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“The general principles on which the fathers achieved independence were the general principles of Christianity. I will avow that I then believed, and now believe, that those general principles of Christianity are as eternal and immutable as the existence and attributes of God.”

John Adams

New Data Shows Enrollment for Private Schools Holds Steady

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) has released data which shows that the enrollment for private schools has remained steady since the COVID pandemic disrupted in-person learning in schools. The data is from the [Private School Universe Survey](#) (PSS), a biennial survey which collects data on the number of private schools, teachers, and students in private schools across the country. According to the PSS from [2021 to 22](#), there were about 4.7 million students enrolled in private schools, the same number recorded from the PSS in 2019–20 when the COVID pandemic began. Interestingly, the number of private schools decreased, from 30,500 in 2019–20 to 29,700 in 2021–22. The overall number of teachers employed in private schools remained the same; when broken down according to religious affiliation, the number of teachers in non-Catholic schools increased by 4 percent, while those in Catholic schools decreased by 4 percent. Enrollment numbers for grades K to 4 increased 3 to 9 percent, while enrollment in grades 5 to 12 remained steady, with the exception of 11th grade which saw a 3 percent decline. Catholic school enrollment decreased by 4 percent, while non-Catholic religious schools increased by 8 percent. Since participation in the survey is on a volunteer basis for private schools, the data reflects only that information from the schools that participate in the survey. Specifically, for AACCS schools, growth in enrollment for the 2021–22 school year was 18%, according to Dr. Jeff Walton, AACCS Executive Director.

In the introduction to the survey, the NCES points out that the data from the survey provides important information for policy makers when considering and making decisions which influence education. Approximately 25% of the nation’s schools are private schools, enrolling 10% of the nation’s students and employing 13% of the teachers. The PSS does not collect personal information in the survey; rather the questions focus on statistical information related to enrollment numbers, ethnicity breakdown of student population, school association and religious affiliation, and length of school year and school day. Private schools that participate are included in the listing of private schools that appears on the FAFSA application (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Private school participation aids in providing an accurate picture of the state of private education in America in terms of number of schools, teachers, and students. “The information gleaned from the PSS is helpful in communicating to lawmakers and administrative personnel the essential work of Christian schools in providing education and their success in serving so many families. The survey is an important tool in our efforts making the case for protecting the autonomy and freedom of our schools,” stated Jamison Coppola, AACCS Government Affairs Director. He added, “We are grateful for the AACCS schools that participate in the survey, so that we can more effectively advocate for their interests.”

Court Rules Against Religious Liberty in World Vision Case

A federal judge has [ruled](#) against World Vision and religious liberty in a case involving the [right](#) of religious organization to hire employees who share their religious beliefs. World Vision, a Christian humanitarian organization, extended an offer of employment to Aubry McMahon as a customer service representative. During the interview process, McMahon had agreed to World Vision's standards of conduct, which includes the biblical belief of marriage between one man and one woman. However, after the offer was made, McMahon disclosed that she was in a same-sex marriage. Upon learning this information, World Vision withdrew its offer citing McMahon's inability to meet its standards of conduct. McMahon sued on the basis of discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and the Washington Law Against Discrimination (WLAD). World Vision argued that the case should be dismissed because the issue was about the ministry's autonomy to operate according to its beliefs. Originally, U.S. District Judge James L. Robart sided with World Vision. But after six weeks, Robart changed his mind and decided against World Vision. Robart claimed that World Vision violated Title VII and the WLAD. Although both laws contain religious exemptions, Robart claimed that the customer service representative position lacked key ministerial responsibilities. Judge Robart again upheld the decision against World Vision in a recent ruling. Although the case is still ongoing, World Vision still has the opportunity to appeal Robart's ruling.

Coming Up: National School Choice Week

[National School Choice Week \(NSCW\) begins January 21, 2024](#), providing families and schools an opportunity to highlight the positive impact that school choice has had in the lives of thousands of students. Since the first celebration of NSCW in 2011, the organizers have helped plan or promote over 270,000 events which have highlighted the benefits of school choice for children and families. For materials and ideas for your school or event, please [click here](#).

Coming Up: March for Life 2024

The 50th March for Life will take place in Washington, D.C., on January 19, 2024. The annual march began in 1973, with the goal and purpose of fighting to overturn the Supreme Court's infamous *Roe v. Wade* decision which legalized abortion in all 50 states. Since the Supreme Court overruled *Roe* in the case *Dodd v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, pro-life advocates have continued the fight to protect pre-born lives from the horrors of abortion. The theme for the 2024 March for Life is "With Every Woman, For Every Child," to emphasize the need of caring for the mother as well as the child. "We really try to discern what's most pressing in the moment, and the heart of the pro-life movement is really support for moms," [stated](#) March for Life President Jeanne Mancini. For more information on participating in the March for Life, please [click here](#).

In Case You Missed It:

[Weekly Market Update](#) provided by Jeff Beach of the [AACIS Investment Team at Merrill Lynch](#)

[Practical Legal Help for Christian Schools: ADF Ministry Alliance](#)

[Promise to America's Children](#)

[Poll Shows Nationwide Support for Parental Notification in School Policies](#)