

cape Council for American Private Education outlook

"Voice of the Nation's Private Schools"

November 2001 • Number 269

Council Members: American Montessori Society • Association of Christian Schools International • Christian Schools International • Evangelical Lutheran Church in America • Friends Council on Education • International Christian Accrediting Association • Jewish Community Day School Network • Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod • National Association of Episcopal Schools • National Association of Independent Schools • National Catholic Educational Association • National Christian School Association • Seventh-day Adventist Board of Education, K-12 • Solomon Schechter Day School Association • Southern Baptist Association of Christian Schools • Toussaint Institute for Historically Black Independent Schools • U.S. Catholic Conference • 30 State Affiliates

First Lady Laura Bush Honors Blue Ribbon Schools Education Secretary Paige Says Program Will Change

Attendees at the Blue Ribbon Schools award ceremony last month got the lift they were hoping for when First Lady Laura Bush made an unexpected appearance at the event. Greeted by thunderous applause and a flutter of camera flashes, Mrs. Bush commended and cheered delegates from the exemplary elementary schools that had come to Washington, D.C., to receive the award.

Once a teacher herself, Mrs. Bush brought believability to her warm words of appreciation for the important work being done in the award-winning schools. "I am especially delighted to congratulate the 264 public and private elementary schools from across the country that are being honored today as Blue Ribbon Schools," she said. "As distinguished educators and professionals, you inspire



Laura Bush congratulates Blue Ribbon schools last month in Washington, D.C.

students, nurture their natural abilities, and encourage them to explore life's many possibilities. You also prepare

good students to be good citizens—something that is as important now as ever."

This year's winning schools included 223 public schools, 41 private schools, and one Department of Defense school.

The day before Mrs. Bush spoke, U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige offered his own congratulations to the Blue Ribbon recipients. "Excellence is difficult to achieve, and often it doesn't get the notice it deserves," said the secretary. "That's why it is so important that we take the time to identify and appreciate how our schools are helping students."

The secretary announced that upon the completion of the program's secondary school cycle, which is currently

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Education Secretary Paige Meets with CAPE's Board

Education Secretary Rod Paige and his top two assistants met with CAPE's board of directors last month and delivered an unambiguous message: the Paige team is committed to serving all students in America.

When Education Department officials use the phrase "No child left behind," they intend it to cover all children, regardless of the type of school they attend, said the secretary. And Undersecretary Gene Hickok underscored the point: "This is everyone's Department of Education; this is

America's Department of Education."

Again and again, Paige, Hickok, and Deputy Secretary Bill Hansen signaled their interest in inclusion and their focus on children. Paige said he regards public education not as a collection of districts and buildings, but as the education of the public — a purpose that can be realized through a variety of delivery systems. He said he hopes to overcome divisions in education and to think in terms of students, rather than structures and systems.

For Paige, the responsibility for

educating the next generation is a shared one. "Education is everyone's business," he said. And although ancestors of different citizens

may have come to this country on different ships, "we're in the same boat now," he said, "and we have to row together."

The CEOs of
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CAPE's member organizations had much to discuss with the department's top officials. With the events of September 11 on everyone's mind, Rev. Peter Cheney, representing the National Association of Episcopal Schools, and Mark Kramer of the Jewish Community Day School Network, talked about how private schools were affected by, and responded to, the disaster. Sr. Glenn Anne McPhee, Secretary for Education at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, encouraged the department to see that disaster-related funds and services encompass all affected schools and students.

Deputy Secretary Hansen conveyed strong support within the department for fair services for all students and outlined a timetable for participating in emergency relief initiatives. He also announced that the department would sponsor a training session on trauma and grief counseling for school personnel in New York City.

Private Schools and America

Mark Siegel, the board representative for state CAPEs, told the secretary that the private school community was very concerned about comments like those made by Sandra Feldman, president of the American Federation of Teachers, who recently suggested private schools Balkanize the country while public schools unite it. Siegel said students who attend private schools are as tolerant of diversity, as supportive of democratic principles, and as committed to America as students who attend public schools. To suggest otherwise is to offend millions of patriotic Americans who have relied on private schools for their own education – people like Rudy Giuliani and George Bush. Private schools, said Siegel, reflect American pluralism and embody the ideals of freedom and diversity.

Success With Minority Students

An overview of the success of private schools in educating minority students was provided by Michael Guerra, president of the National Catholic Educational Association. Guerra pointed to

college-going rates, SAT scores, data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), and other evidence to make the case that private schools are a proven resource in meeting the needs of minority children. The theme was reinforced by Dan Vander Ark (Christian Schools International), Ken Smitherman (Association of Christian Schools International), and Philip Patterson (National Association of Christian Schools). Vander Ark reported on a \$4.4 million grant his organization received recently from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to improve education in 14 schools in Chicago: Smitherman spoke of a new initiative at ACSI to provide scholarships to help needy children attend urban Christian schools, and Patterson told the secretary of the success of Westbury Christian School, a college-prep school with a higher share of minority students (approximately 66 percent) than the Houston public school system, which the secretary once led.

Regular Communication

Dick Osborn, who represents Seventh-day Adventist schools on CAPE's board, spoke of the need for regular communication between the department and the private school community and expressed appreciation for the wonderful work being done in the department's non-public education office. The secretary seconded the need for ongoing dialogue, saying he hoped this meeting with CAPE would be the first of many more to come.

IDEA Reauthorization

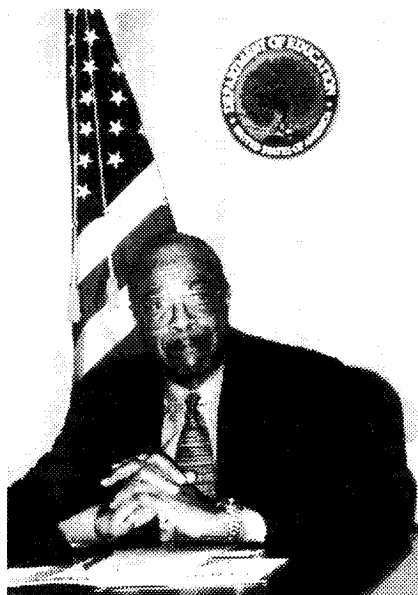
Turning to the upcoming reauthorization of the Individuals With Disabili-

ties Education Act, Joe McTighe, CAPE's executive director, made the case for changes in the law to ensure equitable services for students with special needs in private schools. Deputy Secretary Hansen said President Bush had just announced the establishment of the Commission on Excellence in Special Education, which will examine ways of improving IDEA. Hansen and Undersecretary Hickok urged the private school community to convey concerns about IDEA through the commission and at an

upcoming series of department-sponsored forums on the topic. Emphasizing openness to fresh points of view, Hickok said, "We're interested in hearing from folks who haven't been heard from in a while."

On another matter, McTighe thanked the secretary for visiting a private school during his *Back to School, Moving Forward* tour and for referencing private schools in his recent back-to-school address at the National Press Club. He said both events were strong signs of Paige's commitment to serve as secretary of all education.

Before the meeting ended, Secretary Paige was asked whether he had any general advice for the private school community. The secretary's main suggestion was that private schools tell their story widely and regularly. Schools should not keep their success a secret, he said, but should proclaim it—using open pieces, public access, and other media vehicles—to elected officials and to the public at large.



Education Secretary Rod Paige, at a meeting last month with CAPE's board.



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underway, the 18-year-old enterprise will undergo a transformation in focus and a change of name. Blue Ribbon Schools will become No Child Left Behind Schools, and the focus will be "squarely on student performance," the secretary said.

New Program, New Standards

Paige's blueprint for the new program was clear: "We will evaluate schools based on objective measurements. We will reward those schools that dramatically improve student performance and schools with students from disproportionately disadvantaged backgrounds that perform at the highest levels."

The secretary went on to say that state tests aligned with state curriculum standards will be used to evaluate applicants for the new program. "No Child Left Behind Schools will be evaluated according to scores on those exams and selected based on the same curriculum standards they will use for teaching and for tracking student progress," he said.

Private School Concerns

Commenting on the proposed new program, Joe McTighe, CAPE's executive director, said he was concerned about using state tests alone to identify exemplary schools, since such tests tend to be narrowly focused, and private schools in most states do not administer them. He said he was looking forward to working with officials at the U.S. Department of Education to come up with alternative objective measures of excellence in education. "We would not want the No Child Left Behind program to leave behind an entire segment of American education," he said.

A hallmark of the Blue Ribbon Schools program has been the inclusion of both public and private schools. Since its start in 1982, the program has recognized 4,246 elementary, middle, and secondary schools, including 3,375 public schools and 871 private schools.

Secretary Paige said the department would announce more details about the replacement program in the coming months.

President Launches Lessons of Liberty Initiative

Praising veterans for their courage, sacrifice, and service, and saying Americans, especially now, need "the example of their character," President Bush called on schools to honor veterans and to enlist them as guest speakers during the week of November 11.

Speaking last month at Thomas Wootten High School in Montgomery County, Maryland, the president said he had "a special mission for our veterans and a special request of our schools. I ask all public, private and home schools to join our Lessons of Liberty initiative by inviting a veteran to speak to your students during the week of Veterans Day."

In a rousing speech to an enthusiastic audience of veterans, students, and education leaders, the president said veterans have much to offer schools and students. "American veterans have extraordinary stories. We should listen to them. American veterans preserved our

world and freedom, and we should honor them. American veterans show us the meaning of sacrifice and citizenship, and we should learn from them."

The Lessons of Liberty Web page describes the initiative as "an opportunity for American students to learn more about our country and its values, as well as the people that have been called upon to defend its freedom." Participating schools are invited to ask veterans to speak about "their experience in serving our country; the significance of Veterans Day; and the importance of supporting the ideals of liberty, democracy, and freedom."

Schools can continue to participate in the Lessons of Liberty initiative throughout the year through a variety of activities aimed at helping students learn more about American history and values. A host of curriculum resources and activity suggestions are available on the Web at www.va.gov/Veteranedu/.



Participating in Lessons of Liberty (From the Lessons of Liberty Web Page)

Schools will have access to a multitude of resources for participating in the Lessons of Liberty initiative through the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Education. Schools, educators, parents, and students can visit the Department of Veterans Affairs Web site at www.va.gov/vetsday to find classroom materials and curricula, ideas for activities, and resources for getting in touch with a veteran in their community.

The Lessons of Liberty initiative can be continued throughout the year through a variety of activities, including:

For Elementary and Middle School Students:

- Read books about American history and government.
- Learn about outstanding leaders in America, past and present.
- Visit an historic site, such as a battleground.
- "Adopt an older American" and befriend a veteran.
- Participate in the Friendship through Education initiative.

For High School Students:

- Register to vote.
- Pledge to mentor younger students on Lessons of Liberty.
- Volunteer in community organizations.
- Organize student public service projects.
- Participate in the Friendship through Education initiative.





Return Service Requested

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• One lesson to be learned from a recent survey sponsored by the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation is that private school parents perceive their children's schools in a different way than parents of children in charter schools or public schools. The survey of citizens in Dayton, Ohio, measured views and attitudes on schools and education reform. It reported responses from four segments of the city's adult population: adults with no children, and parents of children in public schools, private schools, and charter schools.

Among the four groups, private school parents were most likely to give their schools an "A" grade and to express high levels of satisfaction with the safety, discipline, curriculum, teacher quality, parental involvement, and level of student learning at their schools. One example of how private school parents see their schools: Eighty-six percent were very satisfied with their child's safety at school, compared with 43 percent of public school parents.

Asked whether they oppose or support the use of government funds to send children to any school, including private

and church-related schools, 68 percent of private school parents said they support the idea, as did 77 percent of public school parents and 84 percent of charter school parents.

The report, *Dayton Education in 2001*, is available on the Web at www.edexcellence.net.

• Ask anyone in education to name the person who best sets the tone of a school, and the response invariably will be the principal. Serving on education's frontline, principals deal daily with students, faculty, support staff, parents, and the community at large. But despite their central role in schools, principals rarely get the praise they deserve.

The National Distinguished Principals program does its part to make up for the praise deficit by honoring exemplary elementary and middle school principals each year. Sponsored by the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the U.S. Department of Education, the program recognizes a public school principal from each of the 50 states as well as principals representing private schools, Department of Defense schools, and U.S. Department of State overseas schools.

CAPE is delighted to join the coun-

try in honoring this year's distinguished principals. They received their awards last month in splendid style during a banquet in Washington, D.C. The private school honorees were: **Barbara M. Clark** - St. Mark's Lutheran School, Hacienda Heights, CA; **Lois D. Scrivener** - Holy Name of Jesus School, Indialantic, FL; **Gaylord E. Flicker** - Grace Lutheran School, Pocatello, ID; **Jeffrey L. Blamer** - Kalamazoo Christian Middle School, Kalamazoo, MI; **Gary G. Wilmer** - St. Charles Borromeo School, Minneapolis, MN; **Camille W. Forrest** - St. Peter Celestine Catholic School, Cherry Hill, NJ.

• CAPE keeps growing. The board of directors last month welcomed the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America as the newest CAPE member, bringing the number of CAPE member organizations to 18.

The board also elected some new officers: **Richard Osborn** (Seventh-day Adventist schools), president; **Daniel Vander Ark** (Christian Schools International), vice president, and **Ken Smitherman** (Association of Christian Schools International) treasurer. **Mark Siegel**, representing the 31 state CAPEs, retains his position as secretary.