

OUTLOOK

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

June, 1975

SPLIT SUPREME COURT LIMITS
STATE AID TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS
IN LANDMARK PENNSYLVANIA CASE

A sharply divided U.S. Supreme court has struck down two of three Pennsylvania programs to assist private school students. In barring all but a \$5 million textbook loan program—in a \$30 million package of

instructional services, and loans of textbooks, materials, and equipment—the high court set the strictest limits yet in its 30 years of rulings on public aid to private schools.

In Meek v. Pittenger, the court ruled 6-to-3 against sending public school employees into private schools to provide specialized remedial services and instruction. The majority feared the task of policing the professional specialists could cause "a constitutionally intolerable degree of entanglement between church and state." In addition, because 75 percent of Pennsylvania's private schools have a "predominantly religious character," the court barred loans of instructional materials and equipment to private schools. Banned items range from films, maps, and periodicals to recorders, projectors, and laboratory equipment.

Leaders in private elementary and secondary education expressed disappointment at the rulings, but stressed that the three-part case did bring a 6-to-3 reaffirmation of public textbook loans for private school students. Justices left intact major pupil-centered services previously approved—school lunches, health services, and pupil transportation.

Some found encouragement in the strong dissenting opinions. Chief Justice Warren Burger scored the "crabbed attitude" of the majority, seeing "as much potential for divisive political debate" from the decision as might surround the programs themselves. He rued "penalties" inflicted on private school children who are disadvantaged or congenitally handicapped or specially gifted, particularly those from lower income families. "This strikes them," Justice Burger said, "not because of any act of theirs but because of their parents' choice of religious exercise." Justices William Rehnquist and Byron White said the court has stepped beyond religious neutrality in government toward requiring "a purely secular" society.

Agreeing with the opinions of Justices Burger, Rehnquist, and White, Dr. Robert Lamborn, Executive Director of the Council for American Private Education (CAPE), lamented the practical limitations that the decision imposes upon rights of parents to determine the character of their children's education. Children in private schools, he said, receive the secular education specified by the state and required by American life. "Beyond that," he said, "they and our pluralistic society benefit from the tremendously varied value orientations—sectarian and nonsectarian—which private schools represent."

The CAPE official called private schools "valid and legitimate social institutions that serve the public need, just as private libraries, museums, and hospitals do. Their students should not be denied the 'secular, neutral, and nonideological' services, materials, and equipment that are provided to all other American school children." Lamborn stated: "The effect of this decision is to erode child benefit, restrict parent benefit, and disregard social benefit."

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
POSES NEW ROLE FOR SCHOOLS
IN PREPARATION OF PARENTS

A child's intellect is nourished or stunted irrevocably by its third birthday, 1,400 educators were told recently. In those formative years, it is parents, not educators, who contribute most to the

physical growth of the brain and to stimulation of a child's curiosity and intelligence.

Because "not one in ten of our children gets what is really needed" by the age of three, educators across America are focusing on better parenthood training for high school students and adults. The 1,400 gathered in Denver in May at the first national conference on "Parent/Early Childhood Education."

Dr. John Silber of Boston University and Dr. Burton White of Harvard cited two decades of scientific studies proving "the lifetime importance" of families in preparing young children for intellectual growth and activity. Silber said nutritional deprivation of a woman in the last three months of pregnancy may stunt brain growth in her baby, causing loss of as much as 10 percent of adult brain weight. White said parents mold a child's lifelong intellectual patterns by age three, by giving or withholding stimulation in language, curiosity, socialization, and the exercise of intelligence.

Most parents fail out of ignorance about how to foster their child's development, White said. Today's family settings lack "support resources" such as grandparents or other veterans in parenthood. The mother alone often bears the responsibility and stresses of childrearing, White added. He called for early testing to detect problems in preschool children and new training in skills of parenthood—to provide safe, growing environments for very young children. "This is an important new role for schools," said Terrel H. Bell, U.S. Commissioner of Education who initiated the conference. "It is the great unmet need in American education today."

FORD BACKS PARENTHOOD TRAINING
TO NURTURE PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

President Gerald Ford says America has a "great need" for parents "who understand how to help their children grow and mature and develop to the fullest potential."

Addressing leaders of the National Education Association in May, Ford called for more instruction in schools about how to be effective parents. He lauded the development of curricular materials and a TV pilot program to teach high school youngsters and parents "how to foster intellectual growth and moral development in preschool children."

NCES PLANS ANNUAL POLLS
IN PRIVATE SCHOOL SECTOR;
CAPE HELPS DESIGN SURVEYS

The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) is moving toward increasing the frequency and depth of its surveys of America's private elementary and secondary schools. The Center plans to start annual

surveys for the private school sector, possibly in the spring of 1976. In the past, NCES has conducted surveys almost every year for public schools, but only at five-year intervals for private schools.

Full current statistics are considered vital for research and policymaking concerning private schools, which educate 10 percent of the nation's students. NCES data is for use by Congressional committees, the Administration, federal agencies, the private and public educational sectors, and the public at large.

As a first step, NCES has contracted with CAPE to compile a list of private schools and to help prepare questions for annual surveys. The extensive list will include member schools of national organizations within and beyond CAPE and schools which do not belong to any national group. This project is CAPE's second for a federal agency in a year.

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH HAS
KEY ROLE, NIE'S NEW HEAD,
WHITE HOUSE GUESTS AGREE

Educational researchers must help America's schools adapt to a changing environment, says Dr. Harold Hodgkinson of the National Institute of Education (NIE). Researchers "are on a moving platform shooting at moving targets," he told 60 White House guests on the day of his swearing-in as Director of NIE. Dr. Hodgkinson said NIE must stress "social significance" with research to help improve the quality of education and thus the quality of life.

At the recent White House session devoted to educational research and development, Dr. Hodgkinson and other administrative officials met with educators, researchers, and key executives in educational publishing and communications.

NIE's important work is "undernourished," said Caspar Weinberger, Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW). Virginia Trotter, Assistant Secretary for Education in HEW, noted NIE's new emphasis on sharing results of research; dissemination accounts for 23 percent of the agency's 1976 budget, she said.

Stressing the fiscal restraints on all federal agencies, Paul O'Neill, Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget, underscored the significance of educational research. While "our instinct is to buy an answer in three months," he cautioned that for designing valid educational research, it is essential to take "a long view."

Administrative officials urged all elements of the educational community to participate in research and development. Dr. John Corbally, who heads NIE's policy council, said researchers in universities and schools as well as government and business should try to operate not as "feudal states," but in close cooperation.

KRAUSHAAR WRITES TRACT ON
PIONEERING PRIVATE SCHOOLS
FOR AMERICAN BICENTENNIAL

As Bicentennial scholars debunk myths and find long-lost heroes in this nation's early years, a renowned author gives private schools the credit as pioneers in American education. "Most schooling in the United States was private until the middle of the last century," says Dr. Otto Kraushaar.

The former president of Goucher College, Dr. Kraushaar has been commissioned to write a brief history of private education in the U.S. It is one of a series of 50-page "fastbacks" for the Bicentennial produced at the behest of Phi Delta Kappa, a national honorary fraternity in education. Dr. Kraushaar is the author of a definitive history of American private education. Most historians depict early schools as public ones, he says; yet, for decades "before education became compulsory," private schools and academies were almost alone in educating the nation's children.

PRIVATE ACADEMIES SERVING
HISTORICAL PUBLIC SCHOOL
ROLE IN NEW ENGLAND TOWNS

Some private academies in New England that date from around 1800 continue to serve primarily as public schools. About 25 receive tuition payments from towns for accepting public students. They have a variety of arrangements with towns for control of administration, staffing, and academic programs, says Ralph West of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

Historically, West notes, private academies once provided "the only secondary school education in New England." Under economic and social pressures, private academies have gone three ways. Some are fully private; some are under full public control. And in "a wide gamut" between those two extremes, West says, about 25 academies operate under control structures involving both public and private elements.

A study West compiled shows several arrangements between the trustees of academies and school officials in associated communities. Some private academies serve as area or regional high schools. For instance, Norwich Free Academy in Connecticut, founded in 1854, serves more than 3,000 students from Norwich and nearby towns. A 12-member board of trustees operates the high school under a contract with tuition-paying towns. Other trustee-run academies serving sending districts under contracts include George Stevens Academy of Blue Hill, Me., founded in 1803 and enrolling 240 students; Thornton Academy in Saco, Me., established in 1811 and enrolling 166 students; and Pinkerton Academy in Derry, N.H., founded in 1814 and serving 1,017 pupils.

The enrollment practices or control structures of some of these "public use" academies vary, West says. In Maine, Fryeburg Academy educates 303 day students under contract with area sending districts; in addition, the academy founded in 1791 has 172 boarding students from across the U.S. who attend as private tuition-paying students. In the Newcastle area, Lincoln Academy serves 465 students; under a contract with the sending districts, the academy trustees retain major control over the curriculum.

A joint board arrangement is featured at Foxcroft Academy, founded in 1823 in Dover-Foxcroft, Me., and enrolling 350 pupils. Academy trustees maintain the facilities; they carry out an educational program designed cooperatively with officials of the public school district, which bears responsibility for the academy's curriculum and staffing. Degrees of cooperation among trustees of various academies and public sending district officials differ, West says. Some work closely and well, others in uneasy alliances.

The roles of New England academies continue to change, West says. Brewster Academy, a 155-year-old town academy in Wolfeboro, N.H., went fully private only a few years ago when a regional high school was built. Burr and Burton Seminary, operating since 1829, is a sending school for 440 pupils from Manchester, Vt., and environs; its trustees may soon decide to "go public," West says, in order to qualify for state construction aid.

FRIENDS STUDENTS SING IN REQUIEM AT KENNEDY CENTER

Some 78 children from Sidwell Friends School in Washington, D.C., recently shared the concert stage at the Kennedy Center with a 71-year-old composer from Moscow. Dmitri Kabalevski led the children's chorus and the Paul Hill Orchestra and Chorale of 100 voices in his Requiem. Kabalevski made a special trip to America to conduct his greatest work in the April 26 and 27 concerts.

The dirge written in memory of Soviet dead in World War II culminates with a lilting song in Russian from the children: "By the sun, by the Motherland, we vow / What our fathers didn't sing, we'll sing / What our fathers didn't build, we'll build." To emphasize the universality of the Requiem, Kabalevski requires a mixed chorus of girls and boys. Paul Hill says the Sidwell chorus of 10 to 17-year-olds was chosen because of its "exceptional work" under the school's conductor, Mrs. Frances Bartley Cleaver.

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