



COUNCIL FOR AMERICAN
Private Education

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CAPE member
organizations:

Agudath Israel
of America

American Montessori
Society

Association Montessori
International-USA

Association of Christian
Teachers and Schools

Association of Christian
Schools International

Association of Waldorf
Schools of N.A.

Christian Schools
International

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

31 Affiliated State
Organizations

November 13, 2008

The Honorable John Podesta, Valerie Jarrett, Peter Rouse
Co-Chairs
Obama-Biden Transition Project

Washington, DC 20001

Dear Co-Chairs Podesta, Jarrett, and Rouse:

We at the Council for American Private Education (CAPE) wish urgently to speak to appropriate representatives of the Obama-Biden Transition Project on issues concerning education in our country. CAPE is a coalition of the major national organizations (listed left) that serve religious and independent elementary and secondary schools. One in four of the nation's schools is a private school; eleven percent of all students attend them. That translates into 29,000 schools, more than six million preK-12 students, and over \$48 billion in tax savings through the efforts of families who choose a private school education. CAPE and its 32 state affiliates represent about 80 percent of the private school community nationwide. Additional information about CAPE is available on the Web at capenet.org.

Senator Obama has spoken so inspiringly of change in our culture. He knows that for any change to be sustainable, education must play a central role. As your transition team oversees the education component of the change agenda and develops a game plan for implementing proposals, you will, no doubt, want to take into consideration the needs and interests of all the children in America, including those in religious and independent schools, who currently participate in a variety of federal education programs.

CAPE fosters communication and cooperation between the private school community and elected officials. We seek the same goal that President-elect Obama seeks: to provide our nation's children with high-quality education. With this in mind, we hope that members of the transition team who are dealing with this issue will work with us. We are vitally interested in discussing education reform and are ready to share a perspective shaped by the experiences and success of private schools. A meeting between representatives of CAPE's member organizations and representatives of the Obama-Biden Transition Project would be an important step in that direction. Listed on the following page are topics that might be discussed at such a meeting:

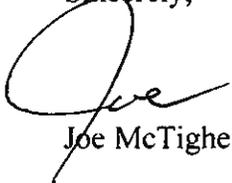


- Amending the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* in its next reauthorization to recapture its original intent of providing equitable services to needy children in religious and independent schools;
- Ensuring improved services for students in religious and independent schools under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* and other federal education legislation;
- Working to address the closings of inner-city faith-based schools, which are anchors of hope in their communities and have long histories of success in preparing students for life, college, and careers;
- Guaranteeing that legislation promoting early childhood education supports American families' right to choose from a variety of providers and programs without financial penalty.

In recent days, President-elect Obama sent a clear signal that education would be an early focus in the new administration. "We can't afford to wait on moving forward on the key priorities that I identified during the campaign," he said. We welcome Mr. Obama's emphasis on education and look forward to working closely with his transition team as it sets the framework for real reform.

With every best wish for efficient progress and great success with the transition, I am

Sincerely,



Joe McTighe

- c: Melody Barnes, Co-Chair, Agency Review Working Group
Lisa Brown, Co-Chair, Agency Review Working Group
Don Gips, Co-Chair, Agency Review Working Group
Seth Harris, Member, Agency Review Working Group ✓