Private Education and the Public Interest

A message from [your organization]

Private schools are partners in the education of the public.

[Your state’s] private schools currently educate more than _____ students representing ____% of the state’s total K-12 enrollment. One out of every ____ K-12 schools in [your state] is a private school. Private schools provide students with knowledge, skills and values that are essential for productive and responsible participation in a democratic society. Graduates of [your state’s] private schools make significant contributions to every aspect of life in the state, often distinguishing themselves for their social, cultural, economic, scientific, academic, legal, religious and political achievements and leadership. Whatever their particular orientation, [your state’s] private schools uphold and promote the values of public participation and service to community.

Private schools are diverse and pluralistic.

American private education reflects the diversity that is a hallmark of our country’s strength, freedom and creativity. Private schools span the ideological gamut, from Society of Friends (Quaker) schools to military academies, include parochial schools associated with multiple faiths and denominations, and feature an array of non-sectarian schools with differing philosophies of education, visions and missions. Private schools are urban, suburban and rural, large and small, progressive and traditional, religious and secular, independent and networked in various associations. In short, private schools offer parents and students a broad and meaningful range of educational options.

Private schools set high standards and assure direct accountability.

For all their diversity, private schools share a number of essential characteristics in common. Chief among these is the fact that enrollment is always a function of choice. This means that the relationship between families and the schools they choose is strictly voluntary. If a private school fails to meet or exceed the expectations of the families it serves, the option of withdrawal and enrollment in other private or public schools can always be exercised. Competition for scarce resources in an open market environment dictates that private schools establish and maintain high standards and commit themselves to the constant pursuit of excellence. The very nature of private education promotes direct accountability of schools, teachers and administrators to the parents and students they serve.
Private schools contribute significantly to [your state’s] economy.

What would the cost to [your state]’s taxpayers be if private schools were to disappear? In the [year] school year, the K-12 per-pupil expenditure from all sources was $_____.

Multiplying this figure by the [total K-12 enrollment in your state] students enrolled in [your state’s] private schools results in an additional cost to the public of $____ [million/billion] dollars. Even if this sum could be modestly reduced by economies of scale, the question of where these students would be educated remains. It is conceivable that as many as ___ new schools would need to be constructed or purchased, resulting in a staggering level of long-term, public indebtedness.

Not only do [your state’s] private schools save taxpayers [millions/billions] of dollars every year; private school families help foot the bill for public education through their own tax dollars. Moreover, private schools provide [tens of] thousands of jobs, generate revenue for local businesses and, most importantly, develop the human capital necessary to assure [your state] of a bright economic future.

Private schools achieve the kind of results [your state] needs.

High standards and direct accountability to students and parents produce positive results. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, private schools both outperformed public schools in the latest National Assessment of Educational Progress, and achieved a substantially narrower gap between minority and majority students, as well. In fact, NCES data show that minority students who graduate from private schools are more than twice as likely to attend four-year colleges as their public school counterparts. And once they get there, they’ll be well prepared. According to recent College Board figures, while SAT scores have risen an average of 4 points for public school students since 1996, they have risen 13 points for private independent school students and 18 points for students attending private religious schools during the same period.

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Civic minded, fiscally responsible, socially and philosophically diverse, accountable and high achieving. These are [your state’s] private schools – truly partners in the education of the public.

About [your organization]

[Include a short paragraph about your organization here.]