


Council for American Private Education

CAPE outlook

Voice of America's private schools

Parents Satisfied with Schools, Teachers, and Standards

A central premise of the school choice movement is that parents know what's best for their children. When they have a choice, parents tend to select schools that match their expectations of what a school should be. Making that match is a source of satisfaction.



Percentage of K-12 Students, by Type of School, Whose Parents Were Very Satisfied With...

	School	Teachers	Standards
Religious	80	76	80
Other Private	82	82	84
Public Assigned	56	58	56
Public Chosen	62	59	64

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A new report from the National Center for Education Statistics confirms the fact that parents who choose their child's school are indeed more satisfied with the school and its various characteristics than parents who are assigned a school by the government. Looking at data from the National Household Education Surveys Program of 2012 (NHES:2012), the report centers on parent and family involvement in education.

Parents of 80 percent of students enrolled in a religious private school in 2011-12 and 82 percent of students in other private schools reported being "very satisfied" with their child's school, compared to the parents of 56 percent of students in public schools to which their children were assigned and 62 percent of students in public schools that parents chose (e.g., charter schools and magnet schools). Higher percentages of private school parents than public school parents were also very satisfied with the teachers their children had and with the academic standards of the

school (see table).

Asked about order and discipline in the school, the parents of 82 percent of students in religious schools and 81 percent of students in other private schools said they were very satisfied, while only 56 percent of students in assigned public schools and 63 percent of students in chosen public schools had parents who were similarly satisfied.

The percentage of students whose parents were very satisfied with the way school staff interacted with parents was 72 in religious schools, 78 in other private schools, 49 in assigned public schools, and 56 in chosen public schools.

Surprisingly, the often touchy issue of homework yielded responses from public and private school parents that were fairly close, with the parents of 85 percent of students in religious schools believing the amount of homework assigned was "about right," compared to the parents of 81 percent of students in other private schools, 77 percent of students in public assigned schools, and 76 percent of students in chosen public schools.


Communication

Good principals and teachers know that parents are the child's primary educators and keeping them informed is essential for maintaining a home-school partnership. The survey found that 57 percent of K-12 students had parents who reported receiving a note or email from the school about the child. But the percentages varied by type of

school, with 66 percent of students in religious schools and 75 percent of students in other private schools having parents who received such communication, compared to 56 percent of students in assigned public schools and 57 percent of students in chosen public schools. General newsletters, memos, emails, or notices addressed to all parents reached the parents of 95 percent of students in religious schools, 97 percent of students in other private schools, 86 percent of students in assigned public schools and 87 percent of students in chosen public schools.

Expectations

Parents of students in grades 6-12 were asked about the levels of education they expected their children to reach. One percent of students had parents who expected they would not graduate from high school; 9 percent had parents who thought a high school diploma would be their top attainment. At the other end of the spectrum,



Percentage of 6-12 Students, by Type of School, Whose Parents Said They Expected Them to Attain a 4-Year College Degree or Higher

Religious	84
Other Private	79
Public Assigned	61
Public Chosen	68

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the parents of 28 percent of students thought their child would finish a four- or five-year college degree, and the parents of 37 percent thought they would earn a graduate or professional degree. As the table illustrates, the percentages of students whose parents had high expectations varied by type of school.

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
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Aspirations, Courses, and Performance Differ by School

Keeping track of a single high school student can be a challenge these days, but try tracking 20,000 such students. That's the formidable goal of the High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HLS:09), conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics. The study started in 2009 with ninth graders in 944 public and private schools, and just last month NCES released its first follow-up report on how the cohort was doing 2.5 years later in 2012, when most of them (93 percent) were juniors in high school. The project will continue to follow the core cohort through college and into careers.

The first follow-up report focuses on several selected findings, including enrollment status in math and science courses, achievement in math, family characteristics, and educational expectations. Results are often presented by the type of high school (public or private) the students attend.

Expectations

By 2012, 59.4 percent of public school students in the study and 79.5 percent of private school students expected that their highest educational attainment would be a college degree or higher. Thirty-two percent of public school students and 47.4 percent of private school students expected to eventually earn a graduate or professional degree.

Courses


Course-taking patterns also varied by type of school. Of those in the cohort still in high school in spring 2012, 35.4 percent of public school students and 41.7 percent of private school students were enrolled in Algebra II, while 19.9 percent of public school students and 35.1 percent of private school students were taking a pre-calculus or calculus course.

In science, 16.9 percent of public school stu-

dents in the cohort and 28.2 percent of private school students were studying physics, while the public/private breakout for chemistry was 34.1 percent and 40.3 percent.


Math Achievement

The new report also presented data on proficiency in mathematics, reporting the percentages of students in the cohort who by 2012 had demonstrated specific algebraic knowledge at various levels. Level 1 indicates proficiency regarding algebraic expressions; Level 2, multiplicative and proportional thinking; Level 3, algebraic equivalents; Level 4, systems of equations; Level 5, linear functions; Level 6, quadratic functions; Level 7, log and exponential functions (geometric sequences). Higher percentages of students in private schools than those in public schools were able to demonstrate proficiency at each of the levels. Here are the public/private percent-

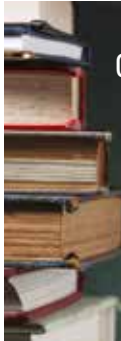


	Public	Private
Algebra II	35.4	41.7
Pre-Calculus/Calculus	19.9	35.1

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	Public	Private
Physics	16.9	28.2
Chemistry	34.1	40.3



	Public	Private
Level 3	62.4	83.5
Level 4	27.2	47.5
Level 5	17.9	33.5

age breakouts: Level 1—92.0/97.7; Level 2—73.5/90.0; Level 3—62.4/83.5; Level 4—27.2/47.5; Level 5—17.9/33.5; Level 6—5.0/8.7; Level 7—2.2/3.7.

College

Part of being a high school junior is thinking about college, the next phase of one's education. Asked to rate various features of a postsecondary institution as "very important" to their choice of a college, 74.3 percent of the cohort identified the school's "academic quality or reputation," and 73.5 percent identified the school's ability to "offer a particular program of study."

The report is available at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2014360>.

CAPE Adds New Member and Two New State Affiliates

CAPE is on what business analysts like to call a growth trajectory.

The board of directors recently welcomed the **Council on Educational Standards and Accountability** (CESA) as the newest member of CAPE and also approved two additions to the State CAPE Network: Montana and Ohio. CAPE, the voice of America's private schools, now has 19 national member organizations and 35 state affiliates, representing more than 80 percent of the private school community in the United States.



CESA

According to its mission statement, CESA exists “to motivate, support, and hold accountable Christian schools that aspire to superlative academic standards, institutional best practices, and collaboration with like-minded schools.” The organization, whose members include an ecumenical array of Christian schools, provides “leadership services, academic enrichment, programmatic development, [and] professional development” to its schools as well as “fellowship and fraternity” to those who serve in them.

It offers schools “rigorous, objective standards to guide their development” and provide the tools and networks to realize those standards.

Dr. Timothy P. Wiens is executive director and cofounder of CESA and, like other CEOs of CAPE's member organizations, serves on CAPE's board of directors. His broad experience in education ranges from teacher to headmaster to college professor.

Montana

The Montana Association of Private Schools is an association of private school organizations and individual private schools in Montana. Chaired by Dr. Patrick Haggarty, superintendent of Catholic schools for the state, MAPS “serves to unify its member jurisdictions and individual schools while respecting their diversity,” according to its constitution. Its purposes include advancing the mission of private schools, providing a “framework for communication

and cooperation,” and maintaining “productive relationships with the Montana Office of Public Education, the state and federal government, and other agencies which impact quality education.”

Current organizational members include the school systems in the Catholic Dioceses of Helena and Great Falls-Billings, the Lutheran Schools of Montana, the Montana Federation of Independent Schools, Seventh-day Adventist Schools, and Montessori Schools.

The new organization's intentions are ambitious: promoting understanding and cooperation among its members; encouraging school improvement; providing opportunities for professional growth; facilitating communication with government agencies, community leaders, and private organizations; initiating research projects; and promoting parental choice in education.

Ohio

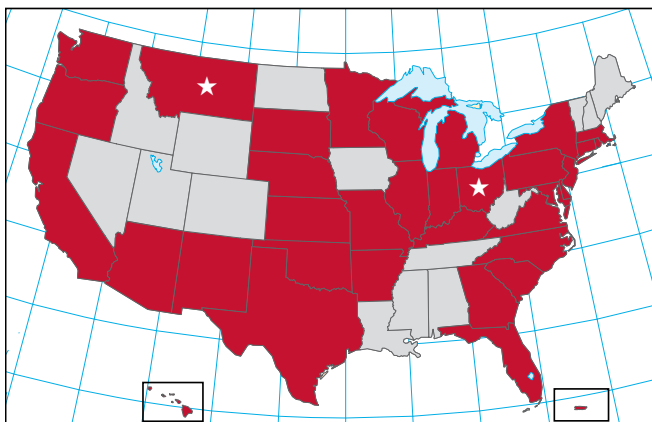
According to its charter and bylaws, the Ohio Chapter—Council for American Private Education (Ohio CAPE) was formed “to promote the

betterment of nonpublic education” within the state.

A collection of strong convictions unites the organization's members. They believe that Ohio's private schools “need to be strengthened and expanded in order to furnish a realistic choice among types

of schools” for children in the state. They are “strongly concerned with the freedom to inculcate religious and spiritual values in the students under their jurisdiction,” and they profess that “the public interest is well served by promoting nonpublic schools which maintain standards of education appropriate to their type of educational institution.”

Headed by Dan Dodd, executive director of the Ohio Association of Independent Schools, the Ohio CAPE's members include Agudath Israel, the Association of Christian Schools International, the Ohio District of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the Ohio Association of Independent Schools, and the Ohio Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.



State CAPE Affiliates

Collaborating with Charters

Understandably, the private school community has had mixed emotions about charter schools. Charters advance school choice, enabling parents, especially the poor, to make a better match between the needs of their children and the offerings of a school, and, after all, a pillar of private education is the protection of a parent's right to choose a child's school.

But another pillar is the preservation of pluralism in education, which ensures a variety of truly distinctive schools from which parents can make that match. The sad reality, however, is that by taking a fair number of students from private schools, charter schools have caused some private schools to close. Studies have documented the impact, but the bottom line is that the elimination of quality religious and independent schools ultimately diminishes both school choice and educational pluralism.

What's needed is a path toward healthy coexistence, and even collaboration, between charter schools and private schools. Toward that end, CAPE's board of directors recently met with Nina Rees, president and CEO of the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (NAPCS), the national advocacy arm of the charter school movement. The goal was to foster understanding between the two groups and explore how they might work together.

One possibility is the pursuit of “level playing field” legislation, advancing school choice equitably through a fiscal arrangement that does not penalize one type of choice over another. Parents would be free to select the school—public, magnet, charter, independent, religious—that meets their expectations of what a school should be and that serves the best interests of their children. It's a solution that would preserve pluralism and ultimately benefit students, families, and society—a worthy goal of any collaboration.

Return service requested

CAPE notes

★ Private school parents tend to participate in school activities at significantly higher levels than parents of children in public schools. According to a **new report** from the National Center for Education Statistics, based on data from the National Household Education Surveys Program of 2012 (see related story on p. 1), 69 percent of K-12 students in religious schools and 66 percent of students in other private schools had parents who said they had volunteered or served on a school committee, compared to the parents of 38 percent of students in assigned public schools and 44 percent of those in chosen public schools (e.g., charter schools and magnet schools). The percentage of students whose parents said they attended a general school meeting was 96 in religious schools, 95 in other private schools, 86 in assigned public schools, and 89 in chosen public schools.

Private school percentages were also higher for students whose parents went to a parent-teacher conference (85 religious, 89 other private, 74 public assigned, 76 public chosen), attended a class or school event (88 religious, 91 other private, 73 public assigned, 75 public chosen), or participated in school fundraising (84 religious, 78 other private, 56 public assigned, 57 public chosen). No surprise there.

★ Looking for the formula for a successful school? The U.S. Department of Education last month released profiles of the 2013 Blue Ribbon Schools. Just about all of the 286 schools, includ-

ing the 50 private schools, submitted a profile and photo. They're easy to find on an interactive map at www.national-blueribbonschools.com/interactive-map-2013-schools/#.UnKZDxbmy9v.

In a related development, officials at the Education Department said they finally expect to release the application for the 2014 BRS program on or about November 4. Private schools can download the document and learn about the application process at www.capenet.org/brs.html.

★ It is possible to find a government program about which 100 percent of participants are satisfied? The Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice did just that and documented their findings in a new report titled "**Schooling Satisfaction: Arizona Parents' Opinions on Using Education Savings Accounts**."

According to the foundation, the "first-ever survey of participants in Arizona's education savings accounts (ESA) program found that 100 percent of sampled parents were satisfied with the program, while none reported any level of dissatisfaction."

Arizona's ESA program provides eligible parents with a debit account they can use for educational expenses, including private school tuition. The accounts are equal to roughly 90 percent of what a child would generate if in the public school system.

"Parents are the best barometer for measuring their own child's needs, struggles, growth, and success," said Robert Enlow, president and CEO of the Friedman

Foundation. "No amount of standardized tests can tell us if a child comes home from school happy, healthy, and excited to learn."

"With the choice and purchasing power ESAs afford these families, we are seeing a clear shift in sentiment from dissatisfied to satisfied," said Jonathan Butcher, education director for Arizona's Goldwater Institute and one of the report's authors.

★ Former Newark, NJ, Mayor Cory Booker was sworn in as U.S. senator from New Jersey October 31, after winning a special election earlier in the month. The American Federation for Children congratulated Booker, a Democrat, describing him as "a proponent of educational choice and commonsense education reform that puts children first." Booker was a keynote speaker in 2012 at the AFC National Policy Summit and once served as a board member of AFC's sister organization, the Alliance for School Choice.

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