

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, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin

CAPE Forum Focuses on Choice

In cooperation with the Smithsonian Institution's Campus on the Mall program, CAPE sponsored a forum on "School Choice: What are the Choices?" The evening session was held October 28 with a panel of education leaders. Despite its ebb from the Washington agenda, the forum concluded the controversial topic is anything but dead.

The panel consisted of five educators: Peter Relic, president, National Association of Independent Schools; Sister Catherine McNamee, president, National Catholic Educational Association; Joe Nathan, director, Center for School Change, Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota; Linda Davis, deputy superintendent, San Francisco United School District; and Joan Davis Ratteray, president, Institute for Independent Education Inc. Joyce G. McCray, CAPE executive director, served as moderator.

The first task to the panel was given by McCray, who asked them each to give their definition of educational choice. Relic provided the straightforward answer that it means the opportunity and right for "parents to select the school that meets the needs of their child." McNamee, a CAPE board member like Relic, responded that choice is "the right and the means for parents to choose the best school for their child." Ratteray echoed those sentiments

by describing school choice as the "empowerment of parents to choose the learning environment early enough to affect their child's development."

Both Davis and Nathan however, gave warnings with their definitions. Nathan cautioned that school choice "can be like electricity", providing either beneficial or disastrous effects for society depending on the scope of the program and what happens to school standards and selectivity along the way. Davis espoused her view that choice "grew out of segregation efforts" and would end up "destroying the system of public education." She particularly admonished the California voucher plan referendum which was within a week of being voted on.

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Peter Relic, President
National Association of
Independent Schools

McCray then asked each panelist one question to discuss and answer in ten minutes. Relic started off by discussing both the benefits and pitfalls of various choice plans. He made four points about the concept that are crucial to judge choice.

He first argued that choice is "an issue of justice", pointing out that those most vocally against choice are those who have it. Relic pointed out that socio-economically wealthy families can determine where they live and which schools their children will attend more easily than those remaining in poor school districts. He also advocated that choice can make schools change. "Nothing in society forces bad school to change -- this (choice) is the one great hope to create an approach to make schools change," Relic said. "Most parents won't change from a school that does serve their needs."

Relic also argued that government should not "create choice systems that will harm public schools," such as the California voucher plan which he said would collapse an already shaky funding system for public education in that state. His fourth and final point addressed the issue of the "level playing field", selective admissions, which choice critics decry as inherently discriminatory. Relic pointed out that current public "magnet schools" are equally discriminatory. He said that many schools screen and pre-test in order to provide the best possible learning opportunities for their students.

Nathan seemingly agreed with Relic on the issue of magnet schools by calling them "quasi-elite" schools. He



continued from front



Smithsonian Forum Panel: (left to right) Joyce McCray, moderator; Catherine McNamee, Joan Ratteray, Peter Relic, Linda Davis, and Joe Nathan.

however, feels that the answer to school change can come more from "empowerment of teachers" who should be given "the ability to create schools" that will foster better learning environments with a particular focus. The notion, known as "charter schools", is a trend and reform effort that has received enormous attention, particularly from Minnesota.

More broadly, Nathan discussed "the lessons of choice plans in Minnesota", in which he disclosed a number of statistics and rebuttals to critics of choice with respect to the public receptivity to the idea, participation in the plans, and improved performance of students affected. He gave specific criticism to a Carnegie Foundation study on choice. He pointed out that the report, which was curiously released days before last year's November elections, had several misstatements about choice plans generally, including three fallacies in just one sentence about the Minnesota system.

Ratteray, who represents a coalition of 420 neighborhood schools serving 52,000 children of color, claimed that her constituency chooses schools predominately due to the learning environment and the academic reputation of the school. She maintains that "every child can succeed, but won't if we don't allow environments for success" to serve them. Ratteray supported education choice by saying, "children won't wait for us to change the system", but giving more choice

to parents can help make the system change.

Linda Davis admitted the discontent with her urban school district by reporting that 86% of minority parents in San Francisco are dissatisfied with their school. Further, she said that one-third of them apply for magnet schools under their open enrollment system. She stated her belief that any problems in the public system should be addressed within the public system. "We must invest in improving our public schools," she concluded.

McNamee reframed the issue in closing the presentations of the panelists by asking, "Why should we have choice in education?" Her response was that education of their children remains a fundamental right of parents. She pointed out that this was affirmed with the 1925 Supreme Court *Pierce* decision, which upheld the existence of private schools and found that "children are not mere creatures of the state."

McNamee also related her experience from a recent visit to Russia and Lithuania where they are engaged in re-building many institutions of society, including education. She asserted that just as our global neighbors, we should seize the opportunity to "re-build" schools based on values of academic success and personal development.

The program was a part of the "Smithsonian Forum on Education School Reform: Issues, Ideas, and Innovations," a series of eight sessions from October through December under the Resident Associate Pro-

gram. For more information on the Smithsonian Forum on Education School Reform, contact the Smithsonian's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education at (202) 357-3030.

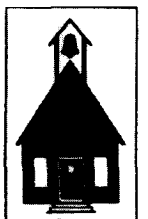
Gardner Leadership Award

The John W. Gardner Leadership Award was established by INDEPENDENT SECTOR in 1985 to honor outstanding Americans, who, in their own way, exemplify the leadership and ideals of John W. Gardner. The award consists of \$10,000, and a replica of an original relief bust of John Gardner.

Gardner, currently a distinguished professor of public service at Stanford University, is the ultimate builder of ideas, people and causes. He has been President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Carnegie Corporation of New York; Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare; Chairperson of the National Urban Coalition; and the Founding Chairperson of Common Cause. He received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civil honor, in 1964. From 1978 to 1979, he chaired the Organizing committee that established INDEPENDENT SECTOR and later served as its first chairperson.

This leadership award recognizes living Americans, individuals working in or with the voluntary sector, who build, mobilize, and unify people, institutions or causes. As a result of their efforts society is better able to address its problems and reach towards its highest aspirations. Award winners are builders -- people who, quite apart from noteworthy personal feats, have raised the capacity of others to improve society. Their leadership has had national or international impact; if their work has been at the regional or local level, it has attracted wider recognition and imitation.

Recipients may be of any age. Gardner Award winners may be the creators of needed institutions. They may concentrate on education and/or advocacy to change public opinion. Whatever the means, the result is that their work has transformed their chosen field and thereby contributed to the greater good.



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For nomination information, call IS at (202) 223-8100.

Legislative Update

Back January 25

After an exhausting schedule in the weeks leading to the Thanksgiving holiday, the Congress officially adjourned the first session of the 103rd Congress on November 26 after finishing its business. They will next convene on January 25, 1994.

Charitable Tax Laws to Take Effect

Major changes in the tax code affecting charitable organizations and private schools will take effect beginning January 1, 1994.

These provisions were enacted when the President signed the omnibus reconciliation budget bill in August. The two primary areas of concern are new "substantiation requirements" and "information disclosure for 'quid pro quo' contributions."

Beginning in the new tax year, no deduction will be granted to a charitable contributor for a gift of \$250 or more unless the donor has contemporaneous written substantiation from the organization. According to the Internal Revenue Service, "in cases where the donee organization has provided goods or services to the donor in exchange for making the contribution, this contemporaneous written acknowledgement must include a good faith estimate of the value of such goods or services."

Therefore, it is incumbent on private schools which accept gifts of \$250 or more to provide a written acknowledgement (e.g. a letter of appreciation) to the taxpayer/donor in order for the donor to receive the tax deduction.

Also to take effect are requirements for "quid pro quo" contributions, (a payment made to a school or charity that is partly "for goods or services furnished" and partly as a contribution), which exceed \$75 in value. A written disclosure is required by the charitable organization to "inform the donor the amount of the contribution that is deductible" which is "limited to the excess of the amount ... contributed by the donor over the value of the goods or services provided," according to the I.R.S.

For additional information on these tax implications, feel free to contact CAPE for a copy of the IRS report on this provision.

Goals 2000

Despite the House having passed the Clinton Administration's education reform package, **H.R. 1804**, in mid-October, the Senate did not bring up their version of the measure before their recess for the year. The "Goals 2000: Educate America Act" will likely be considered early next year.

The measure would authorize \$427 million for school improvement, primarily in block grants to states and administered by state education reform and improvement panels. The Senate version, **S. 1150**, was originally voted out of committee in July. However, a committee substitute authored by Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-Massachusetts), chairman of the Labor and Human Resources Committee, is currently being circulated.

One specific change CAPE has advocated to the Senate is the addition of private school representation on the state panels as well as on the National Education Standards and Improvement Council. CAPE continues to press this issue to the Senate.

ESEA in '94

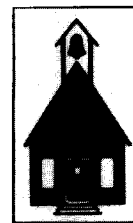
With the clock ticking on the Congress' 1993 session, House Education and Labor Committee leaders decided to put off consideration of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, **H.R. 3130**, until next year.

While Rep. William Ford (D-Michigan), chairman of the committee, indicated earlier in November that action out of the committee could be accomplished, with no time for full House consideration, the decision was made to wait until 1994.

The committee is expected to act on the bill early next year with Senate action to follow." The press of Congressional business dampened the committee's enthusiasm for action right away. Further, reports indicate that they're are still Members who are unsettled about the Chapter 1 funding distribution formula as proposed in the legislation.

The Senate should begin hearings and committee consideration of their version, **S. 1513**, sometime next year.

CapeNotes:



► The **National Teachers Hall of Fame** announced their Third Annual Teacher Induction Program to honor teachers and the teaching profession. Five teachers will again be selected for induction in a ceremony in Emporia, Kansas.

Candidates eligible for induction into the National Teachers Hall of Fame must have (or have had) classroom teaching as their responsibility in grades pre-kindergarten through high school. Candidates may be active or retired, and must be (or have been) certified public or non-public school teachers. The process is highly selective, with final decisions being made by a blue-ribbon committee of educators and officials chosen by the Board of Directors of the National Teachers Hall of Fame.

All nominations and applications must be submitted on an official application form. The closing date for receiving completed forms and all other supporting materials is March 1, 1994. Forms may be obtained by calling (800) 96TEACH or (316) 341-5660 or by writing to: The National Teachers Hall of Fame; 1320 C of E Drive; Emporia, Kansas 66801.

► The **National Diffusion Network** has a number of teaching training programs now available through satellite communication. It is a wonderful way to receive training in exemplary programs without having to pay trainer expenses. Further, broadcast videos are available for purchase for those without downlink capabilities.

The NDN is a body of over 400 educational programs validated by the Department of Education, following rigorous evaluation, as educationally effective, cost-efficient and replicable. CAPE administers the outreach of the program for private schools through its Private School Facilitator Project.

For more information on this link to NDN programs and the Private School Facilitator Project, contact Dr. Charles Nunley, project director, at the CAPE office, (202) 659-0177.

► WP Press of Tucson, Arizona recently announced the publication of **EarthWise**

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Environmental Learning Series for grades 5 to 8. The objective of the classroom materials is to help develop a better understanding of the global environment in young people's minds.

Four issues are published during the school year, each built around a main theme that is explored in depth from an ecological viewpoint. Designed primarily for middle school students, it provides them with objective information in an inter-disciplinary format - allowing them to reach their own conclusions with a factual perspective of current environmental problems. The activities and experiments are simple to do, and do not require extensive equipment or resources. Volume 1 consists of five books with topics: Earth's Trees, Sunlight, Energy, Earth's Oceans and Food.

For more information about EarthWise, contact WP Press at P. O. Box 65768, Tucson, Arizona 85728-5768 or call at (602) 544-0455.

▶ In a guest editorial for *Momentum* magazine, a publication of the National Catholic Educational Association, Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley writes:

This is a most challenging time for those of us involved in education. As educators, parents and policy makers, we must cope

daily with the effects of the changing family structure, community violence, drug and alcohol abuse, increasing poverty among young families, and society's growing neglect of children.

Let there be no doubt that we all care about our children -- whether we teach in public, private or parochial schools or whether we work at the community, state or federal level.

I believe that private and parochial schools are an integral part of the fabric of our country. They represent an aspect of the diversity that makes America great.

For this reason, private school educators are and can continue to be meaningful partners in our efforts to lead the country in achieving what President Clinton calls "a new ethic of learning."

▶ **The Council for Religion in Independent Schools** will co-host a "Community Service Coordinators Conference" on April 17-18, 1994 in Washington D.C. The sessions will provide informative speakers, practical workshops and valuable networking among schools establishing or revitalizing service efforts and programs.

The conference format will start with Sunday afternoon registration and visits to D.C. area community service sites followed

that evening by a dinner and keynote address by Catherine Milton, executive director of the Commission on National and Community Service. The following day's activities will include a number of workshops, information sharing opportunities and a luncheon.

Registration information can be obtained by writing: The National Community Service Network, c/o CRIS, P.O. Box 40613, Washington, D.C. 20016. Registration is \$125, or \$100 if completed before January 15. Other sponsors of the 2-day conference are the DC Area Service Coordinators Consortium and the Abell Foundation.

▶ **Michael J. Guerra**, executive director of the Secondary School Department of the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA), was recently named to the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB).

Representing private schools on the board, Guerra replaces Dr. Carl Moser, director of schools for the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. NAGB administers and oversees the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), known as "the nation's report card."

Guerra's background includes serving as a math teacher, a department chair and headmaster of Loyola School in New York City, before coming to NCEA.

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

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