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**CAPE member
organizations:**

American Montessori
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Christian Schools
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Church in America
Friends Council
on Education
Lutheran Church—
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National Association of
Episcopal Schools
National Association of
Independent Schools
National Catholic
Educational Association
National Christian School
Association
Seventh-day Adventist
Board of Education
Solomon Schechter Day
School Association
Southern Baptist
Association of Christian
Schools
Toussaint Institute for
Historically Black
Independent Schools
United States Conference of
Catholic Bishops
28 Affiliated State
Organizations

School Choice

Objective

To provide parents with financial assistance to allow them to exercise fully their right to choose their child's school—religious, private, or public.

Rationale

Private schools, by definition, help fulfill the ideal of pluralism in American education. America's first schools were private schools established in the early 17th century. Today, one in four of the nation's elementary and secondary schools is a private school; eleven percent of all K-12 students attend them. These schools are continuing to flourish and are identified by strong statements of mission and purpose. They are religious and secular, large and small, urban and rural. They serve diverse populations, and are multi-ethnic and multi-cultural. Almost all vest the school's principal with the authority and the ability to implement change. Faculty, parents, and, when appropriate, students, are actively engaged in the decision-making process. A sense of common community and common goals and an emphasis on values pervade these schools. The goals of private schools include academic excellence, meeting the needs of individual students and families, and a concern about the social, moral, spiritual, emotional, physical and intellectual development of each child.

As the nation continues to focus on education reform, private schools provide significant models of success. They are ultimately accountable to the parents who choose them. In 1925, the landmark Supreme Court decision *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* guaranteed the right of existence to nonpublic schools and therefore the right of parents to choose a school which reflects their values. The Council for American Private Education affirms this right and further urges enactment of national and state legislation that will provide all parents the opportunity to exercise fully their right to choose their child's school—religious, private, or public.

Approved by CAPE's Board of Directors: October 1990

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