

Council for American Private Education

CAPEoutlook

Voice of America's private schools

The Private School Advantage for Teachers

Contentment with one's career is a blessing to be cherished. Not everyone enjoys their job, but those who do seem to sense that they're "at home," fulfilling what they are called to do in a setting that feels right. Working conditions contribute a lot to such contentment. If one feels supported, affirmed, and appreciated, and perceives the workplace as pleasant, the contentment factor grows.

New data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) show some significant differences in job satisfaction and perceived working conditions between teachers in private schools and their counterparts in public schools. Despite earning lower salaries, teachers in private schools are more satisfied with their careers, feel more recognized and supported, and are less stressed about their job setting than teachers in public schools. They also report lower rates of problematic student behavior.

Teachers Like Being Here

Tables to be published in the 2013 *Digest of Education Statistics* and based on data collected in the 2011-12 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) show that private school teachers tend to enjoy teaching at their school. Nearly nine in ten private school teachers (87.5 percent) agreed with the following statement: "Teachers at this school like being here; I would describe us as a satisfied group." About three-fourths of public school teachers (75.7 percent) agreed with that statement.

In other measures of satisfaction, 80 percent of private school teachers said they liked "the way things are run" at their school, and 94 percent said they are "generally satisfied with being a teacher at this school." Slightly lower percentages of public school teachers said they liked how their school is run (73 percent) and were satisfied with being a teacher there (90 percent).

Workplace stress is often an indicator of job satisfaction. Fortunately, only 12 percent of private school teachers and 22 percent of public school teachers said, "Stress and disappointments involved in teaching at this school aren't really worth it."

One source of stress can be the fear of losing a job. Ten percent of private school teachers and 44 percent of public school teachers said, "I worry about the security of my job because of the performance of my students on state or local tests."

Salaries

If they could get a higher paying job, would they "leave teaching as soon as possible"? Only 22 percent of private school teachers and 30 percent of public school teachers said they would.

Speaking of higher pay, public school teachers in 2011-12 did indeed have a base salary that substantially exceeded that of private school teachers (\$53,070 vs. \$40,200), but surprisingly, a slightly higher share of private school teachers (50 percent) said they were satisfied with their salary than public school teachers (47 percent).

Parents

Relationships with parents can sometimes be a challenge for teachers, though apparently less so in private schools. Eighty-five percent of private school teachers, compared to 59 percent of public school teachers, claimed to "receive a great deal of support from parents" for the work they do.

Sometimes little things mean a lot when it comes to creating a satisfying

work environment. More private school teachers (91 percent) than public school teachers (79 percent) agreed that necessary materials were "available as needed by staff." And fewer private school teachers (41 percent) than public school teachers (69 percent) thought that "routine duties and paperwork" interfered with their job.

% of Private/Public Teachers Who Say These Student Behaviors Are Serious Problems in Their Schools



	Private	Public
Tardiness	4	12
Absenteeism	3	14
Class Cutting	0.7	5
Apathy	4	20
Unpreparedness	4	30

Students

At the root of some discontent among teachers is the vexing issue of student misbehavior. The percentage of teachers saying that certain

student behaviors are "serious problems" in their schools varies considerably by type of school (see table). Twelve percent of public school teachers and 4 percent of private school teachers put student tardiness in that category. Fourteen percent of public school teachers and 3 percent of private school teachers identify student absenteeism as a "serious problem," and the percentages also vary when applying the label to other behaviors: students cutting class (5 percent of public school teachers and 0.7 percent of private school teachers), student apathy (20 percent and 4 percent), and students coming unprepared to learn (30 percent and 4 percent).

Asked if "lack of parental involvement" is a serious problem in their school, 25 percent of public school teachers, but only 3 percent of private school teachers, said it was.

When it comes to cooperating with colleagues, a high proportion of teachers, public and private, perceived professional relations in the school in a positive light. More than four out of five teachers (82

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CAPE

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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DC CAPE Overcomes Odds to Secure Equity for Students

It's a modern-day illustration of "The Little Engine That Could," the classic children's story about how resolution and effort can overcome the odds and result in success. But instead of pulling a long train over a steep mountain, the "impossible" challenge was convincing the Committee on Education of the Council of the District of Columbia to extend a college scholarship program to low-income students attending private schools. And the determined blue engine, repeating "I think I can" all the way, was the recently established District of Columbia CAPE, headed by a resolute president, Jennifer Daniels.

When first introduced by Education Committee Chair David A. Catania, the DC Promise Establishment Act of 2013 provided college grants only to DC students who graduated from the District's public secondary schools. Excluded were students from religious and independent schools. But a determined DC CAPE quickly launched a campaign calling on private school parents to urge councilmembers to amend the bill to include all the District's students. Parents were encouraged to sign a petition stating, in part, "Parents make tough decisions to select a school that best fits their child's academic, social, and emotional needs. No taxpaying citizen should be punished for making a choice on behalf of their child."

The campaign, which included emails, phone calls, letters, and even testimony by students and parents at a committee hearing, achieved success when Councilmember Catania introduced an amended version of the bill, which his commit-

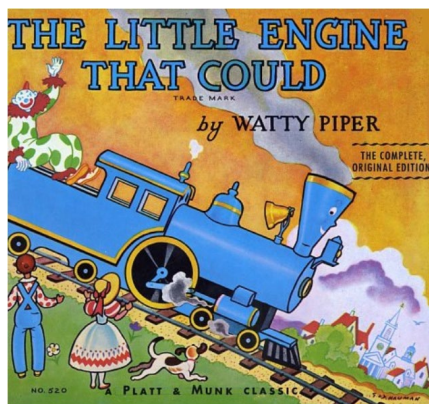
tee unanimously approved December 11.

"Given the importance of higher education in determining employment status and earning potential, it is critical that the District act to remove barriers preventing residents from accessing higher education," said Catania.

The bill requires grant recipients to attend an accredited post-secondary institution at least part-time.

Grants vary in amount depending on family income. Students from families with incomes up to 50 percent of Area Median Income would receive \$12,000 annually up to a lifetime maximum of \$60,000. A family of four earning under \$54,000 annually would be eligible for the maximum award. Students from families with incomes between 126 percent and 200 percent of AMI (up to \$215,000 annually for a family of four) would receive \$3,000 annually.

TDC also has a Tuition Assistance Grant (TAG) program, approved by Congress, which helps DC residents by paying the difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition at state universities across the country. Supporters of the new grant program note that it differs from the TAG program in its narrower income-eligibility requirements (TAG is available to families earning up to \$1 million annually), its applicability to all accredited post-secondary institutions (TAG is primarily limited to four-year institutions), and its limitation to graduates of secondary schools located within the District (TAG also applies to DC residents who graduate from secondary schools located outside the District).



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percent of public school teachers and 89 percent of private school teachers) agreed that there is "a great deal of cooperative effort among staff." Sixty-eight percent of public school teachers and 77 percent of private school teachers agreed that rules for student behavior "are consistently enforced by teachers in this school, even for students who are not in their classes." Moreover, 88 percent of public school teachers and 93 percent of private school teachers agreed that most colleagues in the school "share my beliefs and values about what the central mission of the school should be."

Teachers from both types of schools also had a generally positive view of school leaders. Eighty-four percent of teachers in public schools and 89

percent of teachers in private schools agreed that the "school administration's behavior toward the staff is supportive," and the same percentages (84 and 89) of teachers in both sectors agreed that the principal "enforces school rules for student conduct and backs me up when I need it." Further, 74 percent of public school teachers and 81 percent of private school teachers said that staff members in the school are "recognized for a job well done."

Data for this article were drawn from tables 210.10, 210.20, and 211.10 of the 2013 *Digest of Education Statistics*. These tables have been released in advance of the publication of the digest and are available on the NCES Web site at http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/2013menu_tables.asp.

Episcopal Urban Schools Offer Excellence and Love

They share a warrior's zeal for social justice. They seek not to patch the problem of poverty, but to break its chains. They provide an excellent education steeped in faith, love, dignity, and service—what many would call a foolproof foundation for happiness and success.

The “they” are leaders of schools that make up the Episcopal Urban School Alliance (EUSA), offering low- or no-cost education to children in need and bucking the trend of closings that have beset inner-city religious schools for years.

Established in 2009, the alliance has a noble mission: “Articulate and promote a common interest in serving the educational needs of economically disadvantaged children; share best practices in economic models, institutional management, and Episcopal identity among its members and aspiring members; and explore the ways the Holy Spirit may move the continuing cause of justice in an educational setting.”

The National Association of Episcopal Schools (NAES), a member of CAPE, recently released a [series of videos](#) that highlight the heroic work of alliance schools. In inspiring testimony, various visionary leaders discuss their schools’ origins, ministry, mission, culture, and funding models. The Good Samaritan Foundation in Wilmington, DE, supported the project. Quotes for this article are extracted from the videos.

According to the Rev. Daniel R. Heischman, executive director of NAES and president of CAPE, alliance schools “see education as one of the key ways that we break the cycles of poverty in our culture today.” All indications are that the schools are succeeding in putting children of significant disadvantage on the path to great success.

David Kasiech, head of St. James School in Philadelphia, PA, reports that all of the school’s students come from low-income households and most are from “urban schools that are failing—schools that aren’t meeting their needs.”

“Some of our children have families and generations of family that have perhaps been

incarcerated or have connections with drugs or gangs,” says The Rev. Susan Anderson-Smith, chaplain at the Imago Dei Middle School in Tucson, AZ. She describes the school as “a stable container, a safe place for them to be.” Rev. Anne Sawyer, the school’s head, reports that students “blossom” and undergo an “amazing transformation” during their stay at Imago Dei. “They begin by finding self-confidence, by begin-

ning to believe in themselves, and they begin to excel academically.”

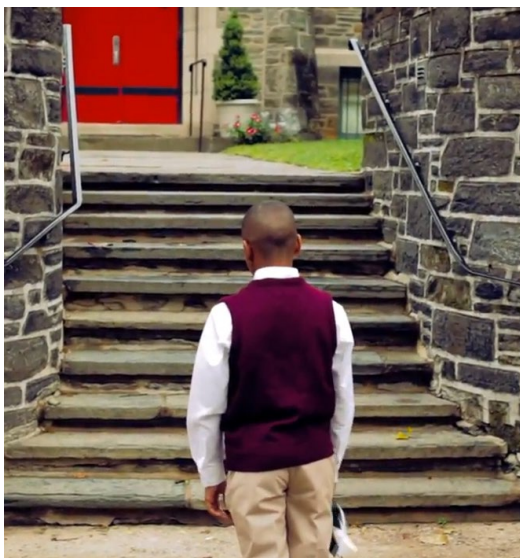
Academic growth at Trinity Episcopal Day School in Hartford, CT, is astounding. According to Rev. Johan H. Johnson, who heads the middle school, “We usually see our kids entering testing about the second-grade level on average in fifth grade, but they graduate eighth grade testing about mid-tenth grade in math and eleventh in reading and writing.” Johnson says the school’s formula for a quality education is very simple: “It’s about small class size, small teacher-to-student ratio.

It’s about students and teachers being invested in what they are doing, and about a very strong program that integrates arts, that integrates science, and that has an extended day.”

Offering an education for little or no tuition is a financial challenge that relies on donations, foundation grants, and support from the wider community. But besides a steady stream of funding, a higher motivation seems to be sustaining these schools.

“All of the schools in the Urban Alliance are schools of faith, so faith is a very, very important thing,” says The Rev. Canon Preston B. Hannibal, canon for academic ministries for the Episcopal Diocese of Washington.

“I think we’re tapping into something very deep and very important that people are feeling about what we need to do in education,” says Rev. Heischman. “The Urban School Alliance is one of the most exciting witnesses of social justice in our Church. We hope that through their work, many of the inequities we see—in education, in economics, in accessibility—can be redressed. All you need to do is to go into these schools and see what miracles are taking place.”



A student enters a promising future at St. James School in Philadelphia, PA, a member of the Episcopal Urban School Alliance. (Image captured from EUSA video.)

Future Sotomayors

It’s not everyday that the case for preserving religious schools is made in the mainstream media, but last month *USA Today* published such a [column](#) by John Coons, professor of law, emeritus, University of California-Berkeley, and Peter Hanley, executive director of the American Center for School Choice.

If you’re going to argue a case, it helps to have a Supreme Court justice as a witness. Coons and Hanley start with an admission by Sonia Sotomayor that it’s “doubtful” she’d have become who she is without the help of the religious school she once attended. Sotomayor described the school as “a road of opportunity for kids with no other alternative.”

The sad reality, however, is that her school has since closed. “Like more than 1,300 other Catholic schools in the past 20 years, Blessed Sacrament fell victim to sweeping social and economic forces—and to education policies that blind themselves to the value of faith-based schools,” write Coons and Hanley.

“America is losing a valuable national asset,” the columnists argue, “not because it has become obsolescent or because the demand for it has disappeared, but because of a needlessly narrow view of which families should have the choice in education that is so dear to the middle class.”

Saying there is “not a constitutional, civic, nor moral reason” to exclude religious schools from choice programs, the authors note “glimmers of hope” in places like Indiana and Louisiana, where, because of choice programs, enrollment in religious schools has grown rapidly. In Florida last year, “60,000 low-income students entered private schools, most of them faith-based.”

“Somewhere out there, a future Sotomayor can live up to her potential,” the authors write. “Where that happens is less important than that it happens.”

Return service requested

CAPE notes

★ Golden State Warriors point guard Stephen Curry is currently one of the NBA's best shooters. In the 2012-13 season, he broke the NBA record for three pointers, and so far in the 2013-14 season, he ranks second in the league in assists. That means he plays well with others and can communicate with his teammates—skills he may have learned as a child in his Montessori classroom.

"Montessori has helped me become the person that I am today," says Curry in a video recently released by the American Montessori Society, a member of CAPE. "Montessori gave me a lot of confidence at a young age," he adds. "I used to love it when I'd come to school because there was something new I was going to learn every single day."

Filmed at the Christian Montessori School at Lake Norman in Charlotte, NC, the school Curry once attended, the video features interviews not only with Curry, but with his siblings, Seth and Sydel, his father, Dell, and his mother, Sonya, who founded the school and serves as its director.

"Montessori for my family has really been the staple of everything," says Sonya. "I love Montessori for the fundamental aspects that it affords children ... indepen-

dence, the intrinsic love for learning, responsibility, respect for yourself, for other people."

Richard Ungerer, executive director of the American Montessori Society and vice president of CAPE, offered his take on the video: "AMS is dedicated to making Montessori a strong and positive force in education. What better way to accomplish this than to tell the Curry family's exceptional Montessori story? We are thrilled to be able to connect their voice and passion with AMS."

The three-minute video, *Living Montessori: The Curry Family*, can be viewed on the AMS website at <www.amshq.org/Montessori>.

★ With renewed attention being given to public policy surrounding Pre-K programs, it's helpful to take a look at where the nation's pre-school population is currently being served.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) estimates (see [Table 202.10](#) from the forthcoming 2013 *Digest of Education Statistics*) that in 2012, 2.7 million four-year-olds and 1.6 million three-year-olds were enrolled in preprimary school programs, including nursery school, preschool, and kindergarten. Roughly

969,000 four-year-olds (36 percent of the 2.7 million four-year-olds in a preprimary program) were enrolled in private programs, as were 730,000 three-year-olds (45 percent of all enrolled three-year-olds).

NCES calculates that 66.4 percent of the 4 million four-year-olds in the country are enrolled in full-day or part-day programs, as are 40.5 percent of the nation's 4 million three-year-olds. An estimated 50.5 percent of four-year-olds who are enrolled in a preprimary program are in full-day programs, while 51.0 percent of enrolled three-year-olds attend full-time.

Lawmakers in both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives are considering ways to improve the delivery of Pre-K programs to students, and CAPE has an issue paper that offers principles to guide the development of such legislation. The issue paper is available for download as a PDF document on CAPE's Web site at <www.capenet.org/pdf/IP-EC2008.pdf>.



Stephen Curry talks about Montessori education in the AMS video.

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