

Council for American Private Education

CAPE outlook

Voice of America's private schools

Private Schools Boost College Degrees for Black Males

High-achieving black males who attend private high schools are dramatically more likely to attain a bachelor's degree than similar students attending public schools, according to a study published in *The Urban Review*.

The study is among the scholarly resources included in the "Black Male Education Research Collection," a new Web site launched by University of Texas College of Education Professors Louis Harrison and Anthony

Brown to "help researchers, journalists, and policymakers locate available research on the education of black males."

Using data from the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS:88/00), Dr. Valija C. Rose, the report's author, looked at how high school types, settings, and programs affect the chances of certain students attaining a college degree. Dr. Rose's focus was black male students who in 1988 as eighth graders had scored among the top 10 percent of all black students on any one of four performance tests in math, reading, science, or social studies.

Her findings were published in 2013 under the title "School Context, Precollege Educational Opportunities, and College Degree Attainment Among High-Achieving Black Males."

While controlling for socioeconomic status or SES (a variable combining parent education and occupation along with family income), Dr. Rose looked at the impact on getting a college degree of (a) school location (urban, suburban, rural), (b) school sector (public or private), and (c) educational opportunities (participation in gifted and talented programs or AP courses).

This could be her report's most startling finding: "Of all the factors explored in the study, attending a private school was found to have the most influence on bachelor's degree attainment among high-achieving black males."

Just how much of an influence? Overall, 42 percent of the sample attained a bachelor's degree or higher within eight years after graduating high school. However, an astounding 93 percent of students who

had attended a private high school did so, compared to 28 percent of students who had attended a public high school.

To illustrate vividly the impact of various factors on the likelihood of attaining a degree, Dr. Rose set up a hypothetical scenario involving different high-achieving

black males. In her setup, fictitious characters Chris and Antoine have the same mean socioeconomic status. They both attend

urban schools, and neither one is enrolled in gifted and talented programs or AP courses. In short, when it comes to the factors considered in the study, the only difference between the two personas is the type of high school they attend. Antoine is in a public school, and Chris, a private

school. "Comparing Chris to Antoine shows roughly the net impact of attending a private school," writes Dr. Rose.

The impact is considerable. The predicted probability of Chris attaining a bachelor's degree or higher eight years after high school is 83 percent, while the probability of Antoine doing so is only 10 percent. As the report puts it, "Antoine, our hypothetical student who attended an urban, public school and never participated in a gifted and talented program or AP, has a 10 percent chance of attaining a bachelor's degree eight years after high school—which is deplorable." As Dr. Rose notes, Antoine unfortunately represents thousands of similarly situated students.

Capturing the benefits of private schools, the report states, "Despite controlling for SES and prior achievement, high-achieving black males who attend private school appear to have an advantage over their public school counterparts." And keep in mind that the study already controlled for gender and race by focusing exclusively on black males.

Dr. Rose also calculates the predicted probability of getting a bachelor's degree for other hypothetical students based on the urban or subur-

Predicted Probabilities of Attaining a Bachelor's Degree or Higher for Hypothetical High-Achieving Black Males of Mean SES

	Antoine	Brian	Chris	Dante
Urban School	Y	N	Y	Y
Suburban School	N	Y	N	N
Private School	N	N	Y	N
Public School	Y	Y	N	Y
Gifted Program	N	N	N	Y
Probability	10%	38%	83%	41%

ban location of their school, the private or public sponsorship of the school, and whether or not students ever enrolled in a gifted and talented program or an AP course. Results are displayed in the ac-

continued on page 2

[photo © michaeljung / Adobe Stock]

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
- 37 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

13017 Wisteria Drive #457
Germantown, MD 20874
(tel) 301-916-8460
(fax) 301-916-8485
(email) cape@capenet.org

www.capenet.org

State Supreme Court Asked to Consider Michigan Law

On June 27, 2016, Michigan Governor Rick Snyder signed an education bill into law that included historic provisions for private schools. Now known as Public Act 249, the law reimburses private schools up to \$2.5 million for the costs of carrying out state requirements relating to student health, safety, and welfare. Similar “mandated services” statutes have long been established in several other states.

In an abundance of caution, Governor Snyder has asked Michigan’s Supreme Court to issue an advisory opinion on whether the section (152b) of PA 249 that relates to private school reimbursement violates one of two Blaine amendments in the state constitution (Article VIII, Section 2), which prohibits the use

continued from page 1

companying table. Using Antoine as a base, the only difference between Brian and Antoine is that Brian attended a suburban public school whereas Antoine attended an urban public school. The single difference between Dante and Antoine is that Dante benefited from a gifted and talented program while Antoine did not.

Positive and Negative Influences

Using a logistic model, Dr. Rose concludes that “attending an urban school, attending a private school, and participating in a gifted and talented program influenced bachelor’s degree attainment among high-achieving black males.” However, the influence was not always in the same direction. While attending a private school “increased the odds of attaining a bachelor’s degree, holding all other variables constant,” as did (though to a lesser degree) participating in a gifted and talented program, attending an urban school actually decreased the odds.

Emerging Research Base

Dr. Rose writes that there has been “an emerging research base” that has “examined the educational experiences of gifted and high-achieving black males in K-12 settings and in college settings,” but says that few studies other than her own have looked at the interplay between high school education and the actual realization of a college degree for such students.

She spotlights a study by Shaun R. Harper, professor at the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania and president of the Association for the Study of Higher Edu-

of public funds “to aid or maintain any private, denominational or other nonpublic, pre-elementary, elementary, or secondary school.” Snyder requested that the opinion be rendered before

October 1, 2016, the date the private school provision takes effect.

To assist the court with its decision, the Michigan Association of Non-Public Schools (MANS), a state CAPE affiliate, has filed a brief explaining that New York, Ohio, and Illinois, which all have

Blaine amendments, also have their own mandated services reimbursement laws, which are “consonant with their state constitutions” and in the case of New York and Ohio, have even “withstood constitutional challenges under the Establishment Clause of the U.S. Constitution.”



Harper wrote a report in 2012 titled “Black Male Student Success in Higher Education,” which looked at 219 black male undergraduates from 42 colleges and universities who had been “successful in an array of postsecondary educational settings” and had earned high grade point averages along with numerous merit-based scholarships and honors. Harper found that a full 27 percent of those successful students had attended private high schools, a remarkable number since nationally only 8 percent of all high school students attend private schools.

One limitation of Harper’s study, observes Dr. Rose, is that “participants were selected because of their high achievement...in college,” meaning that students “who displayed high achievement early on in their schooling, but failed to become high-achieving collegians” were neglected. She says her own study is an attempt “to fill this gap in the literature.”

Students at a Crossroads

Explaining that her study “contributes to our understanding of how school context and precollege educational opportunities influence college degree attainment among high-achieving black males,” Dr. Rose astutely points out that those students “are at a crossroads.” Society is demanding “a more skilled, better-educated workforce across all demographic groups,” but unequal access to high-quality educational opportunities is making it tough for some students to meet that demand. She notes that many high-achieving black males are still awaiting their fair chance to succeed in college.

Report Card Ranks School Choice Programs

Different people use different criteria when evaluating school choice programs. Choice universalists, for instance, give high marks to programs that serve everyone, regardless of income. State accountability devotees put a high premium on measuring student performance on stat tests. Enthusiasts of equal opportunity prefer programs tilted toward students most in need. And the measurement matrix only expands from there. Suffice it to say that there's a plethora of standards in play when sizing up school choice initiatives.

The plethora notwithstanding, the American Federation for Children (AFC) recently took on the daunting challenge of evaluating and ranking 27 “non-special-needs voucher, scholarship tax credit, and education savings accounts programs” across the country. The tool it used was sophisticated, employing criteria from three broad categories (*student eligibility, scholarship and program size, and accountability*) and dozens of subcategories, collectively reflecting AFC's ideal conceptualization of school choice. Within each subcategory, AFC awarded programs 0 to 4 points, but counted some categories more heavily than others in order to reflect their relative importance. Programs were then ranked based on the total points they earned.

How Points Are Awarded

Let's look at the grading system in action. Under the *student eligibility* standard, for example, AFC evaluates programs based on “the limitations placed on the students who are allowed to participate.” Income eligibility is one of the subcategories within the standard. Thus, a program that allows families with annual incomes above, say, \$90,000 to participate receives more points than one that limits eligibility to families making less than, say, \$45,000. Prior attendance is another subcategory. Accordingly, programs in which students already enrolled in private schools are eligible score higher than those that limit eligibility only to students currently enrolled in public schools. Three other subcategories within the *student eligibility* standard yield additional points.

The *program and scholarship size* standard also involves five subcategories. Under one of them, states with high scholarship amounts (e.g., amounts equal to 100 percent of state and

local per-pupil expenditures) receive more points than states with lower amounts (e.g., 40 percent of per-pupil expenditures). Another subcategory favors programs with no caps on enrollment or funding over programs that have such caps.

Accountability

AFC believes choice programs “should contain commonsense academic, administrative and financial accountability provisions.” One subcategory under the *accountability* standard rewards states that give private schools a choice of standardized tests when demonstrating student performance, and penalizes states that require schools to administer state assessments.

Other *accountability* subcategories relate to the reporting of test results, providing proof of financial viability, and complying with health and safety regulations.

Improvement

Not only does the report identify the country's top school choice programs, it also “discusses ways each program can improve to better serve students,” said Whitney Marcavage, author of the report and policy director at the AFC.

According to the report, the top five programs overall are: Florida's Tax Credit Scholarship Program, Nevada's Educational Choice Scholarship Program, Indiana's Choice Scholarship Program, North Carolina's Opportunity Scholarship Program, and Louisiana's Tuition Donation Rebate Program.

400,000 Students

AFC's report notes that as of July 2016, there were “nearly 400,000 students enrolled in 50 different private school choice programs located in 25 states plus Washington, D.C.” AFC only counts programs that “(1) give parents enough assistance to actually make a different educational choice, and (2) provide parents with a variety of private school options, including religious schools.”

“Private school choice programs are providing children across the country with access to a world-class education and the opportunity to succeed throughout their lives,” said Betsy DeVos, AFC's chair.

The AFC Report Card was released August 25 at an event in Washington, D.C., and is available at www.federationforchildren.org.

[photo © BillionPhotos.com / Adobe Stock]

Weekly Meds

Does your mind jump from thought to thought like a restless monkey leaping from limb to limb? Are you looking for a soothing respite from a frantic schedule? Try *Weekly Meditations: 2011-2014*, a new book by the Rev. Daniel R. Heischman, executive director of the National Association of Episcopal Schools and president of CAPE.

Ideal for frenzied educators, the book provides short, dense, inspiring reflections that serve to slow things down and offer a fresh perspective on the noble work of education.

Try Heischman's take on a comment by NPR's Krista Tippett that teachers “connect their words with practices and virtues.” Teachers, he writes, “not only tell students we are ready to be of help, we connect those words with the practice of being available.” The extra time teachers spend with students vividly demonstrates how much they care.

And then there is Heischman's musings on the uncommon calendrical juxtaposition in 2013 of Thanksgiving and Chanukah, both festivals giving us “an opportunity to experience freedom through the simple act of thanking God.” No matter “how bound we are by restriction, worry, or anxiety,” a prayer of thanksgiving allows us “to rise above the here and now and find our ultimate freedom in God.”

Or take his use of Norman Rockwell's breakthrough civil rights painting *The Golden Rule* as a summons for educators to “be alert to the cries of our times and respond in ways that will bring people together.”

Heischman's motivating meditations are mailed weekly to Episcopal school leaders, who receive them with enthusiasm. This new book now makes his essays available to nourish, inspire, and soothe a wider community. Find it at www.episcopalsschools.org/forms/store/ProductFormPublic/.

CAPE notes

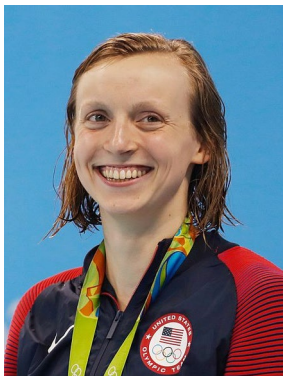
★ Katie Ledecky dominated women's swimming at the Rio Olympics this summer, winning four gold medals and one silver, and setting an 800 meter freestyle world record to boot.

The 2015 graduate of Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart in Bethesda, MD, returned to her *alma mater* August 25 to visit students and teachers and to sit for interviews for PBS News-hour and Fox News Sunday.

Stone Ridge is part of a network of 145 Catholic schools across the world founded by the Society of the Sacred Heart. Astonishingly, that network has produced much more than its fair share of 2016 Olympic athletes, including Ledecky, KK Clark (gold medalist in water polo), Erin Rafuse (double-handed skiff), Gaby Lopez (golf), and Anabelle Smith (bronze medalist in synchronized diving).

Two other Sacred Heart women were also involved with the Olympics: Denise Sheldon, who headed the USA volleyball delegation, and Mary Joe Fernandez, USA women's tennis coach.

"Our athletes recognize that their gifts come from God and are not to be wasted," network spokeswoman, Donna Heckler, told the Catholic News Agency. "They are taught to take personal responsibility for themselves while being self-disciplined in their efforts," she added.



★ Staying with the Olympics theme, the Mathematical Association of America (MAA) reports that for the second year in a row, "the U.S. team won first place at the 57th International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO) in Hong Kong, July 6-16." The IMO is the world championship for high school students, "where the brightest mathematics students from more than 100 countries compete." According to the MAA, "The winning U.S. team score was 214 out of a possible 252, ahead of the Republic of Korea (207) and China (204)."

The six team members from the U.S. included three students from private schools: Junyao Peng (Princeton International School of Mathematics and Science, Princeton, New Jersey), Ashwin Sah (Jesuit High School, Portland, Oregon), and Yuan Yao (Phillips Exeter Academy, Exeter, New Hampshire). All team members won gold medals for individual scores. Yao was one of two American students to receive a perfect scores.

"We are very excited to bring home another first-place IMO award, which serves as a recognition for the high standard of mathematical creativity and problem-solving capabilities we have in our country," said Po-Shen Loh, who served as lead coach for the U.S. team and is associate professor of mathematics at Carnegie Mellon University.

★ Are teachers in private schools happier than teachers in other schools? Well, to the degree that job satisfaction contributes to happiness, the answer is yes.

This past June, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) published a "Data Point" report titled "**Teacher Job Satisfaction**," which looked at responses by teachers since 2003 to the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS).

In 2011-12, 95 percent of teachers in private schools reported they were satisfied with their jobs, compared to 90 percent of teachers in public schools. That meant they "strongly agreed" or "somewhat agreed" with the statement "I am generally satisfied with being a teacher in this school."

It turns out that satisfaction levels have remained somewhat steady for about a decade. In 2003-04 the percentages of satisfied teachers in private schools and public schools were, respectively, 95 and 91, and in 2007-08 they were 96 and 93.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT



EASY FOR EVERYONE

BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE FOR SCHOOLS
FINANCIAL SOLUTIONS FOR FAMILIES
WWW.SMARTTUITION.COM

SMART TUITION
Financial Solutions for Schools and Families