

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 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 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 30 States

America Goes Back to School

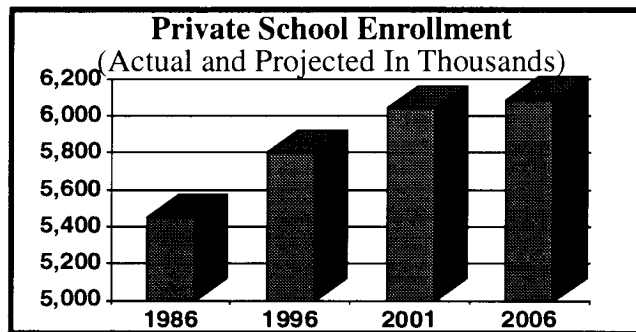
Public and Private Enrollment Going Up

When America's students go back to school this month, they will break a record previously held by their baby boomer parents. K-12 enrollment will reach 51.7 million, surpassing the 51.3 million mark set in 1971. Private schools will enroll a whopping 5.8 million students, 11.2 percent of the nation's total.

And more growth is on the way. According to a back-to-school report released last month by the U.S.

Department of Education on the demographic trend called "the baby boom echo," the country is just halfway through

a 20-year wave of rising enrollments. By the year 2006, total enrollment will reach 54.6 million, and private school enrollment will hit 6.1 million, an increase of 5 percent over 1996 (see chart).



Source: Education Department, "The Baby Boom Echo," August 1996

The Department's National Center for Education Statistics says that among

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Write for E-Rate

Action Needed Now

The passage of the *Telecommunications Act of 1996* may prove to be this decade's single most important federal initiative for propelling schools into the Information Age. But so far, most school officials do not know all that much about the Act; nor do they know that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) will soon be making a momentous decision about how the Act will be interpreted and implemented.

The Act provides for advanced telecommunications services to public and private schools and libraries at preferential rates. The responsibility for designing the discount rate structure and determining the precise services to which it will apply is that of the FCC. A Federal-State Joint Board will make recommendations on such topics to the FCC by November 8, 1996, and the FCC's final rules will be issued by May 1997. *Those rules will carry enormous consequences for all schools, public and private.*

EdLiNC Coalition

CAPE is a member of a coalition of national school and library associations, called EdLiNC, which is attempting to see that the FCC interprets the *Telecommunications Act* in a way that ensures the fullest



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WE MOVED!



In order to serve the private school community more efficiently and economically, CAPE has moved outside the Beltway to a significantly less expensive site, though one still within easy reach of Washington. We look forward to serving you from our new location:

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the factors contributing to the enrollment upswing are delayed childbearing among baby boomers, high birth rates among minority populations, and an increase in immigration.

(A Back to School Special Report: The Baby Boom Echo may be obtained free of charge from the U.S. Education Department, Office of Public Affairs, 600 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20202, (202) 401-1579, or at the Web site <http://www.ed.gov/NCES/pubs.>)

AGBTS: Get Involved!

With more students in school than ever before, the need is greater than ever before for more family and community involvement in education. CAPE is proud to be among eleven national education sponsors of a campaign chaired by U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley to encourage parents, grandparents, religious leaders, community leaders, employers, and employees to work together in support of better schools and high quality education.

Called *America Goes Back to School: Get Involved!*, the campaign, sponsored by the Education Department's Partnership for Family



**PARTNERSHIP
for Family
Involvement
in Education**

Involvement in Education, is intended to let students in public and private schools know the entire community values their education and wants to make that education as good as it can be. As the Secretary put it, "Better education is everybody's business."

Religious Involvement

A component of the campaign especially relevant to private schools is the encouragement of religious community involvement in education. A statement of common purpose that religious leaders are being asked to sign includes an affirmation that parents are "the primary teachers of children" and play a "vital and enduring role" in their education, a concept private schools have long held sacred

The statement goes on to say that religious communities must work with public and private schools to encourage the participation of families "in the total education of their children, including character education." It then calls on government "to promote public policies that encourage greater family involvement in the education of all children."

For More Information

An America Goes Back to School Partners Activity Kit with great ideas for involving families and the community in education has been sent by the Department to every private and public school principal in the country. Additional copies of the kit may be ordered by calling the U.S. Department of Education at

1-800-USA-LEARN

For those with Internet access, an AGBTS Website, which includes activities and resources, has been established at <http://www.ed.gov/family/agbts>

Court Watch

• **Ohio Scholarship Program:** In early August, an Ohio state judge cleared the way for the first publicly-funded scholarship program to cover attendance at K-8 religious schools. In reacting to the decision upholding the constitutionality of the Cleveland program, Joe McTighe, CAPE's executive director, called the historic ruling, "a ray of hope for children trapped in chronically failing schools across the country."

• **Special Education:** The U.S. Second Circuit Court of Appeals ruled (*Russman v. Sobol*) on June 12 that a New York school district must pay for on-site special education services, including a full-time aide and a part-time instructor, for a student attending a Catholic school. The ruling has immediate implications for private schools in New York, Connecticut, and Vermont, the area covered by the Second Circuit.

• **VMI Decision:** In a landmark decision (*United States v. Virginia*), the U.S. Supreme Court ruled this summer that Virginia Military Institute (VMI), a state-sponsored, all-male military college, must open its enrollment to women. Since many private schools are single-sex schools, and since this historic ruling may ultimately prove to carry consequences for such schools, CAPE has prepared an analysis of the Court's decision and its implications. A copy may be obtained by sending CAPE a request and \$2 to cover postage and handling.

• **Kiryas Joel, II:** The NY State Appellate Division ruled on August 26 that a state law resulting in the establishment of a school district to serve special education Hasidic children residing in the village of Kiryas Joel was unconstitutional. The district was created in compliance with legislation designed to address constitutional concerns raised by the U.S. Supreme Court in a 1994 ruling disallowing a similar district.



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possible benefits to schools. The coalition's immediate primary objective is to ensure that the Joint Board recommends to the FCC the establishment of an **E-rate** — an affordable, discounted rate on telecommunications services for the education community.

Predictably, telecommunications carriers oppose the idea of a liberal discount structure for schools and libraries, and are lobbying the Joint Board accordingly. Fortunately, with the help of EdLiNC, the education community is fighting hard for truly affordable rates and discounts that vary with a school's ability to pay.

The numbers tell why such rates are sorely needed. According to two recent surveys by the U.S Department of Education on telecommunications in schools, only nine percent of all public school instructional rooms, and four percent of private school instructional rooms, have access to the Internet. Moreover, approximately three-fourths of schools in either sector indicate that funding is a moderate or major barrier to acquiring or using advanced telecommunications.

U.S. Classrooms With Internet Access	
Public School	9%
Private School	4%

For telecommunications services to become available to students, they need to be made affordable. Providing schools with significant price breaks is the way to do that.

What you can do

Join the campaign for the **E-rate**. Educators across the country should let members of the Joint Board and FCC Chairman Richard Hundt know the importance of helping schools access the full array of advanced telecommunications services by providing affordable rates and deep discounts for schools least able to pay.

All educators should contact Mr. Hundt, and any person living in one of the nine states of the Joint Board members should contact the member from that state.

There is much at stake in all this. Linda Roberts, Director of USDE's Office of Educational Technology, told a gathering of national association directors last month that the estimates of what all this means by way of savings for schools are staggering. And remember, private schools will share fully in these benefits and will receive them the same way as public schools: not in the form of government funds or grants, but in the form of direct discounts from service providers.

So, write today to support the **E-rate** and to make sure no student misses out on the breathtaking opportunities technology has to offer.

E-RATE CONTACTS

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• **Sol Stern** documents the spectacular success of inner-city parochial schools in the Summer edition of *City Journal*. His thorough and compelling article was cited in a September 2 *Newsweek* essay by **Joe Klein** about St. Elizabeth School in Chicago's innercity, where education is considered a "spiritual ministry" and where the infinite potential of each child is affirmed.

• *The New York Times* reported August 4 on the increasing number of Black families choosing private schools. The *Times* article indicated that more than 300 private schools have been started by Black churches and organizations in the last 10 years. "Black private school enrollment is now growing at a faster rate than that of the overall private school enrollment and that of white private school enrollment."

• Researcher **Janet Beales** released a study on August 27 on how private schools provide an array of options for students with special needs. "Far from being enclaves of privilege, private schools extend educational opportunity

to some of America's most disadvantaged students," says Beales. Copies of the study entitled *Meeting the Challenge: How the Private Sector Serves Difficult to Educate Students* are available for \$15 plus \$1.50 s/h from the Reason Foundation at 310-391-2245.

• **Paul Peterson** of Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government delivered a paper August 30 at a meeting of the American Political Science Association entitled *The Effectiveness of School Choice in Milwaukee*. Developed with colleagues from Harvard and the University of Houston, the paper reveals that students who were randomly selected to participate in Milwaukee's inner-city voucher program did significantly better on math and reading tests than students who had applied for the program but were not selected because of the limited number of available vouchers. The authors conclude, "If similar success could be achieved for all minority students nationwide, it could close the gap separating white and minority test scores by somewhere between one-third and one-half." For information regarding the study contact The Center for Education

Reform at 202-822-9000.

• **CAPE** is one of six national co-sponsors of *Tools for Schools*, an easy-to-use kit from the Environmental Protection Agency which helps schools carry out a practical plan of action to prevent and resolve indoor air problems at little or no cost using common-sense activities and in-house staff. The kit (item # 055-000-00503-6) is available for \$22 from the Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250-7954. With a credit card, orders may be placed by phone at 202-512-1800.

• The Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD), which sponsors the presidential and vice presidential debates, has initiated an education project called *Debate Watch '96*, which aims to get citizens talking about the candidates and issues, not just listening. The project - ideal for the classroom - is simple: students watch the debates and then talk about them. A complete packet, with everything educators need to know to organize or participate in *Debate Watch*, can be obtained by calling 800-349-8109. Additional information is available on the Web at Debates96.org.

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