

cape Council for American Private Education outlook

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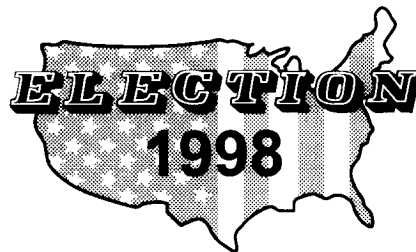
Poll Shows Education Is Top Issue for Voters **Election Brings Mixed Results for School Choice**

In an election full of surprises and upsets, perhaps the least surprising element was the prominent role that education played in influencing the outcome. According to a national exit poll jointly sponsored by The Associated Press, ABC, CBS, CNN, NBC and Fox, one-fifth of all voters identified education as the issue that mattered most to them when they went to the polls on November 3. The second-place issue was morality and ethics, with 18 percent of voters saying it was uppermost.

Ballot Measure Fails; Govs Win

Supporters of school choice saw mixed results on Election Day. In Colorado, a closely-watched ballot measure that would have provided tax credits to help parents educate their children was soundly defeated by a 60-40 margin. At the same time a number of gubernatorial candidates who featured school choice as a prominent part of their education platform emerged victorious. Jeb Bush, a proponent of vouchers for students in

low-performing schools, won the governor's race in Florida, and incumbent Tommy Thompson, an ardent advocate of vouchers, scored a decisive victory in Wisconsin. Proponents of



parental choice in education also claimed the governorships of Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, New Mexico, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.

Senate Status Quo

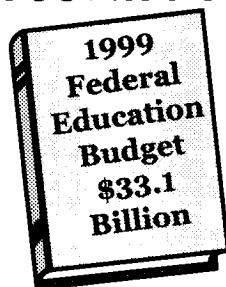
In the U.S. Senate, the issue of school choice, in its different manifestations as education savings accounts and scholarships for low-income students, seemed likely to maintain in the 106th Congress the same strong support it re-

ceived in the 105th. For each supporter of choice who will be leaving the Senate (Republicans Dirk Kempthorne of Idaho, Dan Coats of Indiana, Al D'Amato of New York, and Lauch Faircloth of North Carolina), an opponent of choice will be leaving as well (Democrats Dale Bumpers of Arkansas, Carol Moseley-Braun of Illinois, Wendell Ford of Kentucky, and John Glenn of Ohio). The four Republicans and four Democrats will be replaced by, yes, four Republicans and four Democrats: Evan Bayh (D-IN), Jim Bunning (R-KY), Michael Crapo (R-ID), John Edwards (D-NC), Peter Fitzgerald (R-IL), Blanche Lambert Lincoln (D-AR), Charles Schumer (D-NY), and George Voinovich (R-OH).

In the House, where Democrats picked up five seats, the issue of parent choice, which had enjoyed a slim majority, is likely to see some erosion of support. Such erosion could prove decisive. Last spring the House passed the D.C. voucher bill by a razor-thin margin on a largely party-line vote of 214-206.

Big Boost in Federal Education Spending

Politicians and pundits wasted no time describing the mammoth half-trillion-dollar omnibus spending bill that Congress and the Administration put together last month. From "cave-in" to "hard-won," from "vic-

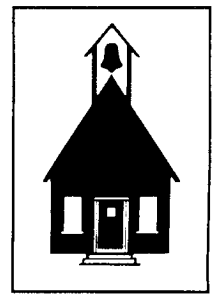


tory" to "debacle," the opposing views on the bill were passionate and polar.

The one position on which all sides seemed to agree was that the negotiated package included a dramatic spike in spending for educa-

tion. After all the numbers were tallied, federal education dollars for discretionary programs totaled

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\$33.1 billion, a whopping \$3.6 billion, or 12 percent, increase over last year's level.

Dollars for Teachers

The program the press paid most attention to was the \$1.2 billion initiative to recruit, hire, train, and test teachers. While the overwhelming share of those funds will be used for public school teachers, a small portion might be available to help with the professional development of teachers in private schools. Public school districts that receive the new teacher funds are permitted to set aside up to 15 percent to provide professional development for teachers. To the extent districts use the funds for that purpose, they must provide equitable services to address the professional development needs of teachers in private schools located within the district.

New Reading Program

Another program contained within the federal spending package provides reading and literacy grants on a competitive basis to states, which in turn provide them on a competitive basis to public school districts. Funds are to be used for:

- programs of reading instruction in the early grades of elementary school,
- programs that help teachers teach reading,

- family literacy services,
- tutoring during non-school hours.

Public school districts that receive grants under the new reading program must provide for the equitable participation of private school students and teachers. The program is governed by a section of education law which requires public school districts to consult in a timely and meaningful way with private school officials regarding (1) the needs of private school students and teachers, and (2) the design and delivery of services to meet those needs.

Any private school official interested in participating in the new reading program or the new teacher program should talk to colleagues in local public school districts about the district's plans to participate in the program and about the provisions in the law for private school participation. In programs like these, it's best to get in on the ground floor.

The omnibus spending bill also contains other provisions of interest to the private school community, including an extension of the current moratorium on piloting, field testing, or administering the proposed national tests in reading and math. The chart below identifies the funding provided in the new law for the principal programs in which private school students are eligible to participate.

Federal Education Aid

	FY 1998	FY 1999
Title 1	\$8.0 billion	\$8.4 billion
Capital Expenses	\$41 million	\$24 million
Technology for Education	\$541 million	\$637 million
Special Education	\$4.8 billion	\$5.1 billion
Title VI	\$350 million	\$375 million
Safe and Drug Free Schools	\$531 million	\$441 million
Bilingual & Immigrant Ed	\$354 million	\$380 million
Charter Schools	\$80 million	\$100 million
Goals 2000	\$491 million	\$491 million
Literacy Initiative	\$0	\$260 million
Professional Development	\$335 million	\$335 million
GEAR UP	\$0 million	\$120 million
Teacher Quality Grants	\$0	\$75 million

Teacher Shortage

Signing bonuses, salary hikes, recruitment fairs, tax breaks. At a time when teachers are in short supply, these extraordinary steps are now being seriously considered by school districts in an attempt to outbid the competition and attract the best applicants. Make no mistake, the teacher shortage is here and is only going to get worse.

In a meeting last month with CAPE's board of directors, U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley reviewed the Department's current policy priorities. At the top of the list was the need to recruit more than 2 million teachers in the next decade to meet the squeeze of the simultaneous surge in students and in teacher retirees.

A number of resources are available to help schools and school systems think about new ways to recruit talented, bright, and committed teachers. One resource, available from the National Center for Education Information (NCEI), is a profile of the *Troops to Teachers* program, which was developed to help former military personnel enter the teaching profession. According to the NCEI, "The program has been a huge success in bringing dedicated, mature and experienced individuals into classrooms who have proven not only to be effective teachers but also excellent role models for students." The report is available on the Web at: <http://www.ncei.com/>

Another resource, available from the U.S. Department of Education, is entitled *Promising Practices: New Ways to Improve Teacher Quality*. The report includes profiles of:

- teacher recruitment initiatives,
- teacher education programs,
- induction programs for teachers,
- in-service programs,
- accountability programs.

While obviously geared toward public education, the report includes a number of ideas that could be adapted to private schools. The full text of the 66-page report is on the Web at: <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/PromPractice/index.html>

Education Secretary Riley Visits Private School

“My job is to represent all of you.”

Sometimes the job title “secretary” is difficult to explain. U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley told students at St. Mary’s School in Maryland last month that he once inscribed “secretary” in the occupation spot on a hotel registration form. At once, the clerk behind the desk responded, “Oh, you have the same job as I do, glad to meet you!” Riley explained to the students that he was not that kind of secretary. “I am a member of the president’s cabinet,” he said, “and my job is to represent all of you when our national leaders get together to talk about education.”

Talking about education is something that Secretary Riley really likes to do. His visit to the Catholic elementary school featured a presentation on the topic to the full assembly of students. He asked the children how many intended to go to college. A sea of hands shot up. For an education secretary, the response, quite naturally, was heartening. It was also a springboard. He seized the chance to mention the new national college mentoring program for middle school and high school students (GEAR UP) and the federal financial aid available to those who go to college.

But the secretary had more than college on his mind during the visit. He told the children that studying hard was only one part of life. “To be well-rounded and to be a good citizen, you have to help others,” he said. “This is something that parochial schools do very well—they teach you to care for others, to be just, and not to get too caught up in things that are not important in life.”

Mixing equal parts pastor and public official, the secretary urged the students to always go out of their way to help others. “Be compassionate and make a difference,” he told them. “If you do that and aim high... you’ll find that life is truly wonderful.”

The following week, at a meeting with CAPE’s board of directors, the Secretary said he found the visit to St. Mary’s School to be a “very good experience,” noting the students’ strong interest in college and the school’s solid commitment to service.



BY MICHAEL HOYT - CATHOLIC STANDARD

U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley listens to Ijeoma Agbaraji, a 2nd grade student at St. Mary’s School in Landover Hills, MD.

Government Report Released on School Safety

Gone are the days when the worst disruptions in the classroom involved chewing gum or talking out of turn. Nowadays, school discipline problems all too often involve violence, weapons, drugs and gangs.

In a show of national concern about the issue, President Clinton held a White House conference on school safety last month, declaring that in too many schools “there is still too much disrespect for authority and still too much intolerance of other students from different backgrounds.”

In connection with the conference, the government released the first in a series of annual reports on school crime and student safety. The President said the report indicates that while the vast

Teachers in 1993-94 who reported that a student:	Public	Private
threatened them with injury	12.8%	4.2%
physically attacked them	4.4%	2.3%
Students, 12-19, who in 1995 reported:		
having experienced violent victimization at school	4.4%	2.3%
that they avoided certain places in school for fear of their own safety	9.3%	2.3%
that street gangs were present in school	30.6%	6.8%

majority of schools are safe, “in too many schools students feel unsafe.” He added that when students feel unsafe, “it’s going to have a huge detrimental impact on their ability to learn and grow.”

Entitled *Indicators of School Crime and Safety, 1998*, the report from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Education Statistics provides a comprehensive picture of the exposure of students and teachers to crime in schools. While the report’s main focus is public schools, a few of its many charts and tables also extend to private schools. The chart captures the major findings of the report that involve private schools. The full report is available on the Web at:

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs98/safety/index.html>



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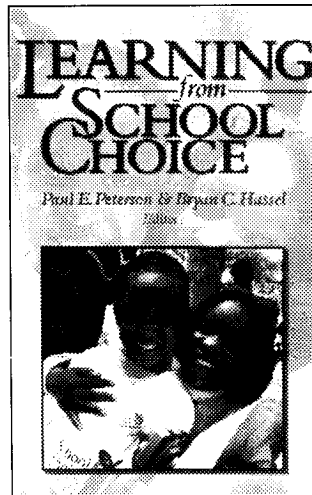
• In a breakthrough “randomized experiment” on the effects of school vouchers, Harvard professor **Paul Peterson** has determined that students who received scholarships to attend private schools in New York City showed greater improvement in math and reading than a statistically identical collection of students who attended public schools. Both groups were pretested, and both were from families that had applied for the privately-funded scholarships, thereby addressing charges that improved results might be because of an increase in parent motivation and support for the private school students. Commenting on the performance of black students in the study, Peterson said, “If you can get these same effects over the next five years, you can eliminate the differences between blacks and whites.”

The report of the first-year results of the scholarship program also found that private school students did more homework, attended more racially-diverse schools, and encountered less fighting, cheating, and racial conflict than the

students attending public schools. A copy of the report is available on the Web at:

<http://data.fas.harvard.edu/pepg/>

Peterson is coeditor of *Learning from School Choice*, a new book from the Brookings Institution on research and arguments relating to parent choice in education.



• On Election Day, are people who have been educated in private schools more likely to vote than those without a private education? According to a new study by **Jay P. Greene**, Assistant Professor of Government at the University of Texas at Austin, the answer is yes. In

The Effect of Private Education on Political Participation, Social Capital, and Tolerance: An Examination of the Results of the Latino National Political Survey, Greene concludes: “Adjusting for differences in backgrounds, we would expect that people with 12 years of private education would vote 70.3% of the time in presidential elections, compared to 55.7% of the time for those with no private education. We would also expect that 29.8% of those with 12 years of private education would join a civic organization, compared to 22.0% of those with no private education. And 49.7% of those with 12 years of private education would tolerate letting members of their least-liked group hold a rally, run for public office, or teach in schools, compared to 39.1% of those with no private education.”

• Congratulations to all 60 recipients of this year’s National Distinguished Principals Award. The five awardees from private schools are: **Joan Bransfield**, School of St. Mary, IL; **Perry Bresemann**, St. Lorenz Lutheran School, MI; **Karen Fasanella**, Our Lady of the Magnificat School, NJ; **Sr. Barbara Davis**, St. Mary School, OH; **James Michael Jordan**, David Lipscomb Campus School, TN.

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