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“The Bible contains the most profound philosophy, the most perfect morality, and the most refined policy that ever was conceived upon Earth.”

John Adams

The AACCS Remembers Dr. Charles Walker with Grateful Hearts

On Sunday morning, September 22, Dr. Charles Walker passed peacefully from this life to the next and is today with his Savior. Hundreds of teachers and leaders in the AACCS have known Dr. Walker as a college professor, state director, and AACCS leader. He served for decades as the executive director of the Tennessee Association of Christian Schools, as the education director of the AACCS from 1993 to 2003, and as the Executive Director from 2003 to 2009. Thousands of Christian school students, teachers, and leaders have benefited from his life and work. With grateful hearts for his ministry, we lift up in prayer his wife, Tonia Mae, and his family.

Office of Non-Public Education Hosts Conference for Private School Leaders

Last week, the AACCS Washington staff attended the National Private School Leadership Conference, hosted by the Office of Non-Public Education (ONPE) in the U.S. Department of Education. The conference began with a presentation on “Enhancing School Climate and Safety,” moderated by ONPE Director Maureen Dowling with guest speakers Dr. Renee Bradley of the Department’s Office of Elementary and Secondary Education and Dr. Jennifer Freeman from the University of Connecticut Neag School of Education. Their discussion emphasized prevention measures to foster a safe and healthy school climate, and they also praised the work of faith-based organizations in assisting communities that have suffered a school shooting tragedy. The conference luncheon featured U.S. Deputy Secretary of Education Cindy Marten who commended the work of the ONPE office on behalf of private schools and spoke to good practices in education such as competency-based education. Other sessions throughout the day focused on specific opportunities open to private schools. A representative of the [U.S. Geological Survey](#) highlighted the educational resources that are available through the program, including Earthshots, a [program](#) that offers satellite view of changes in the earth, and the [Albert Einstein Fellowship](#) for teachers. Pamela Allen from the ONPE and Travis Bryant from the Office of Special Education Programs provided an update on the equitable services provisions in IDEA, including explanations of the child find and complaint processes that are in place to ensure students can receive the services they need.

An update from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) highlighted data that shows enrollment trends since the pandemic. Public school enrollment has seen a drop, down from 50.8 million students in 2019 to 49.6 million in 2021. NCES Commissioner Dr. Peggy Carr pointed to a newly released study, [Parent and Family Involvement in Education](#), that shows 83% of parents who have chosen to homeschool cited a concern about the environment of other schools. This was the 20th year the ONPE hosted the National Private School Conference. In recognition of the 20 years, Phil Rosenfelt, from the Department’s Office of General Counsel, offered a session titled “A Legal View of 20 Plus Years: Looking Back and Looking Ahead,” that highlighted the court victories for desegregation and Title I fairness while also recognizing current challenges in education. He expressed confidence in the durability of the U.S. Constitution and encouraged the attendees to teach students to have “conversations rather than demonstrations” about differences in opinions.

House Considers a Vote on Federal School Choice

The [Educational Choice for Children Act](#), or ECCA, has passed out of the House Ways and Means Committee and now waits for a full House vote. The ECCA is the federal school choice bill that has gained traction in Congress. If passed, the bill would establish a tax credit program that supplements existing state-level school choice programs and create new opportunities for students. The ECCA would allow individuals to donate to scholarship-granting organizations which would then give money to families to pay for expenses such as private school tuition or education technology. The ECCA protects the autonomy of faith-based private schools to carry out their missions without burdensome regulations. “A good education is foundational for a child’s success in life, but unfortunately many parents have little say over their children’s education due to where they live or how much they earn,” [said](#) Rep. Adrian Smith (R-NE), the bill’s sponsor. “This bill would change the educational landscape for families across the country by generating significant new investments in scholarships for K-12 and educational resources.” Supporters of the bill hope the House will vote on the ECCA when Congress returns after the November elections. “So far, over 365,000 students with an average household income of under \$75,000 nationwide have benefitted from such programs at the state level,” [said](#) Ways and Means Committee Chair Jason Smith, “and this legislation will help bring that success to many more students in the future.”

Study Reveals Changes in Evangelical Giving

“[The Giving Gap: Changes in Evangelical Generosity](#),” a new study by Grey Matter Research and Infinity Concepts, has revealed that evangelical Protestants are giving less now than they did in 2020. The study examines inflation-adjusted data from August 2020 and compares it to data collected in February 2024. In 2024, the researchers found that 61% of evangelicals financially supported a church compared to 74% in 2020, a 17% decrease. Evangelicals are also giving proportionally less. Evangelicals give an average of 2.8% of their income to church and 1.1% to charity. The researchers found that white evangelical generosity dropped by 34% compared to a 5% drop by evangelicals of color. As a whole, only 10% of evangelicals gave at least 8% of their income to church or charity. However, the study found a correlation between spiritual engagement and giving: the more one participated in spiritual activities such as Bible reading or prayer, the more one gave to church and charities. The researchers suggested that churches and charities should focus on encouraging spiritual engagement instead of increasing generosity. The researchers also noted a similar correlation between giving to church and charity. Those who give to one ministry often give to the other. “Ultimately, the concept of giving is about more than just giving,” [said](#) Mark Dreistadt, president and CEO of Infinity Concepts. “It is about understanding the true source of our blessings and being generous to others as the Lord has been generous to us.”

In Case You Missed It:

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

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

[Promise to America’s Children](#)

[NEW! AACCS Today Podcast: The State of Religious Hiring](#)

[Study Tying Regular Church Attendance to Emotional Well-being Points to Biblical Truth](#)

[Not-So-Great Society: How the 1960s Destroyed the American Family](#)

Jamison Coppola: Government Relations Director

Olivia Summers: Government Relations Assistant

Maureen Van Den Berg: Policy Analyst

Washington Office, 119 C Street SE, Washington, DC 20003