

Council for American Private Education

CAPE outlook

Voice of America's private schools

Military Families Support School Choice

America's military servicemembers are strong supporters of school choice.

A report published last month by EdChoice found that military households that were given a description of various school choice programs were far more likely to support such programs than oppose them. Seventy-two percent of respondents supported education savings accounts (ESAs), 64 percent supported school vouchers, and 63 percent supported tax-credit scholarships (TCSs). Only 15 percent of military households opposed ESAs, while only 27 percent opposed vouchers, and 23 percent TCSs.

The report found the "magnitude and intensity" of military support for choice programs "surprising" and suggestive of "military parents' strong desire for better access to school choice options."

Sacrifice

Noting that military families "have already sacrificed so much for their country and...for the education and well-being of their children," the report calls on policymakers "to address military families' preferences for personalized student learning and greater access to options in K-12 education."

In particular, the authors suggest that some portion of federal funds already earmarked for the education of military children should be directly allocated to those families, perhaps through ESAs, in order to "amplify military parents' involvement and further personalize the education of military-connected students whose lives require mobility and flexibility."

Survey

Written by Paul DiPerna, vice president of research and innovation for EdChoice, Lindsey M. Burke, director of the Center for Education Policy at The Heritage Foundation, and Anne Ryland, a research assistant at the center, the report, titled

Surveying the Military, is based on findings from a survey of 1,200 active-duty military servicemembers, veterans, and their spouses. Specifically, the survey sought to find out how these groups regard various K-12 choice policies, what their experiences are in K-12 education, and what their views are about the military profession in general.

Impact Aid

The federal government has a unique connection to the education of children from military families through Impact Aid, which this year provides \$1.3 billion to local school districts to help offset the costs of educating students whose parents are active servicemembers or who may be otherwise connected with federal property or tribal lands. Also, some military children (about 4 percent) are educated in schools operated by the Department of Defense and located on military bases.

Reality and Hope

The report estimates that "there are about 750,000 school-aged children living in active-duty member households." Roughly 80 percent of those children are enrolled in public schools.

That's the current reality for military families, but what is their hope? "When asked for a preferred school type, nearly equal shares of military respondents said they would choose a regular public school (34%) or a private school (33%) as a first option for their child. One out of six respondents (17%) would select a public charter school. Smaller proportions would either choose to homeschool their child (6%) or enroll in a virtual school (4%)."

Given the "growing presence of school

choice programs throughout the country," the authors believe the report to be particularly timely in providing "helpful information to federal lawmakers and military leaders about the challenges and needs military families face and the types of policies they support."

Outmoded

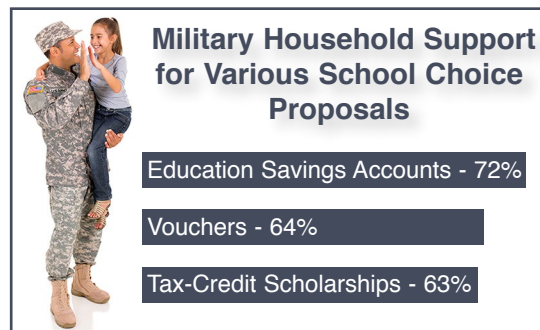
The report argues that although "many other aspects of military life have been modernized to better serve our armed forces, the education of military-connect-

ed children still operates via an outmoded residential assignment model and has not kept pace with the unique needs of military families."

According to the report, less than half of military families "reside in states with any school choice options at all." And this despite the fact that "the quality of educational options available to military families can play a major role in whether a family accepts an assignment or even decides to leave military service altogether." The authors report that a "recent survey conducted and published by *Military Times* revealed that 35 percent of respondents said that dissatisfaction with their child's education was a 'significant factor' in their decision to remain in or leave military service."

The writers conclude with the hope that the survey and report will "serve as a guide for policymakers to affect the wellbeing of servicemembers, veterans, and their families" and that the findings will "provide a spark for energetic public dialogue about the status quo and potential changes in federal policymaking."

Photo: michaeljung/Shutterstock.com





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 of Islamic Schools in North America
- Council on Educational Standards and Accountability
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- Friends Council on Education
- Islamic Schools League of America
- Jesuit Schools Network
- 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
- Affiliated State Organizations

a coalition of national associations serving private schools K-12
Executive Director: Joe McTighe

Outlook is published monthly (September to June) by CAPE. An annual subscription is \$35. ISSN 0271-1451

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NCES Projects Education Statistics to 2025

The U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics recently published *Projections of Education Statistics to 2025*, the 44th edition in a series that started in 1964.

The document reviews actual changes that have taken place over a period of time in enrollment, the number of graduates, the number of teachers, and other select statistics, and then projects what changes will take place in the years to come.

For school enrollment, the projection method assumes “that future trends in factors affecting enrollments will be consistent with past patterns.” It does not attempt to anticipate any “changes in policies or attitudes that may affect enrollment levels.”

MAPE

Further, as with all projections, it is assumed that these may miss their mark. The report looks at the accuracy of past projections and measures that accuracy using the mean absolute percentage error (MAPE), which expresses “the average absolute value of errors over past projections in percentage terms.” By way of example, for past preK-8 enrollment projections for private schools, “the MAPEs for lead times of 1, 2, 5, and 10 years out were 3.1, 5.8, 8.3, and 22.2 percent, respectively.” So, a ten-year projection would be expected to be, on average, within 22.2 percent of the actual value.

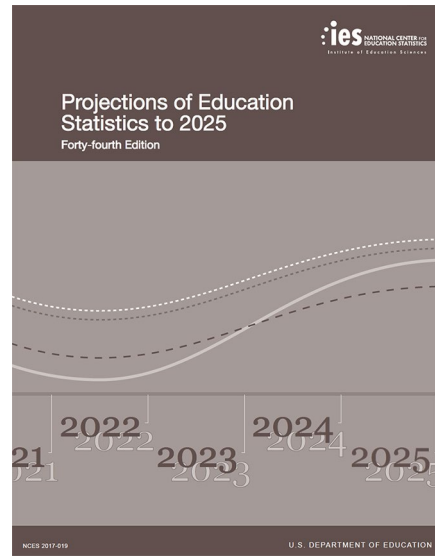
In fact, the imprecision of projections can be illustrated by examining recent actual enrollment figures. Between 2013 and 2015, actual K-12 enrollment in private schools, as reported by NCES, increased by 7 percent. But the 2025 projection document—which uses 2013 as the last year for actual enrollment counts and projects from that point forward—expected preK-12 private school enrollment to drop by 2 percent between 2013 and 2015. True, one count includes preK and the other does not, but still, just two years out there appears to be a significant discrepancy between projections and actual counts. Suffice it to say that projections are not always a precise undertaking.

Projections

Nevertheless, NCES projects that enrollment in private elementary and secondary schools is expected to decrease by 6 percent between

2013 and 2025. By way of a benchmark, total national elementary and secondary enrollment is projected to increase by 2 percent during that same period.

Corresponding to the expected enrollment downturn (absent, that is, any changes in policy or other influencing factors), NCES projects that the number of teachers in private schools will be 2 percent lower in 2025, dropping from 441,000 to 433,000.



Pupil/Teacher Ratio

Using student counts and teacher counts, NCES is also able to forecast a shift in the pupil/teacher ratio in private elementary and secondary schools, projected to decrease to 11.8 in 2025. The ratio was 14.5 in 2000 and 12.2 in 2013. By contrast, the pupil/teacher ratio in public schools was 16.0 in 2000, 16.1 in 2013, and is projected to be 15.5 in 2025.

The NCES report even drills down to projections of new teacher hires. In 1999,

the total number of new teacher hires in private schools was 83,000. That number jumped to 90,000 in 2013 but is expected to be 8 percent lower in 2025, returning to the 1999 level of 83,000.

Graduates

Section 3 of the NCES report looks at trends in the number of high school graduates, which the report defines as “an individual who has received formal recognition from school authorities, by the granting of a diploma, for completing a prescribed course of study.” For projections of private high school graduates, “the MAPEs for lead times of 1, 2, 5, and 10 years out were 1.8, 1.5, 4.9, and 4.9 percent, respectively.” Thus, these projections can be expected to be considerably more accurate than private school enrollment projections.

According to the report, “The number of private high school graduates increased 11 percent between 2000–01 and 2012–13 (279,000 versus 309,000); and is projected to decrease 10 percent between 2012–13 and 2025–26 to 279,000.”

Projections of Education Statistics to 2025—Forty-fourth Edition is available for download as a PDF document from the NCES Web site at <https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2017019>.

Grant Program, Award, and Study in State CAPE News

Several state CAPEs have seen significant events unfold over the last month that relate to the private school community. Here's a brief run down.

New York

On October 24, New York Governor Andrew M. Cuomo opened the application process for private schools wanting to participate in the \$25 million Securing Communities Against Hate Crimes grant program. According to the governor's office, the program "provides grants to help strengthen security measures and help prevent hate crimes or attacks against these facilities because of their ideology, beliefs or mission."

"New York knows its diversity is its strength, and as a people we have zero tolerance for those who seek to use division and hate to divide us," Governor Cuomo said. "This funding will help eligible schools, day care centers and cultural museums that are at risk of hate crimes because of their beliefs or mission take additional steps to increase the security of their facilities and keep our communities safe. With this action, we are taking one more step toward a safer, stronger and more just New York for all."

The grant will provide facilities "up to \$50,000 in funding for additional security training needs, cameras and state-of-the-art technology, door-hardening, improved lighting, and other related security upgrades at each eligible facility," according to the governor's office.

Agudath Israel of America, a member of CAPE, welcomed the announcement. "We thank Governor Cuomo for recognizing the need to increase the safety of yeshivos and other nonpublic schools in this challenging climate," said Rabbi David Zwiebel, the organization's executive vice president. "This is an initiative which can make a real difference."

Maryland

On October 17, the Maryland CAPE presented Governor Larry Hogan with its 2017 Champion of Education award. The event took place at St. Ambrose School, in Cheverly, MD, where the governor was once a student.

"Education is—and will continue to be—the

number one priority of our administration," said the governor at the event. "We remain committed to encouraging and supporting innovative ideas that give parents expanded options to prepare children for higher education and for the jobs of the future. I am grateful to receive this incredible honor."

Rabbi Ariel Sadwin, president of the Maryland CAPE and director of Agudath Israel of Maryland, presented the award along with Garrett O'Day, associate director of the Maryland Catholic Conference. Sadwin said it was "a true

honor to present this award in recognition of Governor Hogan's dedication to the educational success of all of Maryland's children."

Florida

The Urban Institute recently released a study examining the effects of the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship program (FTC) on college enroll-

ment and graduation. The institute described the study as the first to look at such effects for a statewide private school choice program.

According to the report, participation in the FTC has "substantial positive impacts on the likelihood that students enroll in a public college in Florida." The study was limited to enrollment in public, in-state post-secondary institutions, where 79 percent of Florida's high school graduates matriculate.

Researchers compared "the outcomes of more than 10,000 low-income students who entered the program between 2004 and 2010 with outcomes of students with similar characteristics and test scores who never participated in the FTC program." The comparison found that participation in FTC increased college enrollment rates by 6 percent. What's more, the positive effect increased the longer students remained in the program. For students who spent four or more years in the FTC program, college enrollment rates increased up to 18 percent.

The report's authors, Matthew M. Chingos, director of the Urban Institute's Education Policy Program, and Daniel Kuehn, a research associate at the institute, wrote that their findings are "noteworthy in light of evidence that the FTC program more than covers the foregone tax revenue through reduced spending on the public schools many participants would have attended."

Choice Videos

Lots of people have secretly wanted to star in their own viral video, and now they can put that desire toward a noble purpose—and win a cash prize to boot!

Several national organizations that support school choice, including Agudath Israel of America, a member of CAPE, are sponsoring a video contest in which students and their families can tell their stories about the effect of school choice on their lives. The hope is that the videos will "inspire others about the benefits of accessing a learning environment that best fits the needs of students."

As with any contest, a few rules apply. Videos must be under two minutes, must be based on personal stories and facts, must be uploaded to YouTube or Vimeo, and must be submitted by December 1, 2017. Additional details and the entry portal are available at www.choicesined.org.

Three grand prize winners will each receive \$15,000. In addition, three runners-up and two "people's choice" winners will each win \$5,000, bringing the total prize money to \$70,000. A panel of judges will select the grand prize recipients and runners-up, but the public will select the "people's choice" winners during a voting period that starts December 8. Results will be announced during National School Choice Week, January 21-27, 2018.

"Millions of students across the country benefit from being able to choose the learning environment that best fits their needs," said Patricia Levesque, CEO of ExcelinEd, a lead sponsor. "The Choices in Education video contest is a chance for the real experts on education to share their stories on the life-changing benefits of educational opportunity."

Other sponsors include the American Federation for Children, the Center for Education Reform, Democrats for Education Reform, EdChoice, School Choice Week, and several additional groups.



Maryland Governor Larry Hogan (center) receives the 2017 Champion of Education award from Rabbi Ariel Sadwin (right) and Garrett O'Day. (Photo: Office of the Governor)

CAPE notes

★ The search for CAPE's next executive director continues. Heads Up Educational Consulting and Triangle Associates, which are jointly conducting the search, recently announced plans to extend the application deadline to November 15, 2017, with the most promising candidates to be interviewed during the month of December.

The start date for the position is July 1, 2018, or sooner, depending on the candidate's availability.

Last year, Joe McTighe, CAPE's current executive director, announced plans to retire. Since then, the board has been diligently involved in finding a dynamic and highly qualified individual to lead the organization.

More information about the position and the process for applying is available at www.capenet.org/directorsearch.html.

★ CAPE continues to grow. The board of directors recently welcomed CAPE's newest member, the Islamic Schools League of America (ISLA), bringing the national membership count to 22, up from 13 in 1996 and eight when CAPE was first established in 1971.

ISLA works "to foster the development, growth, and quality of Islamic education primarily by establishing networks, providing resources, disseminating knowledge, nurturing leadership, and carrying out critical and foundational research," according to its mission.

Kathy Jamil, who chairs ISLA's board, called it an honor to join the CAPE com-

munity and to partner with other private school organizations in "supporting families in their choice of schooling for their children." She said the CAPE/ISLA relationship "represents the diverse educational pluralism in America" and provides an opportunity to spotlight the contributions of ISLA's schools "to citizenry and the common good."

★ Educators pretty much agree that the hub of success in a school is the principal. Last month, 62 of the most successful hubs of success were named National Distinguished Principals by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP).

The honorees traveled to Washington, DC, for two days of celebration and recognition, culminating in an awards banquet at the Capital Hilton Hotel on October 13.

"Principals create the necessary conditions for providing students with the well-rounded education that they need," said Dr. L. Earl Franks, CAE, NAESP's executive director. "Working in partnership with classroom teachers and other educators, these principals provide the necessary leadership to improve student achievement and ensure every student has a pathway to success."

According to NAESP, principals are selected from schools "where programs are designed to meet the academic and social needs of all students and where there are firmly established community ties with

parents and local business organizations."

The 2017 honorees from private schools were: Phyllis Cavallone-Jurek, St. Therese Chinese Catholic School, Chicago, Illinois • Patrick O'Sullivan, Christ the King Catholic School, Dallas, Texas • Gayle R. Renken, St. Timothy's Christian Academy, San Jose, California • Kenneth J. Willers, School of the Madeleine, Berkeley, California • Michael J. Yurk, St. Paul Lutheran School, Grafton, Wisconsin.

Congratulations from CAPE to all 2017 NDPs!

★ *Salad Bars to Schools* wants "every school in the United States to have a salad bar as part of their school food service program so that every child—from elementary school, to middle school, to high school—has daily access to fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and healthy proteins."

Numerous sponsors have joined forces to make that goal a reality by establishing a grant program that provides schools with—you guessed it—a salad bar. Specifically, schools selected for the program receive a 72-inch, five-well insulated salad bar, complete with tray slides, pan chillers, divider bars, various sized pans with covers, and serving tongs.

The program's robust Web site states, "Any school, public or private, participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) is eligible to apply for the grant."

For more information, visit www.saladbars2schools.org/get-a-salad-bar/schools/faqs/.