

# cape Council for American Private Education outlook

"Voice of the Nation's Private Schools"

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**Council Members:** American Montessori Society • Association of Christian Schools International • Christian Schools International • Evangelical Lutheran Church in America • Friends Council on Education • International Christian Accrediting Association • Jewish Community Day School Network • Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod • National Association of Episcopal Schools • National Association of Independent Schools • National Catholic Educational Association • National Christian School Association • Seventh-day Adventist Board of Education, K-12 • Solomon Schechter Day School Association • Southern Baptist Association of Christian Schools • Toussaint Institute for Historically Black Independent Schools • U.S. Catholic Conference • 30 State Affiliates

## Paige Visits Private School, Promotes School Choice

If Siffre and his classmates enjoyed what a lot of pre-kindergarten children enjoy daily: a story read by a caring adult. But while the story, *Frog and Toad Together*, may have been standard pre-K fare, the adult doing the reading was definitely not. He happened to be the country's top educator.

U.S. Education Secretary Rod Paige stopped by Ife's class at St. Francis Xavier School in Kansas City, Missouri, last month as part of his three-week multi-state *Back to School, Moving Forward* tour to promote school improvement, accountability, local control, and parent choice. He also visited the school's 5<sup>th</sup> grade, where he helped with a science lesson on magnets, and then addressed an assembly of students, parents, teachers, and public officials.

Reviewing the components of President Bush's education reform plan, Paige said students should not be locked "into

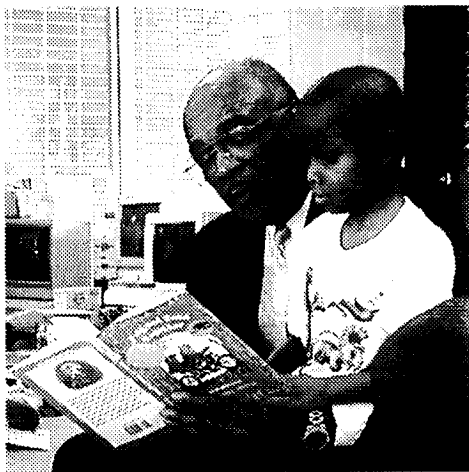


Photo by Joe Cory, The Catholic Key  
U.S. Education Secretary Rod Paige reads to Ife Siffre, a pre-K student at St. Francis Xavier School in Kansas City, Missouri.

failing school systems" but should be allowed to attend schools that meet their needs. Noting that the country has a variety of great schools, including pub-

lic and private schools, Paige said more parental choice will improve education.

Later in the day, at a lunch sponsored by the Children's Scholarship Fund of Kansas City, Paige again hit the theme of school choice, saying, "No student should be chained to a desk in a deficient school."

The day before, at a stop in Tennessee, Paige was even more emphatic about the value of parental choice in education. "There is no force in the universe more powerful, as far as school change is concerned, than an informed parent with options," he said, according to a report in the Nashville Tennessean.

A Catholic elementary school founded in 1910, St. Francis Xavier School serves mostly low-income students. About 85 percent of the children are African American, but only about 10 percent are Catholic. Six out of ten

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## High College-Going Rates for Minorities in Private Schools

Minority students who graduate from private high schools are more than twice as likely to attend four-year colleges than their counterparts in public schools, according to data obtained by CAPE from the National Center for Education Statistics.

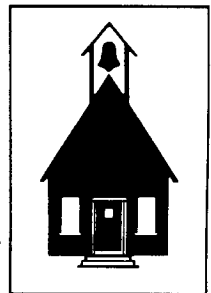
At a time of widespread concern about the persistent disparity in educational achievement among various population groups, the NCES data reveal college-going rates that defy national trends. For example, black graduates of

private high schools went on to four-year colleges at a rate 95 percent higher than white students in public schools and nearly 20 percent higher than their white classmates in private schools. Hispanic private school graduates attended four-year colleges at a rate 42 percent higher than white students in public schools, though 10 points lower than whites in private schools.

The advantage for private school students was most dramatic when rates were examined within racial and ethnic

groups. Black students in private schools attended four-year colleges at more than double the rate of black students in public schools. The story for Hispanic students was the same. The private school payoff for white students, though not as spectacular, was still

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significant. Whites in private schools were 63 percent more likely to attend a four-year college than their peers in public schools.

The data came from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS: 88), a government study that tracked a nationally representative sample of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in 1988 as they progressed through high school and into college. The cohort examined by CAPE included students who graduated high school in the 1991-92 school year and then entered a four-year college sometime between June 1992 and August 1994.

**% of High School Grads Who Went to Four-Year Colleges (by type of high school)**

	Private	Public
All Students	72.5	42.9
White Students	73.7	45.1
Black Students	87.8	38.0
Hispanic Students	63.8	29.5

The findings are especially intriguing at a time when educators and policymakers are frustrated by the inveterate achievement gaps between white students and minority students. Last month, College Board President Gaston Caperton attributed the score gaps on the SAT and other achievement measures to "inequitable access to high-quality education." College Board researchers have found that students exposed to rigorous coursework have higher SAT scores than other students. "Urgent steps must be taken," said Caperton, "to increase the access of minority and low-income students to

high quality K-12 education."

The higher college-going rates for minority students in private schools may in part be attributed to exposure to a more demanding curriculum. Another possible explanation may be the high expectations and culture of achievement that exist in private schools. Factors outside the school, including family characteristics, may also be playing a role.

Given the fact that a host of measures of educational attainment, including college enrollment rates and SAT scores (see page 4), are remarkably higher for minority students in private schools, it is no surprise that some policymakers and researchers have called for school choice demonstration projects and studies to examine more fully the private school performance phenomenon and to test the value of having more minority students attend high quality private schools. They argue that an objective, scientific investigation by impartial researchers could yield a breakthrough in narrowing the nagging achievement gap.

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students receive aid from either the Children's Scholarship Fund or the Central City School Fund, two philanthropic partnerships dedicated to providing tuition assistance to economically needy children. One of the school's claims to fame is that Thomas M. Bloch, former president and CEO of H&R Block, recently finished a three-year stay as the math teacher for students in grades 6, 7, and 8.

School principal Lynne Beachner was honored by Paige's visit. She especially liked the secretary's support of school choice and said the issue is often mischaracterized as a religious matter, rather than an issue of social justice. "Parents with money already have choice," she said, "but any parent who thinks a school isn't working should have the right to choose someplace else."

Judy Warren, superintendent of schools for the Catholic Diocese of Kansas City - St. Joseph, said the themes struck by Secretary Paige in his remarks at the school — local control, parental involvement, accountability, and choice

— are the very elements "that have made Catholic schools strong for more than 200 years."

**New Publications**

Secretary Paige's back-to-school tour began August 15 in Albuquerque, NM, and concluded in San Diego, CA, on September 7. In connection with the tour, Paige introduced three new publications from the Department of Education to help parents, teachers, and communities improve student performance.

The parent publication, available in English and Spanish, reminds parents that the family is the foundation of good education. "You are your children's first teacher. You play a critical role in ensuring that they make steady progress in school, that they go to schools that hold them to high standards, and that the schools help them meet those standards."

In announcing the publications on the tour's first day, Secretary Paige said, "As we start a new school year, it is time for us to reach out to parents,

educators, and community and business leaders to engage them in our plans to create a system of schools that fulfills President Bush's promise that no child will be left behind." He added: "President Bush and I know that change must take place at the local level, and we look to families, schools, and communities to bring about that change through high standards, annual measurement, and accountability for results. As our children return to school to capture the promise of new opportunities to learn and grow, we must embrace these simple principles for reform."

For more information about the *Back to School, Moving Forward* tour and the new publications go to <http://www.ed.gov/inits/backtoschool/index.html>.

(Editor's Note: Information on the secretary's visit to St. Francis Xavier School was based in part on a report provided to CAPE by The Catholic Key.)



## Private School Enrollment Continues to Climb

Six million students — 11.4 percent of the nation's K-12 population — attended private elementary and secondary schools in 1999, according to officials at the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

Since 1989, the private school enrollment figure has risen 15.8 percent, about the same as the 15.6 percent public school growth rate for the same 10-year period.

The figures were released last month in connection with NCES's annual projection of education statistics, a document that provides actual enrollment counts through 1999 and projections through 2011. Total national K-12 enrollment is expected to increase slightly from 53.1 million to 53.4 million between now and 2005, the projected peak year, but the degree and timing of enrollment shifts will vary at the elementary and secondary levels. Public and private K-8 enrollment is set to drop about 1 percent between 2001 and 2011, while 9-12 enrollment is expected to grow by nearly 7 percent through 2006, when it will then begin a gradual decline.

The NCES 10-year enrollment forecast presumes a static 11 percent share of the nation's students will attend private schools throughout the projection period.

On the teacher front, NCES is predicting that 3.65 million elementary and secondary school teachers will be employed nationally in 2011, an increase over 2001 levels of 87,000 teachers in public schools and 11,000 in private schools.

Also last month, NCES published the results of the biennial private school survey (PSS) conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau in the 1999-00 school year. The survey identified 27,223 private elementary and secondary schools, about 23 percent of all schools in the country, and nearly 5.2 million students. (Though derived from the same Census Bureau survey, the PSS enrollment figure for 1999 is about 800,000 less than the figure published in the NCES projection document principally because

the latter includes some pre-K students in its enrollment counts for both public schools and private schools.)

The PSS report showed some significant demographic shifts within the world of private education. Since 1989, conservative Christian schools have seen

### Where do private school students go to school?

Type of School	89-90	99-00
Catholic	54.5%	48.6%
Nonsectarian	13.2%	15.7%
Conservative Christian	10.9%	15.0%
Baptist	5.8%	6.1%
Lutheran	4.4%	4.3%
Jewish	3.2%	3.3%
Episcopal	1.7%	2.2%
Adventist	1.6%	1.2%
Calvinist	0.9%	0.8%
Friends	0.3%	0.3%

an astounding increase of 46 percent in enrollment. The 245,000 additional students in those schools accounted for 75 percent of the total rise in private school enrollment during the past decade. Other types of private schools that posted noteworthy percentage increases in enrollment during the same timeframe included Episcopal schools (37 percent) and nonsectarian schools (26 percent).

### CAPE Members' Numbers

CAPE member organizations, which collectively represent 80 percent of the nation's private school enrollment, have also seen some sharp increases in student counts. The Association of Christian Schools International, which serves evangelical Christian schools, had a K-12 enrollment gain of 70 percent between 1989 and 1999. During that period, ACISI moved from the third largest to the second largest association of private schools in the country. Other CAPE organizations with substantial 10-year enrollment hikes were the Oral Roberts Educational Fellowship (53.4 percent), the American

Montessori Society (53.2 percent), the National Association of Episcopal Schools (20.7 percent), the Solomon Schechter Day School Association (also 20.7 percent), the Friends Council on Education (18.1 percent), and the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (15.6 percent).

Two of CAPE's newest members, the National Christian School Association and the Southern Baptist Association of Christian Schools, while not on the NCES list of private school associations in 1989, had enrollment counts in 1999 of 34,122 (NCSA) and 27,468 (SBACS).

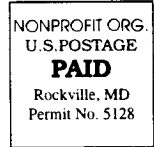
The 1999 enrollment figures for states showed California to have the highest private school enrollment (619,067) and Wyoming to have the lowest (2,221). Other states with large concentrations of private school students included New York (475,942), Pennsylvania (339,484), Illinois (299,871), Florida (290,872), Ohio (254,494), Texas (227,645), New Jersey (198,631), Michigan (179,579), and Maryland (144,131).

### Small and Urban

According to the survey, most private schools are small, with 80 percent having enrollments under 300. Nearly half of all students in private schools (49.2 percent) attend schools located in central cities; another 40 percent attend schools in an urban fringe or large town. Only 11 percent of private school students are in rural or small-town schools.

This fall NCES and the U.S. Census Bureau will be conducting the 2001 private school survey by contacting every private school in the country. Schools are encouraged to assist with this massive undertaking by returning the survey forms promptly, thereby reducing the need for expensive follow-up phone calls and letters.

The 1999-2000 Private School Universe Survey is available on the NCES Web site at the following address: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2001330>.



Return Service Requested

# capenotes

• The College Board last month released SAT results for the high school class of 2001. But while the nation was busy celebrating a nearly negligible 1 point increase in the average combined (verbal and math) score since last year, it all but failed to notice the dramatic differences in the scores of students in public schools and private schools (see chart).

	Verbal	Math
National	506	514
Public	502	510
Religious	530	523
Independent	549	567

Since 1996, SAT scores have risen 7 points for the nation as a whole, 4 points for public schools, 18 points for religious schools, and 13 points for independent schools. Even though they enrolled 9 percent of the nation's 12<sup>th</sup> graders, private schools accounted for 17 percent of senior-year SAT takers from traditional schools (a term that excludes charter, correspondence, and home schools).

In announcing the scores, College Board President Gaston Caperton noted

“some troubling realities that must be addressed,” including the persistent performance gaps between minority and majority students. Although the private school breakout by race and ethnicity is not yet available for the class of 2001, in 1999 (the most recent year for which CAPE has the data) black students in private schools scored 84 points higher than black students in public schools, and the gap in scores between black students and white students was 46 points narrower in private schools than in public schools.

• Students in the nation's public and private schools have made appreciable progress in math over the past 10 years, according to a report released last month by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

At the fourth-grade level, public schools posted a score of 226, and private schools 238, on the 0-500 scale of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) math test administered last year. The scores for each

sector shot up 14 points since 1990.

Eighth-grade scores jumped 12 points in 10 years for public school students and 16 points for private school students. The year 2000 assessment showed eight-grade scores of 274 for public schools and 287 for private schools.

Twelfth-graders also made gains during the past decade. Public school students improved 6 points, and private school students 15 points, to attain respective scores of 300 and 315.

• This fall the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Non-Public Education will sponsor three regional workshops for private school officials on October 18 in Mobile, November 14 in Reno, and December 18 in San Antonio. The free, full-day workshops will feature presentations on federal programs that serve children in private schools, new initiatives in reading, and the new administration's perspective on private education. The program will also provide private school officials a chance to discuss their concerns and issues. To register or to find out more information about the workshops, contact Hia Quach at [hia.quach@ed.gov](mailto:hia.quach@ed.gov).