State CAPE Reports

March 2005

PRIVATE EDUCATION:
Good for Students
Good for Families
Good for America
1. **Membership**

CAPSO membership grew to seventeen organizations with the addition of the Department of Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. The “CAPSO Family” now includes 1,780 schools enrolling 465,000 students and employing 28,000 fulltime teachers.

2. **Private School Recognition Day**

SCR58 establishes each March 22 as “California Private School Recognition Day.” The text of the resolution is available via the state CAPE resource page on the CAPE website.

3. **Tax-Exempt Bonds Case**

CAPSO was lead Amicus party to a successful request for review of “California Statewide Communities Development Authority v. All Persons Interested.” Details on CAPSO website at: http://www.capso.org/resources/cataxexempt.html

4. **Seismic Safety Commission**

CAPSO played an important role in shaping the form of a report titled “Seismic Safety in California’s Schools.”

5. **NCLB Private School Work Group**


6. **Colloquium on Private School Accountability**

Joe McTighe will keynote programs to take place on May 17 & 18, 2005, also featuring Rae Belisle, John E. “Jack” Coons, and Lance Izumi.

7. **California Budget Deficit Projected at $10-12 Billion for 2005-06**

8. **Governor Schwarzenegger Proposes Merit Pay for Teachers**

SCA 1 (G. Runner) would tie teacher salaries to as-yet unspecified annual performance assessments rather than years-of-service and advanced degrees. Tenure requirements would be greatly increased.

9. **CAPSO produced its first Annual Report.**

10. **CAPSO Triennial Convention to take place November 21-22, 2005 in Long Beach, CA.**

11. **Teachers Union Testifies in Support of Parental Rights in Education (SB 715 – Haynes).**

The California Teachers Association stands up for parents wishing to send their children to private schools.
Delaware State CAPE Report

The DAIS group is made up of the heads of schools from private, parochial, Montessori, Hebrew and Christian schools. There are twenty four schools represented in the organization. Mr. "Chip" MacKelcan, head of Sanford School serves as President. DAIS hires a State Government Relations Representative, Mr. William Wood, who attends the meetings and brings a report on governmental issues that may affect the private schools in our association.

The Delaware Association of Independent Schools (DAIS) last met on Thursday, February 10th. The agenda included:

1. State Representative Melanie George provided an overview of the full-day Kindergarten proposal that is being considered at the state level. She explained the financial and programmatic aspects of the proposal and outlined a timetable which seeks to have optional full-day kindergarten available to state residents by the fall of 2008. A longer-term proposal will consider a pre-K program as well as consideration of a "birth to five" program for children in the public sector.

2. DAIS is endorsing an advertisement campaign sponsored by "Community of Concern". This involves a public service announcement in four area newspapers. Community of Concern is a program that campaigns against drug and alcohol use and provides support and education for schools, students and parents.

3. "School's Attuned" course will be offered at the Wilmington Montessori School during the spring and summer of this year.

4. Bill Wood gave a legislative update. Chief issues are: 1) the contention involving state teachers unions and teacher/school accountability, 2) state testing is under fire, and 3) an anti-bullying program, promoted by Peter Yarrow is available.

5. A round-table discussion was held concerning school benefits and each school was given the opportunity to share notable developments at their respective schools.

The next (and final meeting for the year) is scheduled for April 13, 2005

Respectfully submitted,
Bill Stevens
DAIS Representative to CAPE
LEGISLATIVE

Private School Day at the Capitol
Lt. Governor Duke Aiona proclaimed Thursday, January 27, 2005 to be Hawaii Private Schools’ Day at the State Capitol, in honor of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools, the Hawaii Council of Private Schools, and the Hawaii Catholic Schools & Seventh-Day Adventists Schools in Hawaii.

The entire day was a celebration of private school contributions to the State of Hawaii.

The annual private school legislative day at the State Capitol is designed to foster the ongoing partnership between private and independent schools and state policymakers.

Private School Legislative Interests
During the 2005 Legislative Session, the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools and the Hawaii Council of Private Schools will monitor, provide resources for, and selectively provide testimony on the following issues as well as other that may arise which will affect our independence.

- Special Purpose Revenue Bonds for school renovations
- Early Childhood Education (private school licensing requirements)
- Health and Safety Issues (youth obesity and bullying)
- Charter Schools
- Pupil Transportation (private school pupil transportation research)

Liaisons
- The Department of Human Services has implemented a new registry program to include:
  - a teacher database
  - newly revised forms and applications
  - college credits from other university may be accepted
  - preschool teachers may be required to have a BA degree beginning 2010

- Honolulu Magazine – An admission guide for parents was published for the second year.

Licensing Activities
The HCPS Board conducted licensing and re-licensing visits to six schools on the Island of Hawaii visit on February 7 & 8, 2005. The HCPS board convened for a meeting on the afternoon of February 8th at Hualalai Academy.

Criminal History Record Check Program
The program is well underway. HCPS has received tremendous support from the Hawaii Criminal Justice Data Center (HCJDC) and has engaged in ongoing and productive dialogue with the HCJDC staff throughout the year, thus helping to ensure the success and effectiveness of this requirement that assures the safety and well being of children in all private schools.

Enrollment and Tuition Reports

These annual reports are published again this year and available at www.hais.org
Publicly, action in Illinois, relevant to nonpublic schools, has been tepid. Behind the scenes, however, our coalition remains vigilant and vigorous.

Our usual presence and momentum at the state level was derailed when the Governor of Illinois staged a virtual coup of the Illinois State Board of Education. Specifically, the Illinois House and Senate allowed the Governor to replace the State Superintendent and seven of nine board members and make personal appointments to these vacancies. Our dialogue with the State Board of Education was instantly scuttled on many fronts.

The following initiatives survive:

1. Nonpublic School Recognition (Accreditation)
   • Initially eliminated by the Governor, political pressure rallied to reinstate the program, albeit with serious damage to our longstanding efforts to create a process for reciprocity between the state agency and approved private accrediting agencies such as A.C.S.I.

2. Teacher Certification and Renewal
   • Illinois’ complex Professional Development model has receded in import to the Legislature and Governor, leaving a shriveled administrative trail leading to, in essence, an honor system among professionals to pursue training on threat of a records audit.

3. Opportunity Grants
   • The Coalition has voted to support a bill for the creation of Opportunity Grants for disadvantaged students in the City of Chicago. The Coalition has been working closely with the Catholic Conference of Illinois on this initiative, along with other national groups advancing private school choice and vouchers. Details of the bill are firm but not yet public. Stay tuned.

4. Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) will be required in every school, public and private, by next year; actual regulations are incomplete.

5. FYI: ICNS contracted Simplified Solutions and MemberClicks (cf. Tom Casale, State CAPE presentation, Union League Club, June 2004) for web and e-newsletter services. Moderate satisfaction.

6. Future initiatives:
   • Double the current Illinois $500 educational expense tax credit.
   • Increase the Transportation Reimbursement to Parents, presently $30m+.

Respectfully,

Gary B. Arnold, Ed.D.
Executive Director
1. The Kentucky Non-Public Schools Commission (KNPSC) is in the process of implementing its revised accreditation process, which now features school improvement components and yearly reviews. A series of in-service programs have been held across the state to educate principals and site visitors about the changes and the new reporting requirements. Site visits to ten schools are currently underway in this first year of implementing of the new process.

2. The KNPSC has initiated a search process to identify and hire a new executive director. The position will start off as a part-time arrangement with part-time clerical support. A new and higher fees structure has been adopted to support these changes. We hope to hire the new director in time for the next school year.

3. As chairperson of the KNPSC I have been invited to participate in a special committee established by the Kentucky High School Athletic Association (KHSAA) to prevent and solve problems regarding private school participation within the association. Topics to be studied include: Private school participation and the offering of scholarships and financial assistance by the private and parochial schools; recruiting of middle school students; transfer rules and how to deal with dual owned residences and separation/divorce situations; and Title IX and the prime-time scheduling of events. As always there is concern that attempts will continue to be made by certain public school members of the KHSAA to exclude private school participation in state tournament competition. We hope to be proactive in preventing such attempts before they reach the point of public debate and public vote by the member schools.

4. The KNPSC is working with the Catholic Conference of Kentucky and the Kentucky League for Educational Alternatives (KLEA) to have private school busing funds restored to the governor’s budget for the 2005-2006 school year. In these times of budget shortfalls, there was a move to eliminate the 2.5 million dollars in the budget to reimburse the local public school districts, which provide transportation of private, and religious school students to and from school. So far the money has been restored, but with the increase in the number of private schools seeking safe bus transportation of their students, the commission and league are working to have the funding increased to a necessary 3.4 million.

Respectfully submitted by:

Dr. Lawrence M. Bowman
Chairperson
KNPSC
Michigan State CAPE Report

Public Policy - Little new or unique is happening on the public policy side in Michigan. We are one of the last states to show signs of economic recovery so the mantra for the Governor and Legislature is JOBS, JOBS, JOBS. Higher education has taken more of an economic hit than our K-12, but the K-12 folks are still crying louder than ever. There is a growing frustration on the part of our average Joe on the street that the Michigan Education Association will never have enough money and they will always be the first and loudest to cry.

Another challenge for our leadership is that we have a very popular Democratic Governor and a Republican House and Senate. They keep talking about working collaboratively but there is little or no evidence of this. They claim every idea will be considered but the facts show that this conversation is all window dressing. This along with term limits, does not bode well for Michigan's citizens.

Conference Planning - We are in the middle of planning two conferences. The 2005 MANS Administrators' Conference planned for October 2005 on Mackinac Island is about set and we are just beginning our plans for the large (5,000 attendees) convention which is scheduled for October of 2006 in Grand Rapids.

We have added a new twist to the two conferences this time around. We are planning a common theme and using the same keynote speaker for both conferences. So, the theme for the 2005 Administrators' Conference is "Leaders in Faith - Called to Serve" and the 2006 Convention theme will be "Partners in Faith - Called to Serve."

Accreditation - We have found it necessary to give our accreditation program a shot in the arm. The process became somewhat repetitive so we have added a new category for schools who want to flex their improvement muscles. This category is referred to as "Accreditation with Distinction." We have just begun this effort so we really do not know how well it will be received. We will keep you posted.

Parent Network - Without a major public policy challenge on the immediate horizon, we are finding it a challenge to keep parents engaged in the MANS Parent Network. Our Parent Network Leadership Council has discussed this at length and decided to try a different approach. They have asked me to explore the concept of using our network to plan and deliver practical services to the potential sixty to seventy thousand parents with the hope of getting some financial benefit back to the schools where these parents send their children. To date, I have contacted Verizon Wireless about a group rate on their service, an affinity credit card company so parents could carry a MANS Parent Network credit card, one of our major Michigan Banks to offer distinctive group services to parents and schools, and a high speed internet company who would offer discounted monthly services to parents along with a rebate back to the school. Time will tell if any of this exploration produces any specific program for parents.
Interestingly, in my conversations with Verizon Wireless, I learned that Verizon has just purchased exclusive rights to wireless service in the southwest part of Michigan. Now they are in need of more transmission towers and there is always resistance to these in communities for aesthetic reasons. While thinking about this, I thought about the possibility of placing transmission and receiving equipment in the steeples of our churches. When I shared this thought with Verizon folks, there was obvious interest. The upside of this could be of benefit to churches because it could result in a nice monthly check from Verizon. The downside may be that priests and parish pastors could be competing with cell phone user interference as they are delivering their homilies and sermons. I’m told by the Verizon folks that the engineers are studying the positives and negatives of what may be the dumbest idea of the century.

Energy - We are still in the business of contracting for discounts for our schools and affiliates in the areas of natural gas and electricity. We have just purchased natural gas on a nine month contract and electricity on a two year guaranteed price contract. With the economy looking up just a little, are also looking at vendors who will help our schools and churches on the conservation side. We all know though, that it takes money to save money.

I look forward to our time together in Washington D.C. Blessings to each of you and all those you love.

Glen Walstra
Minnesota CAPE REPORT, March 2005

Filed by
Minnesota Independent School Forum (MISF)

New Mission Statement

Our mission is to advance independent education as an advocate and resource for our students and school communities.

The Minnesota Independent School Forum (MISF) is a non-profit organization working on behalf of 84,538 students plus parents, teachers and administrators in Minnesota’s 574 private K-12 schools. The Minnesota Independent School Forum:

• Works inclusively with independent, religious and non-sectarian schools.
• Provides services to member schools, including scholarships, multicultural training and resources, research and student leadership workshops.
• Respects the independence and autonomy of private K-12 schools in setting their mission and educational focus.
• Provides information to all nonpublic schools in the state through the Internet, newsletters, conferences, and legal reference guide.
• Represents Minnesota nationally in public policy actions through the Council for the Advancement of Private Education (CAPE) in Washington, D.C.
• Seeks cooperation with the public school community.

Activities 2004-2005
Government & Legislative

1) Provide leadership to the Minnesota Nonpublic Education Council, reporting directly to the Commissioner at the Minnesota Department of Education.
2) Published legislative advocacy positions. MISF:
   a. Support tax credit for corporations and individuals that contribute to a scholarship granting organization.
   b. Support full funding of the educational tax credit and deduction for parents.
   c. Support an amendment to allow funds to be used to pay travel costs for essential personnel employed by the LEA to teach and provide special services at the nonpublic site. Also, require LEA’s to have private school parents or staff on district special education advisory councils.
   d. Maintain full funding and distribution of nonpublic pupil aids, including textbooks, transportation, counseling and health ($14 million).
   e. Act as a conduit for nonpublic school athletic director and school heads to participate in encouraging fairness in high school activities through the Minnesota High School League Classification Committee and discourages a “multiplier” formula from reaching a vote by the MSHSL Board of Directors.
   f. Allow participation of nonpublic students in local school district extracurricular activities.

Programs & Projects

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<th>Programs &amp; Projects</th>
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<td>1) Teacher Recruitment Fair</td>
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<td>2) Minnesota Independent Schools Conference</td>
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<td>3) Webmaster Forum</td>
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<td>4) Student of Color Leadership Conference</td>
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<td>5) Legal Handbook for P-K-12 private schools</td>
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<td>6) Monthly and quarterly communications with all</td>
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<td>Minnesota private schools and including MISF website</td>
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<td>7) Research and school advocacy statistics</td>
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<td>8) Multicultural leadership training &amp; consulting</td>
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<td>9) Math &amp; Science Education Initiative</td>
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Tax Credit Post Card Campaign: The NYS Catholic Conference is spearheading a state-wide post card campaign designed to demonstrate support for education tax credit to elected officials. The Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn already collected nearly 90,000 postcards. Members of the NYS Coalition of Independent and Religious Schools (NYSCIRS) are exploring ways to extend the campaign throughout the rest of the state.

State Budget Overview – Coalition Testifies: NYSCIRS testified before the legislative fiscal committees concerning Governor Pataki’s 2005-06 budget proposal. The proposal totals $105 billion, of which $15.9 billion is directed to elementary and secondary schools, including the following provisions affecting religious and independent schools:
- **Mandated Services Aid (MSA)** – $87.7 million, includes a 5% increase.
- **Academic Intervention Services (AIS)**: $1 million, plus $4 million in reappropriations.
- **Textbook Aid**: $57.30 per pupil.
- **Software Aid**: $14.98 per pupil.
- **Library Materials Aid**: $6.00 per pupil.
- **Learning Technology Grants (LTGs)**: $3.29 million to fund 50 to 60 projects.
- **Teacher Centers**: Teacher Centers at $31 million.
- **Universal Pre-K (UPK)**: $200 million. $8 million for contracts with religious and independent schools.
- **School Bus Driver Training**: $400,000 to help drivers comply with safety and training requirements.
- **Charter Schools**: $6 million Charter School Stimulus Fund.

APPLE Legislation – A package of bills (called APPLE: Assisting Private and Parochial Learning Experiences) aimed at providing state support to independent and religious school students and teachers has been reintroduced. Last year, one of the bills, which helps schools reduce energy costs, was signed into law. The remaining APPLE bills include: Reimbursement for Health & Safety Mandates; Prompt Payment and Contracted Services; Tax-Exempt Financing for Construction; Computer Hardware Aid; and Teacher Training.

Parental Choice Bills Reintroduced – NYSCIRS pursues a two-track approach to parental choice legislation. Bills are being introduced to create a tuition tax credit bill that includes a refundable provision for the poor and an investment tax credit to spur donations to schools and scholarship organizations.

Transportation – This measure expands transportation services from 15 to 25 miles, requires small city school districts to provide the same level of transportation services required of all other school districts, and requires public schools to provide transportation to private and religious school students on certain days public schools are closed.

IDEA Regulations; NYS Coalition Testifies -- NYSCIRS provided oral and written comments to the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services regarding the federal IDEA regulations. The Coalition’s comments focused 1) LEA responsible for Services; 2) On-site Services; 3) Direct Services; 4) Consultation; and 5) Individual Entitlement to an IEP.

Political Action Committee – A group of Catholic and Jewish lay individuals are coming together as private citizens to explore the creation of a political action committee to support legislation benefiting parents, students, teachers and administrators of independent and religious schools.
**Oregon Federation of Independent Schools (OFIS)**

The Oregon Federation of Independent Schools is the voice of private education in Oregon, representing private preschool and K-12 schools in Oregon. Governed by a board of directors reflecting the diversity of Oregon's private schools, OFIS works to ensure that Oregon private schools are able to operate with a minimum of government influence or control so that parents can choose from a wide range of educational options for their children. OFIS conducts programs and meetings throughout the year, publishes its Oregon View newsletter and e-mails notices to keep its members informed of developments and news affecting private schools. Subject to underwriter approval, member schools are offered preferred insurance rates and dividends based on lower client acquisition costs. OFIS members receive a CAPE *Outlook* subscription.

In past years, OFIS has worked hard to ensure that administrative rules regarding voluntary registration of private schools did not unduly restrict private schools operation in Oregon. This included appearances before the Private School Advisory Committee and the State Board of Education. Private Schools Appreciation Day has been proclaimed by the governor every year since 1991, often affirmed by the Board of Education. The Oregon legislature has often joined in its support as well. We look forward to Private Schools Appreciation Day being proclaimed on the first Thursday in February each year as it was this February.

Among other things, OFIS worked to get fingerprinting and background checks available for all private school employees and to include private schools in nonprofit bond financing. OFIS conducts very successful Legislative Days and Legislative Dinners with many Oregon State Senators and Representatives in attendance. OFIS has received recognitions and commendations for its work from both the Council for American Private Education (CAPE) and the U.S. Department of Education.

This school year OFIS conducted a very successful Kick-Off meeting featuring a variety of presentations, including hearing from the new Executive Director of the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission, and a representative from the Oregon Department of Education on the topic of school improvement and the Department’s initiatives that could impact private schools. [Private Schools in Oregon can voluntarily register and certify they meet a set of minimum standards, allowing teachers in registered schools to maintain their teaching certificates. Other recognitions flow from this voluntary registration as well. Oregon has a Private School Advisory Board that currently meets annually to advise the Board and the Department.]

This year’s Oregon Private Schools Appreciation Day was held on February 3. A private school choir opened the Oregon House meeting that day, and private school choirs sang in the Capitol Rotunda at noon. A very successful Legislative dinner was held that evening, and it was attended by the largest group of private schoolers and legislators ever. Numerous acknowledgements were received about the Governor’s Proclamation and copies will be distributed at the State CAPE meeting.

Our legislature meets every other year. Oregon has a major budget crisis which will continue to be the major legislative concern, reducing any attention on legislation that could affect private schools or teachers. Currently there are no legislative issues of concern to private schools, but we
are monitoring a number of developments relating to NCLB, charter schools, state testing, etc. Our main goal at this point is to maintain good communication with all state agencies and officials that relate to or work with private schools, teachers and administrators.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is promoting its Small Schools Initiative in Oregon. OFIS has offered its member expertise to public high schools that want to break into small autonomous entities.

Mark Siegel, Executive Director
Oregon Federation of Independent Schools
Membership
As of January 25, 2005, membership stood at 217 schools and 21 associations. TANS was organized in 1967 to promote the interest of non-public schools in Texas. It is the largest and one of the oldest private school organizations in Texas. TANS has become the go-to-place for information about non-public education in Texas.

Mission and Goals
TANS has begun implementing the new mission and vision developed last year by the Executive Board. Keith Loomans has been added to the TANS staff as a part time person with the specific duty of keeping TANS informed of all potential legislation that may affect non-public education. TANS has subscribed to a legislative service to provide Keith with the tools he needs to stay abreast of developments in Austin.

Current Issues
To fund this more proactive approach to legislation, TANS is looking for alternative funding sources. We would appreciate any ideas that have worked for other state cape chapters.

TANS is also looking at the advantages and disadvantages of being a C3 as opposed to a C6. It appears that TANS will need to become a C6 if it is going to become involved in lobbying efforts.

Issues within the State
- School Choice
- Funding for Public Schools
- Virtual School Network
VCPE directed most of its energy and attention toward a school choice initiative in the form of the most comprehensive tax credit bill presented in Virginia. Although tax credit bills have been introduced each year since 1999, this is the first year that a tax credit bill has passed the House. The bill ultimately failed in the Senate Finance Committee but the significance of the House passage cannot be overlooked.

We went into the session with great hopes for the comprehensive language of HB 2914, which would have provided a broad tax credit to all students attending private schools. Yet, it was last year’s more restrictive HB 1942 that survived with amended language taken from HB 2914. The amended version of HB 1942 included last year’s tuition tax credits for at-risk students in families making less than $40,000 per year as well as the new language expanding the tax credits to include contributions to public school foundations.

We expected that the Senate would not look kindly on the measure because it would cost the state up to $12 million in tax credits. Unfortunately, the Senators did not even make a motion to report the bill. VCPE found that many of the Senators were sympathetic and specifically asked to have face to face meetings this summer to discuss the merits of tax credits for private school tuitions. VCPE will certainly follow up with a series of meetings to further educate the members of the legislature.

BACKGROUND

Several years ago, VCPE was asked to “informally” join forces with a group of school choice advocates to develop acceptable language in regard to accountability measures in the language of any school choice bill. Our coalition partners included Lil Tuttle, Education Director of the Clare Boothe Luce Policy Institute, who authored the bills and organized of the coalition, the Virginia Family Foundation, the Home Educators Association of Virginia, as well as a few other academics supporting school choice. By the end of the process this year, VCPE and the Family Foundation were the only groups actively working on the measure with Lil Tuttle.
This year’s efforts started last summer with meetings with the bill’s patron, Delegate Chris Saxman, and a coalition of other interest groups. Delegate Saxman is a very conservative but very young and energetic legislator from a faith-based community. His constituency supports school choice and the Virginia Education Association has little influence in his district.

Joe McTighe joined Del. Saxman, Lil Tuttle and Marie Powell at the VCPE sponsored Legislative Forum held in September in Richmond. School choice issues were highlighted along with an introduction of Del. Saxman’s idea for this year’s tax credit bill, HB 2914. The fruits of our efforts were evident in the increase in interest in this issue and others shown through the willingness of our schools to participate and their responses to our frequent Legislative Updates and Alerts.

This was the first year that VCPE had fully participated in the writing of the bill and we were able to take the template of last year’s unsuccessful bill and introduce new language for tax credits that would help our parents send their kids to our schools. Last year’s version focused on a tax credit to businesses who donate money to a nonprofit organization providing scholarships to eligible children attending a public school and our participation was limited to the accountability language. Eligible children included those in families earning less than $40,000 a year, those who attended a non-accredited public school, children with learning disabilities and children who failed one or more Standards of Learning tests.

This year’s language was meant to create a multi-layered approach to tax credits for businesses and individuals supporting non-public education. This would apply to both private and home-schooled children to create a broader base of support. The public school foundation piece provided political cover for delegates in districts with a strong teacher’s union.

**KEY POINTS IN THE BATTLE FOR THE AMENDED HB 1942**

**Tax credit for public school foundations or scholarship organizations:**
In order to create support among the public sector, the bill allows a total of $50 million in tax credits for donations from individuals and corporations going to both public school foundations and scholarship foundations. The public school foundation could provide funds for a certain public school’s bands, athletics, chorus, additional construction or any number of other activities. The scholarship organization may provide tuition assistance to children attending a nonpublic school.

Individuals may donate money to either a public or private foundation and receive a tax credit in an amount equal to 25% of the contribution to a foundation. The credit may not exceed $800 for individual filers or $1,200 for joint returns.

There is no cap on the amount of tax credit a business may receive, but the total amount the state may spend is $50 million for both the public and private foundations.

**Tax credit for educational expenses:**
This tax credit would apply to expenses incurred by all parents or guardians whose children are in a private or home school. Educational expenses include tuition and/or instructional fees and materials including textbooks, workbooks, curricula and computer software. For individual taxpayers the tax credit is $800 or $1,200 for joint returns for the total education expenses paid by the taxpayer for a student claimed as a dependent.

**Other points to consider:**

HB 1942 was created to appeal to a wide range of public and private interests, with the understanding that if any amendment is added to impose any burdens on private schools, the bill will be pulled by the patron and not considered this year.

HB 1942 also established criteria for the schools selected by scholarship students. Because of the broad coalition established to advocate for this measure, private schools selected by the student are not required to meet VCPE accreditation standards.

- The school selected by a scholarship student must be in compliance with Virginia’s and the localities’ health and safety laws and codes;
- The school must hold a valid occupancy permit as required by the locality;
- The school must not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, or disability;
- The school must comply with nonpublic school accreditation requirements as set forth in 22.1-19 and administered by the Virginia Council for Private Education; OR
- Maintain an assessment system that annually measures scholarship student’s progress in reading and math using a national norm-referenced achievement test, including, but not limited to, the Stanford Achievement Test, California Achievement Test, and Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

Unfortunately, the language that passed the House Finance Committee was the much more narrow language from last year’s tax credit bill that only applied to low-income families and at-risk children. Most VCPE parents were disappointed when the language that would establish a tax credit for their tuition was amended. However, we were able to maintain momentum and the bill was sent to the floor of the House.

On the floor, several Republican delegates noted that they could not support the measure because it did not contain any benefits to public schools. So, we added the public school foundation tax credit language from HB 2914. The amended bill ultimately passed the House 56-41. We lost votes from Democrats and rural Republicans.

As expressed earlier in this report, the bill did not stand a chance in the Senate. The Chairman announced a policy of no new tax credits to begin with and few of the committee members are friendly to the concept of school choice. The Senators are much more concerned with accountability through accreditation than the House. If anything ever were to pass out of the Senate, the accountability language would have to be fine-tuned and may only allow tax credits to state recognized accredited VCPE schools.
Washington

The word “change” describes the Washington Federation of Independent Schools. On July 1st, Judy Jennings, former superintendent of Seattle Christian Schools, was selected by the WFIS Executive Board to succeed Dan Sherman as Executive Director. Dan felt called to begin a new Catholic elementary school in Bellevue, Washington and has left the federation in excellent condition. All of our private schools owe Dan a large debt for the establishment of so many positive relationships with government officials, and paving the way for increased understanding and collaboration between public schools, private schools and constituency leaderships.

In October eight Sound-Offs were held around the state. This was an opportunity to bring diverse schools together to meet the new executive, hear their needs from the Federation, address the lay of the political landscape, and gather input for the development of a Strategic Plan and Board of Directors’ goals.

Working with the Learning Support and Improvement Committee of the State Board of Education and the Private School Advisory Committee, we were able to have the WAC’s changed regarding teacher certification. No longer does there need to be one state certified teacher for every 25 students. While the ratio did not change, private schools are now free to hire teachers with valid out of state certificates, or certificates from nationally recognized associations (i.e. ACSI, CSI, Montessori, etc). This has allowed our schools to hire personnel that reflect the mission specific goals of their organization. Currently, we are working with these same committees to allow national accrediting bodies to accredit schools within their constituencies and have that accreditation be recognized directly by the state. This will eliminate the third party system that has existed until now with the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools (NAAS). Private schools may use NAAS or the state board’s accreditation instrument as well. This year we were also successful in securing a WFIS appointed position to the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association. This further improves communication between public and private schools and even among private schools with one another.

On February 2nd we hosted our Annual Winter Dinner and Best of Washington Awards. This year’s keynote was Joe McTighe in abstencia. Awards were given for the Best Teacher, Best Program, Best Contributor, Best Administrator, and a special recognition award for Dan Sherman and his work with the Federation. The evening was capped with the Columbia Award given to someone who has been influential, instrumental, and involved in the promotion of the private school movement in Washington. This year’s award was given posthumously to Father Dan Weber was one of the founders of WFIS and one of its greatest advocates.

Prior to our dinner, we held two workshops. The morning presentation was given by Pamela Allen from the Department of Non-public Education on the reauthorization of the IDEA and its implications for private schools. This was the first presentation given in the country about this topic. She was followed by Barbara Quick from OSPI, who gave an update on accessing federal funds. The afternoon speakers were Dr. Rick Maloney from
OSPI and director of professional certification requirements, and Donna Foxley, Region 10 Representative from DNE. Each of the workshops was well attended and extremely informative.

After the longest governor’s election in the history of the state, we now have a democratic Governor, House and Senate. There have been a plethora of bills before the legislature and some of them could be injurious to the private school community. The most significant one would omit a private school representative on the State Board and change the entire configuration of the board itself. Others would place all of early childhood education and daycare under OSPI, and remove it from DSHS. Some of our schools are concerned that some of their state funding will be eliminated or reduced. We will know by March 3 which bills will move out of committee and on to the legislature for decisions. We have our constituents ready to respond.

I am encouraged and honored to be Director of WFIS.
State Legislative/Administrative Items of Interest

Proposed property tax freeze and Tax Payer Bill of Rights (TABOR)
There is a strong movement being lead by Republican legislators to implement a three-year freeze on the amount local governments can impose in the way of property taxes. There is, at the same time, a movement to amend the state constitution to create a Tax Payer Bill of Rights (TABOR) that would limit both the amount the state and local governments can raise on an annual basis as well as limit spending at the state and local levels.

The concern that WCRIS has been tracking is an effort by local government bodies to make up for any lost revenue due to TABOR by lifting the property tax exemption currently enjoyed by non-profit organizations. We are also tracking a separate movement to recoup lost revenue by charging non-profit organizations a fee for the services a local government may offer, irrespective of whether the non-profit ever uses the services for which they are being charged.

Milwaukee Parental Choice Program
The MPCP is currently in danger of reaching the artificial enrollment ceiling place on the program better than 10 years ago. The ceiling is 15% or the enrollment in Milwaukee’s public school district, or approximately 15,000 students.

There have been intense negotiations with legislators and Governor Doyle on an education package for Milwaukee that would include, in part, a meaningful lift in the current enrollment cap. There has also been discussion surrounding a proposal to allow the cap to be exceeded by 1,500 students for the 2005-2006 school year while a more permanent lift in the enrollment cap is negotiated. As of this drafting, no agreement on any type of lift to the enrollment cap has been reached. If an agreement to lift the enrollment cap cannot be realized, the state education agency will institute a plan that will ration seats in MPCP participating schools.
**Teacher Licensure**
In May of 2005 the first full wave of students graduating with a degree in education will be coming into the workforce. These educators, and those who will follow, will be required to renew their license based on a portfolio driven process versus the current credit hour approach.

WCRIS has spent considerable time working with the state education agency to clarify components of the rule relating to religious and independent schools, educating our members on the requirements of the new administrative rules, and examining how our schools and WCRIS can best serve the licensing needs of our teachers. This process will continue during next 2-3 years.

**Transportation Changes**
A new administrative rule has gone into affect that changes the circumstances when a local public school district can offer a “take it or leave it” reimbursement contract versus traditional transportation services.

WCRIS worked on the creation of the new administrative rule and in educating our members as to how the rule will affect their relationship with the local education agency.

**Organizational Initiatives**

**Staples office supply program**
WCRIS has agreed to join with the state private higher education association to offer an office/school supply purchasing program to our respective institutions. The program allows for WCRIS to identify 225 core items that will have national account pricing. Items ordered away from the core 225 items will still see significant price reductions. The program provides significant ordering flexibility, a variety of billing options, and rebating programs for both WCRIS and our schools.

The program will be introduced this spring with schools able to utilize the system with 2005-2006 school year ordering.

**WCRIS Leadership Conference**
WCRIS recently completed its second Leadership Conference for school administrators. We had nearly 300 administrators on hand for the two-day event. Administrators selected from 30 sectional presentations, enjoyed a dinner banquet, and hear keynote addresses from Dr. Kevin Reilly, new president of the University of Wisconsin System, and Dr. Vernard Gant, Head of Urban School Services with the Association of Christian Schools International.

The 2005 Leadership Conference concluded a six-week Empowerment Series sponsored by WCRIS. The series included five informational pieces covering the NCLBA, IDEA, and state transportation rules, sent electronically each Friday, and finished with the two-day Leadership Conference.

Attendance at the 2005 Leadership Conference was up 20% over or 2003 attendance.