

The Public Benefits of Pennsylvania's Non-Public Schools

Pennsylvania's Non-Public Schools Benefit the Public Good

The United States is one of the few industrialized nations that provide little or no financial support to non-public schools. Despite this, non-public schools serve approximately 11% of America's students. **In 2007/2008 these schools saved U.S. taxpayers over \$64.5 billion.**²

The most recent data published by the Pennsylvania Department of Education reveals that in the 2007/2008 school year **265,545 students** (189,635 elementary, 75,910 secondary) **in Pennsylvania were educated in non-public schools.**³ These are children whose parents pay state and local school taxes for which they receive few services.

According to *The Costing Out Study*⁴, the most recent research available, the average cost-per-pupil in Pennsylvania for the 2005/06 school year was \$12,057.⁵ Assuming a modest increase of 2% for the 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 years, produces a figure of \$12,545 for the 2007/2008 academic year. Multiplying that by the number of Pennsylvania residents in private schools in 2007/2008 (265,545) demonstrates the extent to which non-public schools provide annual budget relief for PA taxpayers. **At the \$12,545 per pupil rate, more than \$3.3 billion was saved in one single year.**

Assuming the same modest increase of 2% for 2008/2009 and for **2009/2010**, the figure represents a substantial subsidy of **almost**

\$3.5 billion in next year's school district budgets.

Additional savings are found in capital costs. If the school districts in the state of Pennsylvania became responsible for an additional 265,545 students, the cost of construction and maintenance of new facilities to accommodate these children would push the potential annual cost up significantly.

In addition to the over \$3.3 billion a year savings made possible by non-public schools, they also support the wider Pennsylvania community in a variety of other ways.



- Non-public schools, which include independent schools, Catholic and other denominational schools as well as secular, non-affiliated schools, pride themselves on being **institutional role models** for the behaviors they promote in their students.
- Non-public schools have historically been at the **forefront of innovation in education**, which has been freely and generously shared with public school colleagues.
- Non-public school **communities are diverse**; they are not determined by zip code or school district.
- Non-public schools are **good neighbors**. They commonly offer facilities (auditoriums, playgrounds, playing fields, gymnasiums) and other resources for use by their greater community.

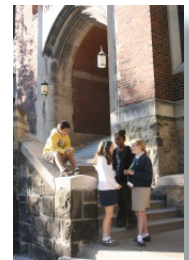
- Non-public school students and their families voluntarily **commit to community service projects**.

- The presence of non-public schools in a municipality has been shown to increase average property values by **offering families greater choice in schooling options**.

- Non-public schools help to **support the local economy**. Parents who visit their children in Pennsylvania's boarding schools eat in local restaurants, stay in nearby hotels, shop in local stores.

- Non-public schools **provide jobs** – good jobs with security and good benefits and thereby increase the local wage tax base.

Pennsylvania's non-public school student enrollment saves local school districts and local tax paying citizens significant money. They are relieved of the burden of the per pupil education cost for each child enrolled in a non-public school.



Each municipality gains revenue from property owning families who pay their school taxes, but choose to send their children to non-public schools. If local districts were forced to absorb the current non-public school population, the local tax base would surely need to increase. **There is no doubt, communities in Pennsylvania are enriched by the existence non-public schools.**

¹ <http://www.capenet.org/facts.html>

² US Department of Education; ies National Center for Education Statistics; Fast Facts.

³ Pennsylvania Department of Education; Table 3; Private and Non-Public School Enrollments 2007-2008.

⁴ The Costing Out Study; Commissioned by the Pennsylvania State Board of Education; November 2007.

⁵ Ibid; Table V-4; page 55.

Mission Statement

The mission of Pennsylvania Association of Independent Schools is to represent and support member independent schools and to develop and offer services which strengthen its members.

PAIS Quick Facts

- Voluntary membership association
- 100 + member schools offering
 - Day Programs 98
 - Boarding Programs 17
 - Preschool Programs 41
 - Lower School Programs 68
 - Middle School Programs 65
 - Upper School Programs 55
- Enrollment range: 43 - 1,494 students
- IRS designated 501(c)(3) not-for-profit association
- Accrediting schools since 1948
- Accreditation approved by the Pennsylvania State Board of Education
- Recognized by the Pennsylvania Department of Education
- Represents more than 40,000 school aged children
- Affiliate member of National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS)
- Member of NAIS Commission on Accreditation



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