

Council for American Private Education

# CAPE outlook

Voice of America's private schools

## Survey of Principals Compares Conditions, Influence, and Mobility

Two related federal surveys of school administrators offer fresh insight into the working conditions that principals face on a day-to-day basis, the degree of influence they have over school affairs, and their tendency to stick with their job, switch to another school, or bid the position a final farewell.

### Disruptive Student Behavior

A daily challenge that principals face is maintaining a safe and secure environment. Private school principals have a much easier time with this than their counterparts in public schools, at least when it comes to dealing with certain types of dangerous student behavior. Survey data from the National Center for Education Statistics show that principals in private schools report far fewer instances than public school principals of physical conflict among students, bullying, and acts of disrespect against teachers.

NCES estimates that of 24,800 private school principals, 1,800, or 7.3 percent, reported during the 2011-12 school year that physical

conflicts among students occurred once a month or more often.

By contrast, among 89,530 public school principals, 29.5 percent reported the same level of frequency. Significant differences also existed

in reported occurrences of bullying, with 16.6 percent of private school principals and 42.1 percent of public school principals saying that bullying occurred among students once a month or more. A greater share of public school principals (24.6 percent) than private school principals (7.7

percent) also reported a month or more occurrence of student acts of disrespect toward teachers.

### Mobility Rates

The data come from *Principal Attrition and Mobility: Results From the 2012-13 Principal Follow-up Survey*, which the NCES released in July. Base data (including that reported above) were recorded in 2011-12 as part of the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS). Principals were then tracked a year later to find out how many were working in the same school, had moved to another school, or had left the principalship entirely.

It turns out that 77.4 percent of public school principals and 79.8 percent of private school principals in 2011-12 were still at their same school in 2012-13. Seven percent of public school principals and 2.2 percent of private school principals had moved to a different school. The report notes, "Of all private school principals who moved to a different school, 70 percent moved to another private school."

The share of principals who had stopped being principals altogether was roughly the same in both sectors (11.5 percent of public school principals and 11.6

percent private school principals). According to the report, "Of principals who had left the principalship in 2012-13, some 38 percent of public school principals and 30 percent of private school principals left due to retirement."

### Major Influence

Related data from the 2011-12 SASS, released separately by NCES through online tables, compares principals in private and public schools by several additional factors.

One table looks at whether principals "thought they

had a major influence on decisions concerning various activities at their school." The picture is mixed. When it comes to setting performance standards for students, establishing curriculum, and determining the content of in-service professional development programs for teachers, a significantly larger share of private school principals than public school principals saw themselves as having a major influence on such matters (see table). But a greater share of public school principals (96.2 percent) than private school principals (83.7 percent) saw themselves as major players in the evaluation of teachers.

In other administrative areas, the differences in the percentages of administrators who perceived their influence as major were negligible: hiring new full-time teachers (85.1 percent public, 85.8 percent private); setting discipline policy in the school (79.8 percent public, 81.9 percent private); deciding how their school budget will be spent (64.1 percent public, 63.4 percent private).

Percentage of Principals Who Reported Having a Major Influence on Decisions Concerning...

	Private	Public
Performance Standards	80.6%	73.6%
Curriculum	70.4%	43.2%
Professional Development	78.5%	69.8%

Percentage of Principals Who Reported One or More Monthly Occurrences Among Students of...

	Private	Public
Physical Conflict	7.3%	29.5%
Bullying	16.6%	42.1%
Disrespect for Teachers	7.7%	24.6%

**CAPE member organizations:**

- Agudath Israel of America
- American Montessori Society
- Association Montessori International—USA
- Association of Christian Schools International
- Association of Christian Teachers and Schools
- Association of Waldorf Schools of N.A.
- Christian Schools International
- Council on Educational Standards and Accountability
- 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 Christian School Association
- Oral Roberts University Educational Fellowship
- Seventh-day Adventist Board of Education
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
- Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod Schools
- 35 Affiliated State Organizations

a coalition of national associations serving private schools K-12  
Executive Director: Joe McTighe

**Outlook is published monthly (September to June) by CAPE. An annual subscription is \$35. ISSN 0271-1451**

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## Cato Scholar Offers Sobering Take on Charters and Choice

Andrew J. Coulson, director of the Center for Educational Freedom at the Cato Institute, met with state CAPE leaders in Seattle, WA, July 15 and offered a sobering assessment about the impact of charter schools on private schools.

Coulson reported that between the years 2000 and 2008, charter schools drew approximately 200,000 students out of private education. What's more, the pace of transfers has been accelerating. If the trend were to continue, charters would eventually displace many more private schools, leaving parents with even less choice.

The way to stem the tide, said Coulson, is to "reduce financial discrimination against private schools." He examined two ways of doing that: vouchers and education tax credits, the latter reducing taxes either for parents who pay tuition

or for individuals and corporations that contribute to scholarship funds.

Coulson sees tax credits as the preferred option for several reasons. First, because vouchers involve spending public funds, they raise constitutional issues in some states. They also present concerns about directing tax money to the support of programs that may violate the conscience of some citizens. A tax credit, on the other hand, provides a benefit (i.e., a reduction in taxes) only to those who willingly choose to take advantage of it by making a voluntary contribution to a cause of their choice. A third downside to vouchers, argues Coulson, is that, at least so far, they have generally involved a greater degree of private school regulation and government control than tax credit programs.



## Surprises in Trulia Data on Housing and Schooling

School quality plays an important role in the housing decisions of many families, according to a **report** released this summer by the online real estate site Trulia. The report's twist is its focus on how private schools are a factor in the decision—at least for some families.

"Nationally, 10 percent of school kids grades 1-12 attend private schools, and in some neighborhoods, the majority of kids go to private school," writes Jed Kolko, Trulia's chief economist.

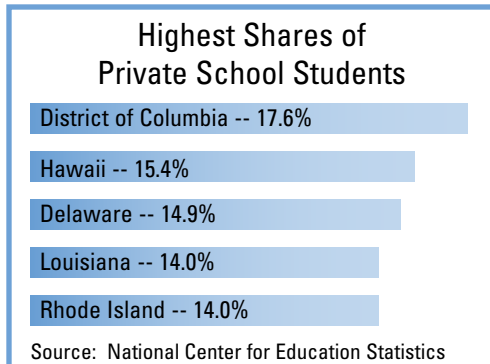
Despite pundits who suggest that private schools serve only the wealthy, and public schools serve only the poor and middle class, the report reveals that 74 percent of families with annual incomes over \$200,000 either homeschool their children or send them to public schools. For families in the \$100,000 to \$200,000 range, the figure jumps to 86 percent. With the National Center

for Education Statistics (NCES) estimating that only 3 percent of the school-age population is homeschooled, it seems safe to assume that the overwhelming majority of wealthy families in the United States have their children educated in public schools, which is to say entirely at taxpayer expense.

neighborhoods with the highest percentages of private school enrollment. New Orleans tops the city list with 25 percent of students attending private schools. Honolulu is next (21 percent), followed by San Francisco (20 percent). Parents looking at the cost of having their children attend a quality school may be surprised at how the numbers play out. Jacob Davidson, a reporter for *Money*, used the Trulia data to compare two fictional families: the Publicos, who choose a top public school, and the Privados, who opt for private education.

In the scenario he devised, the monthly cost of housing in a high-performing public school district outpaced the cost of both housing *and* private school tuition for a family living in an average public school district. "Over time, these savings add up," writes Davidson. "By the time the Publicos' child graduates high school, they will have paid \$52,982 more than the Privados for education and housing."

Davidson used the NCES average private tuition of \$7,770 for elementary schools and \$13,030 for high schools in his formula. He cautioned, however, that calculations will vary depending on the number of children involved as well as the actual cost of housing and tuition.



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The report looks at the states, cities, and

## Polls Measure Support for Schools and Choice

The public has positive opinions about private schools and school choice, according to a pair of prestigious national opinion polls released over the summer.

The *Schooling in America Survey*, released June 26 by the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice and Braun Research, found that the public is favorably impressed by private schools.

“Americans are much more likely to give grades A or B to private/parochial schools in their communities, compared with the local public schools,” the report states. Among all respondents, 59 percent awarded an A or B to local private/parochial schools, while 43 percent gave the same grade to local public schools. Eliminating poll

participants who did not give any grade, private schools did even better, with 78 percent of respondents giving them an A or B, compared to 45 percent grading public schools the same way.

Asked what type of school they would select “in order to obtain the best education” for their child, 40 percent of Americans chose a private school, while 37 percent selected a regular public school. Another 11 percent said they would prefer to homeschool their child, and 10 percent opted for charter schools.

Particularly intriguing is what the report calls “a significant disconnect between stated school preferences and actual enrollment patterns in the United States.” Although 40 percent of respondents said they would prefer a private school, only 9 percent of K-12 students currently attend one. Similarly, the share of students who actually attend regular public schools is more than twice the percentage of respondents who said they would prefer to have their children do so. The numbers suggest that if more parents had the ability to choose schools without financial penalty, the distribution of students across various types of schools in the United States would shift dramatically.

The Friedman poll provided respondents a chance to weigh in on various ways to level the financial playing field. More than six out of 10 Americans (63 percent) said they support school vouchers, while 33 percent said they oppose them. And with elections coming up, candidates should note that “Americans are more likely to vote for a pro-voucher candidate, rather than oppose one” (27 percent “more likely” vs. 16 percent “less likely”).

Tax-credit scholarships also polled well, with 64 percent of respondents favoring the measure and 25 percent opposing it.

While the Friedman poll found strong support by the general public for private schools, *another survey*, sponsored by *Education Next*, a journal published by the Hoover Institute

at Stanford University, found that teachers favor private schools more than the public at large. At least that’s what their actions demonstrate. About 19 percent of teachers living with school-age children “have used or currently use” private

schools. The figure was 14 percent for all respondents with school-age children.

*Education Next* also measured support for school choice initiatives. The poll asked participants if they favored “a proposal...that would give families with children in public

schools a wider choice, by allowing them to enroll their children in private schools instead, with government helping to pay the tuition.” Fifty percent of respondents said they would, up 5 percentage points since last year. Moreover, 59 percent of African Americans and 58 percent of Hispanics supported the measure.

Asked about a “tax credit for individual and corporate donations that pay for scholarships to help low-income parents send their children to private schools,” 60 percent of the public favored the measure, as did 60 percent of African Americans and 70 percent of Hispanics.

The Friedman report is available at <[edchoice.org](http://edchoice.org)>, and the Education Next report is available at <[educationnext.org](http://educationnext.org)>.

## Living Free in NH

“This is a great day for parental liberty in New Hampshire!” That’s how Dick Komer, senior attorney at the Institute for Justice (IJ), reacted to a ruling August 28 by the New Hampshire Supreme Court that saved the state’s tax credit scholarship program.

IJ represented parents who wanted their children to receive scholarships. It also represented the Network for Educational Opportunity (NEO), a non-profit organization that awards scholarships.

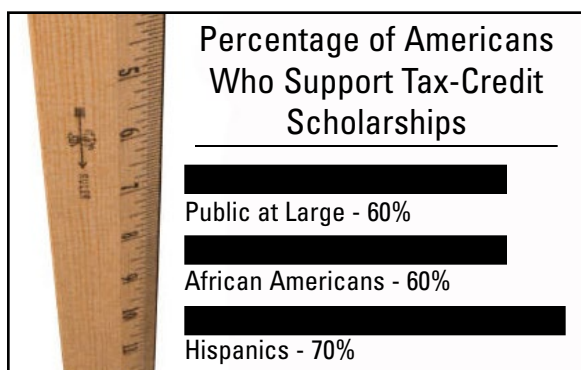
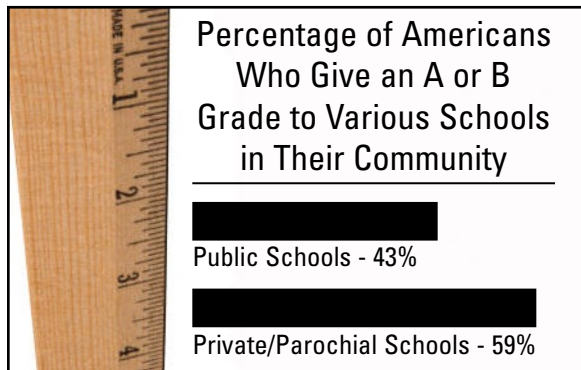
In June 2013, a trial court in the state stopped the program from benefiting students who attended religious schools, claiming a violation of the state’s constitution. The state Supreme Court, however, unanimously vacated the lower court’s decision, thereby allowing the program to benefit all eligible applicants regardless of the type of school they attend.

The core of the court’s decision was that the citizens who challenged the program had no right to do so. As the court put it, “Because the petitioners fail to identify any personal injury suffered by them as a consequence of the alleged constitutional error, they have failed to establish that they have standing to bring their constitutional claim.”

The program offers tax credits to businesses worth 85 percent of their contribution to organizations that offer scholarships for students to attend private schools or home schools. Scholarships are limited to students from families with annual incomes up to 300 percent of the federal poverty line (\$71,550 for a family of four).

Kate Baker, executive director of NEO, said, “We are eager to get to work awarding scholarships to low-income families without having to discriminate based on what sort of private school the parents want their children to attend.”

Tim Keller, Komer’s co-counsel, said the decision represented “a victory for all who would live free in New Hampshire!”





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## CAPE notes

★ What is the percentage of international secondary students in the U.S. who attend private schools? The astounding answer, 95 percent, is provided in a report released this summer by the Institute of International Education. *Charting New Pathways to Higher Education* also reports that international students “make up less than one percent of all the secondary students in the U.S., indicating that there is a large capacity for U.S. high schools to enroll greater numbers of international students.” Encouraging schools to consider enrolling such students, the report notes that doing so “may serve to enhance schools’ internationalization efforts and provide a diversity of student viewpoints and experiences to develop the global perspectives of American students, some of whom may not have global exposure otherwise.”

★ The back-to-school season saw a setback for students benefiting from school choice initiatives in Oklahoma and North Carolina. On August 29, an Oklahoma County district court ruled that the state’s scholarship program for students with disabilities was unconstitutional, while a week earlier, a Wake County superior court judge in North Carolina pronounced a similar verdict for that state’s scholarship program. Both decisions are being appealed.

Reaction was swift. “It is disheartening to see the court strike down a program that helps those who may need choice the

most,” said Russell Perry, co-chair of the Oklahoma Federation for Children.

“We will do everything in our power to ensure that today’s decision is merely another speed bump on the way to victory at the North Carolina Supreme Court,” said Dick Komer, senior attorney at the Institute for Justice.

★ Why should private schools participate in NAEP? An impressive new video from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) offers several answers, one being that a complete picture of student performance in America is only possible if all sectors of education are represented. The video is available at: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/non-publicschools.aspx>.

★ School choice programs that excessively regulate private schools may have the unintended consequence of limiting the number of private schools that ultimately elect to participate in the program. That’s the message in Matthew Ladner’s essay “School Choice Regulation: Be Careful What You Wish For.” “One of the clear recent lessons from the states is that regulation of private schools leads to fewer private school seats made available to children,” writes Ladner, the senior advisor of policy and research for the Foundation for Excellence in Education. The essay is available at <http://dailysignal.com/2014/08/14/school-choice-regulation-careful-wish/>.

★ Three member organizations of CAPE have seen changes in top leadership this summer. James Rademan is the new director for the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod’s Commission on Lutheran Schools (CLS). Rademan served as CLS associate director since 2013 and has held various positions in Lutheran schools for more than 30 years.

Drew Smith is the new executive director at the Friends Council on Education. Former CEO of Russell Byers Charter School in Philadelphia and one-time head of Friends School Mullica Hill in New Jersey, Smith describes his new role as “imager-in-chief.”

Bonnie Beste is the new executive director of the Association Montessori International / USA. Beste has impressive experience in Montessori education and most recently worked for the District of Columbia Public Schools as the early childhood Montessori specialist for the city’s public Montessori program.

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