

## **Shared Convictions About Education**

### **United Methodist/Roman Catholic Dialogue**

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1. An adequate education is one of the most indispensable achievements for life in the modern world, and it is a crucial responsibility of the entire society to make it possible for every child to obtain such an education.
2. The public school is the chief instrument by means of which our society attempts to make an adequate education available to all children. It is not only the agency of education, but if others fail, it must take up their task. It must be open to all on an equal basis, without discrimination because of race, religion, national origin, sex, or economic class.
3. It is the right and responsibility of parents to choose the kind of education their children shall have, particularly what understanding of the nature and duty of man they shall be taught. Parents may delegate this responsibility to teachers in public or private schools, but it remains the parents' right and should not be usurped by others.
4. Our entire society is and should be taxed for the expenses of education through various modes of taxation, local, state and federal. Taxes paid by all the people under duress of law must be used in ways that are essentially and actually amenable to public control for benefits that are available to all without discrimination.
5. Resources obtained from the entire society by taxation cannot be used to finance the teaching or practice of religion, whether in public schools or private. What constitutes financing the teaching or practice of religion in public and private schools is still a subject of disagreement and litigation.
6. Parents may arrange for their children to be taught a particular understanding of the nature and duty of man and the meaning of existence, at their own direction and expense, in church schools, summer camps, and private schools of general education.
7. Any (non-public) school which provides the type of education which parents want for their children (and which meets certain minimal standards and does not actually jeopardize public health or safety) is a legitimate part of the total education enterprise of the American society, and deserves recognition, protection, consideration, and encouragement as such.
8. Children in private as well as public schools are entitled to welfare benefits provided by government to all children without discrimination, irrespective of what schools they may attend. Their welfare benefits clearly include school lunches, medical and dental care, and may include bus transportation, secular textbooks, and certain other services, the extent of which is still a subject of disagreement, experiment and litigation.
9. Teachers and administrators of private schools are entitled to respect and encouragement as important contributors to the common good. Their counsel and cooperation should be sought and valued in any efforts to improve the total educational enterprise. They should enjoy the same professional standards and opportunities as those in public schools within the limits of nos. 4 and 5 above.
10. Certain subjects that are deemed to be entirely "secular" in significance should be offered by public schools to children enrolled for the rest of their instruction in private schools, through such arrangements as shared time and educational television, thus making

possible significant economies for private schools and a mingling of school-children with their peers of varying persuasions.

11. In situations where public schools cannot or do not provide an adequate education for children or where they cannot or do not meet the expectations of parents, other kinds of schools may be needed to supply what the public schools are not supplying. How they may be enabled to assume this extra burden is a matter for continuing exploration and experiment. It is conceivable that some way can be found to enable private institutions to serve a public purpose with public resources without losing their autonomy or distinctiveness, without sacrificing public control of public funds, and without risking discrimination among children.