Reform(?) Bill Dead

After several months of contention with the Bush Administration, the Senate failed to stop a filibuster against an education bill, S. 2, designed to reform public elementary and secondary schools. The legislation would have authorized \$800 million for school improvement efforts. It was passed out of a joint House-Senate conference committee on September 25 and approved by the House six days later by voice vote.

There were strong indications and threats that the President would veto the legislation. Falling far short of Bush's "America 2000" legislation announced a year and a half ago, Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander stated earlier that the House version of the bill, H.R. 4323, was "worse than awful" and that he would recommend the President's disapproval.

However, Bush was spared that strategy on October 2 when the Senate failed to limit debate on the legislation in the waning days of the Congressional session. With the elections just a month away, campaign strategists feared a veto on an education bill

could be politically risky, as would an embarrassing override vote by Congress. In need of 60 votes, the proponents' effort to stop a Republican filibuster fell one short in a 59 to 40 ballot.

CAPE added its name to those opposed to the bill. In a letter to Senate leaders September 30, Joyce G. McCray, CAPE executive director expressed CAPE's concern that "S. 2 does not address the basic needs of education reform." She added that "At a time when reform is imperative for American schools, this bill does little to create opportunities or motivation for educators to change." Charging that private education's role is omitted from the bill, McCray stated the bill "represents a backward step from previous legislation."

The defeat of the bill represents the second failure in four years for the Congress and President to agree on a comprehensive reform bill for elementary and secondary schools. A 1990 education bill was similarly unpopular with the Administration and was killed by Senate Republicans.

Senate, CAPE Push for Tax Relief

The Senate passed a \$34 billion urban aid and tax relief bill on September 29 by a 70 to 29 margin. The measure, H.R. 11, includes a provision to give relief to taxpayers who donate gifts of appreciated property to charitable organizations, including private schools.

The provision has been supported by CAPE and several non-profit organizations for several years. Strong support for that measure alone exists in the House, Senate and the White House. However, the package also includes provisions which would raise tax revenues from security firms, commercial real estate owners and quarterly taxpayers. Due to the heated election-year debate surrounding the President's broken "no new taxes" pledge from 1988, the Administration has already indicated he may veto the bill.

A House-Senate conference agreement is expected to pass before the Congress adjourns in early October.

Tax Issue: II

CAPE has also joined forces with non-profit organizations to encourage Congress to allow another tax issue to expire. In a

previous budget agreement, Congress passed a "3% floor" provision in the tax code with restricts certain taxpayer's ability to deduct charitable gifts and taxes paid to state and local governments.

In a letter to Congressional leaders, groups associated with Independent Sector wrote that "restrictions on the deductibility of charitable contributions ... threaten to impair ... private nonprofit organizations to finance critical human service programs."

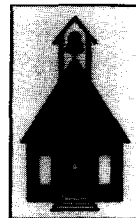
The September 18 letter concluded that "As Congress searches for revenues, it must avoid measures that jeopardize the fiscal stability of ... charitable groups, whose resources have been severely strained by the economic recession and by the need to shoulder growing responsibilities."

CAPE Conference Dates

Remember to mark your calendars for the 3rd Annual CAPE Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. The dates will be March 16 and 17. More information will be announced in *Outlook* soon.

Capenotes:

◆ In an effort to address the six National Education Goals, the **National Diffusion Network (NDN)** is promoting a list of their programs which address each of the goals. The nationwide system of proven exemplary programs can help students at all levels. With its correlation with the national goals, NDN hopes to show the effectiveness of its programs in addressing the most pressing needs in American schools today and into the 21st century. CAPE promotes NDN programs to private schools on behalf of the Department of Education through its Private School Facilitator Project. You may request information by contacting its project director, Dr. Charles Nunley at the CAPE Office, (202) 659-0177.



◆ The **Florida Council of Independent Schools (FCIS)** has established a relief fund to collect financial contributions for schools damaged in Hurricane Andrew. The aim is "to help families who would otherwise have to withdraw their children from school and to help schools to replace materials" not covered by insurance due to hurricane and

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water damage, according to C. Skardon Bliss, FCIS executive secretary.

For more information or to send contributions, you may write: FCIS Hurricane Relief Fund, Suite 612, 1211 N. Westshore Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33607.

CAPE has been accepted as an officially approved charitable organization eligible for gifts through the **Combined Federal Campaign (CFC)** of the National Capital Area. The CFC allows federal employees to designate an approved charitable, educational or voluntary organization to receive contributions from payroll deduction through the federal government.

Since 1987, the federal government has allowed its employees to indicate a charitable group by code number for a specified donation amount. CAPE received its designation as an eligible organization in Spring of this year. The designation code for CAPE is **7025**.

By notifying persons working for the federal government in the Washington area about CAPE and CFC, you will make a contribution to the voice of the nation's private schools. CAPE hopes to be added to the campaign in other areas of the nation next year.

► **The National Center for Education Statistics** disclosed figures concerning teachers views on parental involvement in schools. In 1990-91, one out of every four public school teachers said that lack of parental involvement was a serious problem in their school, while less than 5% of their private school counterparts agreed.

The figures show that 20.6% of elementary and 30.6% of secondary public school teachers cited lack of involvement as "a serious problem", compared to 2.9% and 5.5% in private schools, respectively.

Among both private and public school teachers, this problem topped the list in the percentage who rated it as a serious problem in their schools. The study also looked at school principals views on student alcohol and drug abuse from 1988 to 1991. Private school principals listed both problems as slightly less of a serious problem with alcohol use going from 0.8% to 0.7% and drug abuse going from 0.6% to 0.3%. While public school principals agreed that drug abuse was less a serious problem by 1.8% to 1.3%, they indicated alcohol use was more serious, going from 3.6% in 1988 to 4.3% in 1991.

► **The National Geographic Society** and **PBS** are offering free taping rights to educators at nonprofit educational institutions to their television specials in the new sea-

son. The upcoming schedule includes "Mysteries Underground" on cave exploration, "Lost Kingdoms of the Maya", "Keepers of the Wild" on animal keepers, and "Survivors of the Skeleton Coast" on wildlife in Namibia. The respective dates of broadcast are November 18, January 20, February 17 and April 14.

Local PBS stations have free resources guides with suggested activities for teachers. Check local listings for program times.

► A new package of videos and publications that focus on educating children exposed to drugs and alcohol has been introduced by the **Elementary School Center**. The Center is a national advocacy, policy and resource association in New York.

The materials, "Educating Children from the World of Drugs and Alcohol" is based on the findings and experiences of professionals regarding the biological, developmental, social, emotional and academic risks of prenatal drug exposure and drug-abusing environments. The material is made up of two 16-minute videotapes and two publications.

Further information can be obtained by calling (212) 289-5929 or by writing the Center located in the New York Academy of Medicine Building, 2 East 103rd Street, New York, New York 10029.

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a coalition of 14 national associations serving private schools K-12
 Editor: Greg D. Kubiak Executive Director: Joyce McCray
 [ISSN 0271-1451]

Outlook is published monthly (September to June) by the Council for American Private Education. Annual Subscription is \$10.

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 Washington, DC 20036

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