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By-Farquhar, Robin H.

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Communication and cooperation between public and nonpublic schools might have potential for an immense and beneficial national impact, especially in confronting certain urban problems which nonpublic schools are better able to deal with than are public schools. At present there is a great lack of such communication and cooperation, due to a variety of legal, constitutional, structural, financial, philosophical, historical, and psychological barriers, the majority of which are largely emotional in origin. There are two basic kinds of activities which can be used to overcome these barriers: (1) Research on the barriers themselves and development of proper solutions, such as shared time or dual enrollment; and (2) preservice and inservice training programs to improve mutual understanding and increase contact between officials of public and nonpublic schools. School board members can play a vital role in overcoming the obstacles. Generally, they should be aware of what other related agencies are doing and provide the leadership in procuring available resources external to the public schools which may contribute to the achievement of the public schools' goals. (HW)

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TOWARD IMPROVED COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION BETWEEN
PUBLIC AND NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS

By

Robin H. Farquhar

Associate Director
The University Council for Educational Administration

presented at the Annual Convention of the
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Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, new dimensions of cooperation between public and non-public schools are required. This clinic is designed to suggest ways in which to achieve this cooperation and to reduce tensions which might arise.

Introduction

Because I suspect that your expectations for what we shall discuss this morning have been determined largely by the little statement above which the NSBA is using to describe this clinic on "Public and Non-Public School Relationships," and because this same statement constituted the only clue which I received as to what the topic of my address should be, perhaps it would be useful for all of us if I took a few minutes at the outset to summarize how I defined this statement operationally in preparing what I shall say today. This will give you some early warning as to whether or not your expectations are going to be met and, if you find yourselves disappointed, this clinic has been scheduled early enough so that you may make a dignified exit before I really get started, on the grounds that you haven't yet had breakfast.

Assuming that you are fully familiar with the term "public schools," let me begin by telling you what I mean by the term "nonpublic schools." For today's purposes, I shall define "nonpublic schools" as "all schools which provide a full, day-time program of elementary and/or secondary education to those students who are not enrolled in public schools." According to available evidence, there are more than 18,000 such nonpublic schools in this country, and these schools reportedly enroll almost six million elementary and secondary pupils. Proportionately, this figure represents about 15 per cent of the

nation's elementary and secondary students. A large majority of nonpublic school pupils (over 93 per cent) are enrolled in institutions associated with religiously supported systems, and a substantial proportion of these (about 95 per cent) are in Roman Catholic schools.¹ Thus, while there is a great variety of nonpublic schools falling within our definition, it is nevertheless clear that when we speak in general about nonpublic schools we are speaking mainly of religiously affiliated schools, and primarily of Catholic schools.

Having defined what we mean by "nonpublic schools," let's look briefly now at what it is we're supposed to do with them this morning. This clinic's description cites a need for "cooperation between public and nonpublic schools" deriving from the 1965 Education Act, and charges us with suggesting "ways in which to achieve this cooperation and to reduce tensions which might arise." Let me say, first, that while the 1965 Act may have highlighted the existence of this need for cooperation, it did not originate it. I believe that the need is a reflection of societal and other problems which existed long before the Act was written and which have continued to worsen at an alarming pace ever since it was signed into law. Having entered this qualification, it appears to me that my task this morning should be to discuss five rather basic questions with you:

1. Can we truthfully say that there is a need today for functional communication and cooperation between public and nonpublic schools?
2. If so, can we demonstrate that such communication and cooperation currently operate?
3. If not, what are some of the barriers inhibiting the operation of such communication and cooperation?
4. How may we seek to overcome some of these barriers?
5. What are the implications of this discussion for school board members?

Today, then, I propose to explore briefly with you these five questions, in the order in which I just stated them. (Now is the time for those of you who wish to take a "breakfast break" to do so.)

The Need for Communication and Cooperation

We must first attempt to determine whether or not a need exists for communication and cooperation between public and nonpublic schools. To put the question differently: Is it desirable for officials of public and nonpublic schools to talk together and work together as they pursue their respective educational objectives? At a very general level, the question can be answered with a simple "yes" if we assume that it is good for people in essentially the same business to talk together and help each other, and perhaps to stimulate a little constructive competition between their respective agencies.

But let's be a little more specific, and perhaps a bit more stimulating, for a moment by putting a few simple facts together. First, there seems little doubt that the most significant and the most complex problem faced by this country today (at least domestically) lies in the physical decay, the human wastage, the moral rot, and the spiritual emptiness which plague the nation's great cities and the poor souls who are virtually trapped in our urban centers. The danger inherent in this condition -- to the country, its social and political orders, and its value systems -- has been noted repeatedly by authorities, most recently by the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. Secondly, regardless of where the blame for this deplorable situation lies, there seems to be pretty strong agreement that if there is any hope for overcoming the urban condition, this hope must be implemented in large measure through our educational institutions. This belief has been expressed by Congress on numerous recent occasions (as reflected by its passage

of such measures as the Economic Opportunity Act, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and the Education Professions Development Act), and it was repeated in the report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. Third, the public schools are having great difficulty in meeting these high expectations, in part because the expectations are too high and in part because the resources of the schools are insufficient. While some progress is certainly being made by some schools in some cities, I think we would all agree that it is not enough and, moreover, it is difficult to see how it will ever become enough. Fourth, by far the greatest proportion of the country's 18,000 nonpublic schools are concentrated in our metropolitan centers. In 1962, it was reported that one-third of all nonpublic school students in the country lived in our 50 largest cities, whereas only one out of every eight public school students were in these cities;² there seems little reason to suspect that these ratios have changed significantly during the last five years. Moreover, 56 of the nation's 212 Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (more than a quarter of them) have at least one-fifth of their elementary pupils enrolled in nonpublic schools; included among these 56 SMSA's are such large urban centers as Milwaukee, Philadelphia, New Orleans, Chicago, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Cleveland, Minneapolis-St. Paul, New York City, Omaha, Boston, Detroit, and Baltimore.³ When these four factors are considered conjointly -- the critical enormity of our urban problems, the high expectations for education to solve these problems, the difficulties encountered by the public schools in attempting to cope with the problems, and the relatively numerous nonpublic schools located in the big cities -- it may be concluded quite reasonably that communication and cooperation between public and nonpublic schools might have potential for a rather immense and beneficial national impact.

This conclusion is further supported by the fact that, because of structural and functional differences, there are certain urban problems which nonpublic schools are better able to deal with than are public schools. Because of a comparative lack of constraining bureaucracy, for example, the nonpublic school is typically able to respond more rapidly, more fully, and more flexibly than the public school to the changing needs of its immediate constituency. If the unique capabilities of the nonpublic school, particularly in the urban setting, could somehow be harnessed alongside those of the public school and applied in a complementary or even a supplementary fashion to mutual problems, one could hypothesize that education's chances of resolving some of these problems would be drastically increased. I have a hunch that, at present, willingness to enter this double harness is more characteristic of those associated with nonpublic schools than of those in public schools, although it was apparent at the AASA Convention last month that public school officials are beginning to accept a lowering of the separation wall under the child benefit principle. At any rate, I think I have demonstrated my belief that there is indeed a need for functional communication and cooperation between public and nonpublic schools.

The Current Picture

Let us turn now to the question of to what extent such communication and cooperation currently operate. I want to make quite clear at the outset my realization that there is no single correct answer to this question. The degree of communication and cooperation between personnel in public and nonpublic schools varies immensely across the nation, and there is evidence that this variance is related to a wide range of factors, which include: differences in the cultural history and ethos of certain regions; personal

variables such as attitudes, values, background, and experience; and situational variables such as the location of schools in relation to one another, the nature and extent of non-public school patronage, and the Church's visibility and "power" in certain localities. Recognizing this underlying variability, I shall nevertheless respond to the question in terms of over-arching generalities.

First, let's take a quick look at some of the findings turned up by Nuccio and Walsh in a recent Boston College study of nonpublic school pupils' participation in Title I programs during 1966. At the state level, the investigators found no evidence that the implementation of Title I led to any internal administrative change in public state education agencies which would uniquely affect relationships with nonpublic schools. While a number of Catholic dioceses appointed coordinators of governmental programs (for understandable reasons), no state education agency official was designated as a specific liaison person with non-public school authorities.⁴ They report that:

Typically there was no opportunity for diocesan educational officials to become involved in any way in the development of policy, or the review of project applications or evaluations. There was, of course, no requirement that the state agency should consult with private school representatives, but if SEA's had been desirous of improving the working relationships between the two educational sectors and had wanted to set a pattern for cooperation that would also be useful at the local level, the appointment of a non-public school person in an advisory and review capacity would have been a fruitful opportunity to achieve these purposes.⁵

They go on to suggest, quite reasonably, that "there is a clear possibility that funds are being used for many projects that bear little if any relationship to the educational needs of children who are not enrolled in the public schools."⁶

In assessing participation at the local level, Nuccio and Walsh's findings are no more encouraging. But let us change horses here and look at the problem of communication

and cooperation between public and nonpublic schools at the local level through the eyes of two other well known scholars in this area. In the 1968 yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Erickson and Greeley discuss their views of this problem as it is reflected in metropolitan areas. They say:

In many urban centers, public and non-public schools that might profitably share their services and facilities continue to operate in insular detachment. In other cases, efforts to arrange concerted action run afoul of so much prejudice and bureaucratic inertia that pedestrian outcomes are viewed as a triumph of diplomacy. To be sure, the idea of sharing is not universally or painlessly applicable. Some schools are too far apart to permit frequent shuffling of personnel. Complex calendars and schedules are difficult to mesh. Questions of jurisdiction and responsibility arise concerning discipline, extracurricular activities, pupil injuries, grading, promotion, and graduation. Often public schools are ineligible for state aid for students primarily enrolled in non-public schools. The sharing concept is hard to reconcile with the contention of many religious leaders that no subjects are truly "secular," "neutral," or "value-free," since all of knowledge must relate to theistic premises. But it seems the only explanation for some barriers to co-operation is a deeply ingrained resistance to mutuality between public and non-public schools. A recent study suggests that public and non-public schools in sizable American cities have tended for decades to proceed along parallel, seldom-connected tracks, studiously limiting contact.⁷

At this point I should probably rest my case. However, I do not want to leave this topic on a completely negative note. We are all aware, I'm sure, of situations in which public and nonpublic schools have cooperated to the benefit of pupils enrolled in both. Recent federal legislation is, of course, playing a part in stimulating some of this. Last Spring, Commissioner Howe spoke at the Annual Conference of the National Association of Independent Schools, and called for more "entangling alliances" and less "neutrality" on the part of independent schools with respect to national educational concerns and deliberations. For a brief treatment of how independent schools are becoming involved in more "entangling alliances," I recommend that you read an address, entitled

"Independence and Cooperation," which was delivered last December by Cary Potter, the NAIS President. Also, you may recall that at your convention in Boston three years ago, Don Erickson, of The University of Chicago, read a paper, entitled "Impending Realignments between Public and Nonpublic Schools," in which he described some illustrations of a gradually developing rapprochement between certain elements of the two sectors. Nevertheless, it is apparent that these kinds of cooperative activities are still very much the exception rather than the rule; in fact, they tend to be exceptions which prove the rule -- that the need for effective working relationships between public and nonpublic schools is not being adequately met today.

Some of the Barriers

What are some of the barriers which tend to inhibit the operation of functional communication and cooperation between public and nonpublic schools? This is a rather difficult question to answer, but certainly a highly significant one. As no one, to my knowledge, has systematically studied the issue with any thoroughness (although Erickson and Greeley give it some thought in the passage which I quoted earlier), all we can do at present is make some educated guesses as to what these barriers probably are. Because our time is restricted, I shall limit myself here to suggesting briefly seven kinds of barriers which I suspect play a role in inhibiting the development of good working relationships between public and nonpublic schools.

I believe the most frequently cited obstacles are in the nature of legal and constitutional barriers. In the Nuccio and Walsh report, legal problems associated with the implementation of Title I were cited as "formidable, complex, and emotionally charged."⁸

As they say:

Typical of issues which are clouded with legal uncertainty, and subject to variant interpretations, are the permissibility of including non-public school teachers in in-service training programs, and the utilization in non-public schools of mobile equipment -- purchased with Title I funds -- for projects which are not remedial in nature.

... Hence, in some localities the participation of non-public school children was impeded during FY '66 by delays in rulings of state attorneys general concerning possible conflicts between the provisions of Title I and state constitutional requirements.⁹

They go on to point out, however, that perhaps even more significant than the legal barriers are problems which arise through the misinterpretation of legal barriers as, for example, when public officials deny legitimate requests from nonpublic schools, or when nonpublic school officials make requests which are clearly beyond the intention and purview of the Act. While both types of error may be the result of simple ignorance and misunderstanding, they can have disastrous effects upon the spirit of cooperation and mutual trust between the two educational systems which is required for the successful implementation of the Act. As the authors say:

The need for school officials to be fully and authoritatively informed on all aspects of Title I, and on the constitutional and legal context of the state, is a pressing one. The sooner the need is satisfied the earlier will harmonious working relationships between public and private schools be achieved.¹⁰

Many of these legal barriers are, of course, reflections of perceived constitutional barriers, relating particularly to church-state separation. It can be argued, however, that claimed constitutional opposition to public assistance for nonpublic schools -- which is frequently associated with cooperation between the two sectors -- is really just a "cover-up" for psychologically-based opposition. That is, such claimants may be no

more in favor of assisting non-sectarian nonpublic schools than they are of helping religious schools. Moreover, such persons have historically expressed far less opposition to public support of sectarian welfare agencies or sectarian colleges and universities than to such assistance for nonpublic elementary and secondary schools.

A third kind of barrier to functional public-nonpublic school relationships is structural in nature. As we know, for example,

... administrative structures for public schools and for Catholic schools in the United States are not parallel or comparable. Consequently, contacts between administrators of the two systems involve people who are operating at different levels of responsibility, and whose channels of communications as well as official relationships with subordinates are also different.¹¹

Moreover, public school systems and nonpublic school systems in the same general area typically have different boundaries, and the administrative authority and responsibility of the public school board, superintendent, and principal are frequently quite dissimilar to those of their titular counterparts in nonpublic schools, in part because the public school officials are not directly responsible to bishops or pastors and the nonpublic school officials are not directly responsible to the general public. Additional structural barriers to cooperation, of course, emanate from differences in scheduling and evaluation, and from other technical administrative difficulties which plague attempts to share time or facilities. Structural differences, then, can become major inhibiting factors in the development of communication and cooperation between public and nonpublic schools.

The last four kinds of barriers I want to mention might all be classified under the general heading of "emotional" for, while their origins may be quite real, their expression tends usually to be associated more with feeling than with fact. One such

obstacle is the financial barrier. While ardent public school proponents believe that nonpublic schools should receive no monetary assistance from the public coffers because their existence serves no worthwhile societal purpose (and may, they say, be detrimental to the health of our social order and our public school systems), nonpublic school proponents believe that they deserve some public assistance because they are performing a public service, are maintaining the diversity which is essential to a democratic society, and are relieving the public schools of the cost of educating a substantial number of children. Both parties to this argument claim constitutional support for their respective beliefs. The bad feelings which result from such a drastic opposition of views comprise a barrier to good working relationships between the two educational sectors. A second emotional barrier grows from philosophical roots in that the educational, religious, societal, and even moral values embodied in some kinds of nonpublic education tend to be rather diametrically opposed to those espoused by the public schools. The result again is frequently bad feeling between the two sectors. Third, there is an historical barrier which often stands in the way of functional communication and cooperation, for it must be remembered that most nonpublic schools were founded in protest to the public schools. Thus, there has developed a tradition, which varies in intensity, of uneasiness between those protesting and those protested against and the result, once again, is bad feeling. Finally, there is a whole set of phenomena which I can only classify as psychological barriers. These include the distrust, the jealousy, and the downright fear which the two educational systems sometimes feel for each other. These emotions are in part an outgrowth of the naturally competitive framework within which the two systems are placed, and in part a result of the existence of some of the other barriers which I have

mentioned. They are reflected most extremely in the oft-expressed (and unjustified) views that without public help nonpublic schools will die, and that with such help they will relegate the public schools to second-class status. The result, again, is ill-will between the sectors.

I have suggested seven kinds of barriers which I think are capable of becoming obstacles to productive communication between public and nonpublic schools: legal, constitutional, structural, financial, philosophical, historical, and psychological. Some of these barriers are realistically founded, but I submit that the majority are largely emotional and should be recognized and dealt with as such. I make no claim that these seven represent all of the barriers which have been erected, nor do I even suggest that they are the major ones. But I do believe that they are representative and that they must be taken into account if we seek to improve working relationships between public and nonpublic schools.

Overcoming the Barriers

This brings us to the question of how we might go about trying to surmount some of these obstacles. Quite obviously, there is no panacea which can be applied to cure the whole problem in one fell swoop; if there were, it would have been applied long ago and we would all be off somewhere eating a leisurely breakfast this morning -- perhaps with our good friend, the diocesan superintendent of schools. Nevertheless, while there is no cure-all, there are some steps we might take which would yield incremental gains in working toward a solution. Prior to suggesting a few such steps, let me make clear my bias that the basic problem, as reflected in the several kinds of barriers which I have

just referred to, is primarily the result of misunderstanding and mutual unfamiliarity between public and nonpublic school officials. I believe rather strongly that if the two sectors knew more about each other, they would develop a greater appreciation for each other, and functional inter-system working relationships would emerge. This bias generates my propensity for two basic kinds of activities aimed at overcoming some of the barriers to communication and cooperation; one type is in the nature of research and development, and the other in the nature of training. I shall treat each of these with some haste.

First, with regard to research and development, I think there is much need for an extensive and systematic study of the barriers themselves: What dysfunctional obstacles really pertain? What are their basic causes? What approaches have the greatest potential for overcoming them? The Boston College type of study, for example, might be extended to incorporate problem areas other than Title I implementation, to probe into causal factors, and to generate feasible solutions. This research might then be followed by developmental work which would seek to design and test some of the alternative solutions recommended by the researchers -- perhaps using selected urban centers as experimental laboratories and, subsequently, as demonstration models. Another developmental kind of activity might take the form of an intensive dissemination program designed to convey accurate information about the nature and functions of nonpublic schools to public school personnel. This too might lead to the liquidation of some unfortunate ignorance. Moreover, it could have rather immediate payoff in the nature of substantive and methodological improvements in the public schools; I am aware of several cases, for example, in which public school curricula and instruction have benefitted from an

awareness of practices in independent and religious schools.

At a less ambitious level of developmental activity there is the broad concept of sharing. The most common expression of this principle, of course, is shared time or dual enrollment; most of us are familiar with the advantages and drawbacks of this approach, so I won't dwell on them here, except to note that I do not view shared time as being among the most fruitful means of improving working relations between the two sectors.¹² There are many more imaginative alternatives involving sharing that have been or might be tested, including such mechanisms as student exchanges to mitigate racial imbalance, released time to take courses which are offered in one kind of school but not in the other, and inter-system sharing of teachers in highly specialized subject matter areas. These are a few examples of ways in which, through research and development activities, attempts might be made to overcome some of the barriers to functional communication and cooperation between public and nonpublic schools.

Shifting to training kinds of activities, I see a great need for both pre-service and in-service programs which would seek to improve mutual understanding and increase contact between officials of public and nonpublic schools. Specific courses, seminars, and workshops should be developed (and, in a few instances, have been developed) which are designed to deal particularly with the issue of public-nonpublic school relations and in which enrollment of both public and nonpublic school administrators -- and perhaps board members too -- is encouraged. Instructional materials need to be designed which present case studies or simulations of problems involving public-nonpublic school relations -- problems which can be "solved" by participants through the utilization of role-playing techniques within the classroom

setting, to be followed by probing and sophisticated analysis of the solutions generated. A few prototypes of such materials are already in existence. It would seem desirable for exchanges between the public and nonpublic educational sectors to be incorporated for both professors and students within the training program, not only for regular course work but for internships, surveys, and other field-related components as well. Cross-system or inter-system research should also be encouraged, particularly at the doctoral level in administrator preparation. One way of facilitating these various training innovations would be through the mechanism of a regional consortium of institutions which would include public and non-sectarian private universities, sectarian universities, public school systems, nonpublic schools and school systems, and a conveniently located central office which could serve as an information clearinghouse and a coordination center for the various activities of the consortium. Through such a mechanism, some substantial and lasting improvements might be effected in working relationships between public and nonpublic schools.

Implications for School Board Members

I have identified some of the barriers which I view as standing in the way of improved cooperation and communication between public and nonpublic schools, and I have suggested in rather general terms some of the ways in which we might seek to overcome certain of these obstacles. This brings us, finally, to the question of what role school board members might play in this process, and it leaves us with insufficient time to deal with the issue properly. I am sure all of you are aware of important implications for school boards in what has been said, and perhaps our reactor may want to discuss some of these.

Before closing, however, maybe I could offer a few quick suggestions. First, with regard to the legal barriers, I think it is essential that school board members educate themselves so that they may be aware of precisely what is and is not permitted under the law; you may find that much more in the way of public-nonpublic school cooperation is possible than you originally thought. Secondly, with regard to the constitutional barriers, I think that school board members might consider two potentially fruitful guidelines: (1) do not use the constitution as an excuse for avoiding working with nonpublic schools if your main reason for this avoidance is other than constitutional; and (2) do not devote an inordinate amount of time and energy to worrying about whether or not an archaic constitutional interpretation is being upheld in practice if this time and energy might be better invested in devising and implementing means of harnessing together some of the unique capabilities of two educational sectors in the common pursuit of better schooling for all children. Third, perhaps some of the structural barriers could be overcome by your creating some temporary systems for experimental purposes; for example, you might take a certain section of your school district -- or even a single school -- and, in cooperation with the local diocese, or parish, or independent educational agency, test out a variety of cooperative ventures with nearby nonpublic schools -- ventures such as teacher and student exchanges, reciprocal shared-time arrangements, joint curriculum committees, cooperative instructional experimentation, and the sharing of various facilities and services. Finally, with regard to the several emotional barriers which were mentioned, school boards could play a significant part in surmounting these obstacles simply by making

it possible and (more importantly) attractive for personnel in the two school systems to come to know each other. You are in a position, for example, to encourage the inauguration of a monthly dinner meeting for personnel from both school systems; you could sponsor a series of periodic seminars, of summer workshops, or of annual retreats for the in-service professional development of public and nonpublic school administrators together. The possibilities for such activities would seem to be as limitless as your own imaginations and energy.

In conclusion, I think it is essential that you, as policy makers for public education agencies, be aware of what other related agencies are doing and are capable of doing, and that you provide the leadership which is required in procuring the available resources external to the public schools which may contribute to the achievement of the public schools' goals. I submit that many nonpublic schools are rich in such resources.

Notes

¹The majority of these descriptive statistics refer to the years 1960-62 and are reported in Kenneth A. Simon and W. Vance Grant, Digest of Educational Statistics (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Office of Education, 1965).

²"Statistic of the Month: Nonpublic Schools in the 50 Largest Cities," School Life, Vol. 46, No. 8 (July, 1964), p. 14.

³Donald A. Erickson and Andrew M. Greeley, "Non-Public Schools and Metropolitanism," Metropolitanism: Its Challenge to Education, ed. Robert J. Havighurst (Chicago: National Society for the Study of Education, 1968 Yearbook), pp. 288-9. It is interesting to note that, of these 56 SMSA's with relatively high proportions of nonpublic school enrollment, all but five are located in either the Northeastern or Midwestern regions of the country.

⁴Vincent C. Nuccio and John J. Walsh, A National Level Evaluation Study of the Impact of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 on the Participation of Non-Public School Children (Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts: Boston College, 1967), p. 263.

⁵Ibid., p. 264.

⁶Ibid., p. 265. This suggestion is supported by other data as well. (See, for example, "Washington Monitor," Education U.S.A., May 12, 1966, p. 183).

⁷Erickson and Greeley, op. cit., p. 307.

⁸Nuccio and Walsh, op. cit., p. 260.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 262-3.

¹²While shared time has some obvious advantages in terms of curricular expansion and the achievement of economies of scale, it also promotes some rather painful administrative headaches. Moreover, it will likely never be practiced very widely, especially outside of urban centers, because it requires the close proximity of public and nonpublic schools, which does not often pertain. Also, it runs contrary to the philosophy of many nonpublic schools which were founded on the premise that religion should infuse all subjects of instruction in one way or another. In addition, it can be argued quite convincingly that shared-time programs serve to exaggerate the separation of public and nonpublic schools by bringing their students together for instruction in some areas but not in others.