

**The Private Elementary
and Secondary Education**

OUTLOOK

A report from the Council for American Private Education, Washington, D.C.

March, 1975

NEW NIE GRANTS TO FINANCE
FURTHER STUDY OF VOUCHERS
IN PUBLIC, PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Renewing priority for voucher experiments in American education, federal officials have awarded \$387,000 to East Hartford, Conn., and \$210,000 to a New Hampshire consortium. Casper Weinberger, Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, has called for "additional tests of the voucher concept." The two new studies of "regulated" and "open market" voucher approaches will include private schools, according to the National Institute of Education (NIE).

Vouchers are designed to offer wider choices for parents, students, and teachers. The voucher represents educational dollars allotted to each student; the dollars go to the school that parents select for their child. NIE's Denis Doyle says East Hartford, like the NIE pilot project in Alum Rock, Calif., will test "regulated" vouchers--with uniform admissions policies and voucher values for participating schools. The project in New Hampshire may involve an "open market" approach, allowing parents to supplement vouchers with private funds; admissions policies may vary, but must not discriminate racially, says Doyle, Assistant Director of School Finance and Management at NIE.

For urban East Hartford, with 12,000 kindergarten through high school students, there are two stages: expansion of current open enrollment programs and "serious examinations" of potential private school involvement and transportation needs and costs, Doyle says. East Hartford public schools are "healthy" with high per-pupil expenditures. That and Connecticut's enabling legislation augur well for participation of independent and parochial school children, he says. CAPE is working with NIE to organize and involve private schools in the project. Doyle predicts that East Hartford will survey parents and decide in January, 1976, whether to embark on a full voucher program. In New Hampshire's group of seven suburban systems, private schools will help draft the voucher plan, Doyle says. Their participation in the actual test hinges on passage of pending state legislation.

COMMISSION TO IDENTIFY,
DISSEMINATE INNOVATIVE
NAIS SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Two private foundations have funded a project to draw on the "freedoms and resources" of independent schools as an educational resource for the nation. The newly formed Commission on Educational Issues is financed by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the E. E. Ford Foundation. It will work with members of the National Association of Independent Schools in promoting "the public mission of private schools," Commission Director William D. Berkeley says.

With NAIS schools as laboratories for innovation, the Commission plans to identify and spread educational programs and practices among public and private elementary and secondary schools across America. To start, Berkeley says, the Commission has focused on two areas. First are private school experiences with "nonclassroom learning"--from urban internships to wilderness courses. The second area is continuing education "for people to re-educate themselves several times during their working years," he says.

Berkeley, who formerly headed A Better Chance, Inc., sees the Commission project as a further step away from the "elitist" image that independent schools bore until recently. In the past decade, independent schools diversified their student bodies, increased scholarship aid, and altered institutional life-styles, he says. Now, Berkeley says, through the Commission, the independent school sector "can live up to its own rhetoric as an educational resource for the nation." Commission members include representatives from the private and public sectors in education and community service. Autonomous in its operations, the Commission is sponsored by NAIS.

PRIVATE EDUCATOR PREPARES
NATIONAL RESOURCE HANDBOOK

Father C. Albert Koob, a prominent leader in private education, is preparing a guide to national educational resource programs. His work this spring is under the auspices of CAPE and the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., where Father Koob is working for a doctorate in education.

Father Koob will identify educational resource programs from many federal and private sources ranging from the National Science Foundation to the private National Humanities Faculty. The handbook will provide brief descriptions and information about participating in programs of national scale, except those administered by the U.S. Office of Education (OE). The handbook is a companion to one on OE programs that CAPE recently produced for OE. The new project's author is a past president of the National Catholic Educational Association and a pioneer director of CAPE. Father Koob holds honorary doctorate degrees bestowed by three universities during his 33-year career in private education.

COOP OF 80 PRIVATE SCHOOLS
SAVES BY POOLED PURCHASING

A Michigan-based cooperative of 70 Christian and ten Lutheran schools shares in savings by pooling their purchases of supplies and equipment. "We can get anything that a school can use--other than textbooks," says Ben Bonmema, the driving force behind the Christian School Buying Cooperative. "Soap and wax, even pianos," he says, come at 30 percent savings through the Coop.

Bonmema operates the Coop from Byron Center Christian School near Grand Rapids, where he is the principal. The Coop serves schools mainly within a 200-mile radius--in Michigan, in and around Chicago, but also as far away as Pittsburgh and Southern Illinois.

The central purchasing project operates two ways. Bonmema gets bids from suppliers for the large summer order. Goods for the 80 Coop members are delivered to Byron Center, filling the school's two gyms, Bonmema says. He, the principal of a neighboring school, and Bonmema's son, a teacher, "stack each school's materials in a pile." Then comes a caravan of trucks and station wagons as each school picks up its goods.

During the school year, Bonmema adds, "scientific supplies or pianos, soap or wax," and other items specially ordered are shipped from suppliers directly to each school. Bills, however, go to the central Coop. "That's a major factor to a supplier," Bonmema says.

The joint purchasing venture began 15 years ago among Byron Center and five other schools that feed into a Christian high school in Grand Rapids. Together, they bought "paper supplies by the carload," Bonmema recalls. The plan next spread within their basketball league. Now, the Coop's 80 schools, several churches, and a college share in savings through bulk purchases. Approaching a half-million dollars of business annually, the Coop pays "30 percent under the price in school catalogs on most school supplies," he estimates. Many goods are bought through retail outlets. Bonmema says the Coop adds 3 percent to all purchase prices to cover its operational costs.

Elsewhere, other private schools are sharing in savings from going to the marketplace together. For instance, the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) reports some member schools cooperate among themselves or with public schools or agencies in buying school supplies, fuel, and food. Successful joint purchasing requires commitment from schools and a keen watch over administrative costs. John P. Downing, NAIS Business Manager, warns, "You can spend a lot of effort chasing a dollar."

Three independent schools around Watertown, Conn., buy fuel together, NAIS reports. And the Colorado Association of Independent Schools offers an insurance package to its member schools. The state group has negotiated an employee health, accident, and life plan that provides better coverage "at substantially less premium," Downing says. The Colorado approach interests other state associations in NAIS, he says.

PRIVATE SCHOOLS BUILD TIES
STATE-BY-STATE WITH PUBLIC
EDUCATION LEADERS, LAWMAKERS

Across the "vastness" of Alaska and from California to Florida, the private school sector is working to improve its own communication system and to cooperate with public educators and government officials. Areas

of interest include pending legislation, accreditation standards, teacher certification, and publicity for the private school community.

In Alaska, CAPE State Representative Frank W. Matulich reports his outreach efforts are designed for private schools and an OE regional office unusually remote from one another. The California Executive Council of Nonpublic Schools stays in touch with state education department contacts about legislation; pending bills touch on such matters as a mandated total of annual school days and a uniform fiscal year for public and private schools.

The Florida Association of Academic Nonpublic Schools recently joined state education and OE Region IV officials in sponsoring a conference for private school educators from eight Southern states; the two-day session in Orlando was a first in the nation for such three-way sponsorship. The Kansas Association of Nonpublic Schools and state education department officials are discussing a joint effort to design one accreditation standard broad enough to accommodate diversity in both public and private schools.

In Kentucky and Minnesota, advisory groups for state education departments are studying private as well as public education. A special legislative commission in North Carolina reports to the General Assembly early in 1975; its concerns range from certification of private school teachers to the private sector's relationships with public schools and the state education agency. On the West Coast, Washington Federation of Independent Schools recently offered public relations workshops in five cities; editors and newscasters gave pointers about getting private school news to the community. Another focus of the Washington group is a proposed state constitutional amendment. At legislative hearings recently, the federation supported the proposed aid for students in private as well as public schools and post-secondary institutions.

MARYLAND-CAPE ESTABLISHED
AS 16TH SUCH STATE GROUP

The newest broad-based state group for private schools is Maryland-CAPE, born in February. Charter members include educators from Catholic, Christian, Episcopal,

Friends, Hebrew, independent, and Missouri Lutheran schools. President of the group is Frederic Rhineland, headmaster of Glenelg Country School; vice president, Catherine O. Coleman of St. John's Parish School; and secretary, G. Patrick Canan, representing the Catholic dioceses of Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Md., and Wilmington, Del. Fifteen other states have associations drawing together a spectrum of private schools. The groups seek to improve communication among private schools and with state and federal officials.

'VOLUNTEERS IN EDUCATION'
OF ALL AGES, WALKS OF LIFE,
WORK IN MIAMI-AREA SCHOOLS

In Dade County, Fla., volunteers of many races and all ages help teachers in 240 schools by tutoring, reading with, or merely talking with children. Requirements are simple for 10,770 participants in "Volunteers in Education"—college students and retirees, shopkeepers and professional people, parents of Anglo, black, and Spanish-origin. Each must be available at least two hours weekly and willingly go through training and orientation programs. Most important, each must have "positive attitudes about children and schools," says Dr. Audrey Jackson.

She has directed the Miami-based program from its start in January, 1971. With federal and foundation aid totaling \$382,000, Dade County has devised recruiting and training materials and has drawn as many as 12,000 volunteers to serve in public and some private schools. The financial investment is "miniscule," she judges, compared to the results. In 1973-74 alone, public school volunteers provided \$4.4 million worth of free services.

In human terms, the program helps harried teachers, gives a sense of purpose to old and young volunteers, and measurably assists children. Teachers ask for volunteers. Some who sport the "I am a school volunteer" buttons stay the entire school day. A teenager coaches youngsters in reading. A retired executive tutors children in math. Another helps with a teacher's clerical chores. And in a new "listen to children" project, dozens of volunteers work one-to-one with elementary school children to lessen their anxieties. Tactics include classwork, play, free reading, and simply talking with a student. Tests of self and peer-perception show 70 to 80 percent of children working with "listeners" indulge substantially less in self-defeating behavior.

Dr. Jackson stresses that teacher-volunteer assignments are flexible. Either may ask for a change. The director and each school's resource head believe there is "a right place" for each volunteer. The goal, Dr. Jackson says, is a "productive" assignment where a volunteer feels "like a member of the team."

Within Dade County, one Catholic elementary school has fitted "Volunteers in Education" to its needs. Some 212 volunteers, mostly mothers and grandmothers, provide a range of services at St. Rose of Lima School, according to Sister Jean Rosaria. Some run errands or track students for computer-individualized instruction. Others staff reading labs or help with Spanish instruction, library or clinic services, or playground supervision. The St. Rose principal says her 587-pupil school draws "a high percentage," more than 60 percent, of school families into the volunteer program.

For private schools, where parent and alumni voluntarism is traditional, Dr. Jackson is working on two fronts to promote use of recruiting and training approaches developed in the nationwide "Volunteers in Education" program. Last month at the behest of officials in OE, she told private school educators from eight states about Dade County's program. Next, she and Dr. Robert Simpson of the Nonpublic School Consortium at the University of Miami plan a summer workshop there for private school teachers working with volunteers.

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