

# OUTLOOK

---

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

November, 1975

---

GREATER PARENT ROLE IN  
EDUCATION POLICY-MAKING  
URGED, SOUGHT, DEMANDED

Charging parents have lost control over the education of their children and confidence in the performance of their schools, widely diverse groups call for a stronger voice for parents in determining the character of their children's experiences. "The public," says Dr. Mario Fantini, State University of New York education dean (New Paltz), "is seeking to repossess its schools."

Dr. Carl Marburger, former New Jersey Commissioner of Education, maintains "there has been a loss of confidence by parents and citizens in the basic ability of the public schools to carry out their responsibilities." Attributing this loss to poor student achievement, disenchantment with teacher strikes, crime in the schools, and an inordinate concentration of power in the hands of professionals, Marburger, now Senior Associate of the National Committee for Citizens in Education, reports that organization is affiliating concerned citizen-action groups into a parent network seeking a "real share in determining policies and practices for the education of children."

Concerned that parents become more active in school affairs, Dr. Harvey Scribner, former school chancellor of New York City, urges an organized parent drive for education reform "to ensure a better education for every child"; failure may mean, he says, "you may soon see the end of public education." National PTA President, Mrs. Carol Kimmel, cautions that parents are on a collision course with the schools that can be averted only through parental participation in the important decisions in education.

David Selden, past president of the American Federation of Teachers, analyzing the Alum Rock voucher experiment, finds especially impressive the high degree of parental involvement and satisfaction in the Alum Rock mini-schools. Tom James, in COMPACT, magazine of the Education Commission of the States, comments on the broad spectrum of parental unrest and response. The characteristics of the "new breed" of concerned citizens, he says, could signal "that the days of punch-pouring and band-boosterism are over."

Parent groups express concern. In Missouri a class-action suit sponsored by Parents Rights, Inc. and Citizens for Educational Freedom charges public schools teach a form of "secular humanism" in violation of First and Fourteenth Amendment rights; several million tax dollars are in escrow, pending settlement of the suit. The Parents Union of Public Schools of Philadelphia is suing school board and teachers' union, claiming the bargaining agreement constitutes an unlawful delegation of school board power to the union.

"Parent Power" advocates see the exercise of that power as a way for parents to share effectively in shaping their children's destinies. "What the present controversy comes down to," says U.S. Commissioner of Education Dr. Terrel Bell, "is a growing concern on the part of parents that they have lost control over their children's education and, therefore, over their children's future." Speaking to the subject, John Vander Ark, Director, National Union of Christian Schools, comments: "Private school people, long dependent upon the personal commitment and active involvement of parents, recognize and value the constructive influence parents exert on the character of their schools."

NEW OE POLICY ON GIFTED  
AND TALENTED ANNOUNCED  
AT WHITE HOUSE MEETING

Pledging the U.S. Office of Education will do more than ever for the gifted and talented, Dr. Terrel Bell announced a 2.5 million dollar program to meet the needs of "the country's most valuable and often disregarded asset, our gifted and talented youth." Students will be served who have shown outstanding potential in a variety of fields, a group in no sense exclusively middle or upper class.

Only a small percent of the gifted and talented are receiving programs which meet their special needs, Bell told representatives of national organizations of educators and scholars. The typical classroom, he said, often "turns off" the especially able; their thrusting minds often threaten teachers not trained to cope with their intellectual power.

Bell signed an OE policy document recognizing "the education of the gifted and talented as being an integral part of our educational system"; encouraging "an investment by the private sector in a cooperative venture with the public sector for the purpose of providing needed specialized services to improve the quality and relevance of instruction for the gifted and talented student"; and promising to provide technical and supportive services to institutions and individuals interested in gifted and talented education.

D.C. CATHOLIC SCHOOLS  
CITED AS STABILIZING,  
INTEGRATING AGENCIES

Catholic schools of metropolitan Washington (D.C.) "present a picture of substantial voluntary integration," help stabilize population in the city, and provide a significant example of inter-jurisdictional busing for purposes of integration, according to Columbia University Professor Thomas Vitullo-Martin.

Buttressing his position, Vitullo-Martin, a social scientist who is assessing the role of Catholic Schools in major U.S. cities, reports 42 percent of the 13,400 elementary students in the D.C. schools are black and 45 percent of the total Catholic school enrollment is non-Catholic. His studies also show that parents who would otherwise move from D.C. chose to remain because of satisfaction with their children's school experience.

Significant numbers of black children in the Washington diocese are bused into suburban areas to attend predominantly white Catholic schools in another diocese, while substantial numbers of white students are bused from the suburbs to the central city to attend Catholic schools there. This practice is consistent with established church policy to resist forces which might tend to make Catholic schools serve as "white flight" schools.

OE DIRECTOR FOR PRIVATE  
SCHOOL SERVICES INTERPRETS,  
COMMUNICATES, EXPEDITES

The Congressional mandate for the equitable participation of private school children in OE-administered programs is clear, says Dwight Crum, Director of Nonpublic Educational Services for the U.S. Office of Education. "Our responsibility is to facilitate the implementation of that mandate." Crum's major duties are to identify legislation having implications for private education, to aid OE personnel in translating legislative intent into effective operating procedures, to help private school representatives obtain equitable treatment for their children under the law, and to increase understanding between key OE and private school people.

Crum, in the immediate office of the Commissioner, is charged with implementing Bell's private education policies. He stresses the importance of helping the public and private sectors capitalize on their "mutual concern for quality education for all children," and has created a liaison system to aid this effort. Dr. Al Senske, CAPE President, comments: "Dwight Crum understands public education, the federal bureaucracy, and private education--how they relate to each other. He serves all three well."

FIVE LUTHERAN CHURCHES  
CONDUCT 1,750 SCHOOLS  
ENROLLING OVER 216,000

Lutheran schools reflect a variety of denominational shadings, while they share a strong common concern for value-centered Christian education, according to two leading Lutheran educators, Dr. Al H. Senske and Mr. Donald A.

Vetter. Founded on a commitment to the teachings of Christ and serving that end, Lutheran schools at the same time provide a sound basic education program, they say.

Lutheran education in America dates from before the Revolution. One of the first schools, St. Matthews in Manhattan, still in operation, opened 226 years ago. Since then, Lutheran education has grown extensively in North and South America. In 1974-75, the 1,750 Lutheran schools in North America enrolled 216,000 students, up over 1,600 from the preceding year. Of the Lutheran groups conducting elementary and secondary schools, the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod (LC-MS) is the largest in terms of number of schools and students enrolled--1,268 schools with over 166,000 students. The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, The American Lutheran Church (ALC), The Lutheran Church in America, and the Church of the Lutheran Confession complete the group.

Educational leaders in ALC and LC-MS schools view their schools as "vehicles for a congregation's outreach into the community," according to Donald A. Vetter, ALC Director for Elementary Schools. Consequently, the composition of their student bodies is mixed. For ALC, less than half the students are from sponsoring congregations; 20 percent are from unchurched homes; and the rest are from other churches. In the case of LC-MS, 65 percent of the students come from the sponsoring congregations; 15 percent have other Lutheran affiliations; 12 percent are from other churches; and 8 percent indicate no church affiliation. While the students are drawn from all socio-economic levels, they tend to be less rather than more affluent, and representative of the general population in terms of academic aptitude. Over 10 percent are black, and Spanish-speaking children attend in significant numbers. "Expulsion rates are low; achievement levels are high; and research shows that Lutheran schools are effective in transmitting the value structures they espouse," Senske and Vetter report.

PRENATAL, POSTNATAL CARE  
SHAPES LIFE-LONG LEARNING  
CAPACITY STUDIES SUGGEST

Life-long intellectual capabilities may be irreversibly affected by the quality of prenatal and postnatal care according to research findings cited by Dr. Harold Hodgkinson, Director of the National Institute of Educa-

tion (NIE). Studies related to the eating, smoking, and drinking habits of pregnant women, and to malnutrition in the very young, for example, suggest this conclusion.

Nutrition and birth-weight studies at the University of Minnesota show "regardless of sex or length of term, children who weigh 5 pounds or less at birth tend to fall behind heavier children in both mental and motor development." At 5 and 7 years of age, low-birth-weight children in the study "did less well than their peers on traditional tests of intelligence, language development, reading, spelling and arithmetic skills." By age 11, an International Conference on Smoking and Health study based on a 100,000 sampling reveals, the children of women who smoked heavily during pregnancy are .4 inches shorter than those whose mothers did not; they lag by 4 months in reading level. Heavy drinking during pregnancy also can adversely affect the offspring according to a report of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. Children, ages 5 to 14, who experienced starvation in early infancy have learning deficits in all abilities tested, especially in short term memory and attention; the greater the "degree of starvation severity," the greater the loss. The findings are uncontaminated by socio-economic factors.

This growing body of research literature raises major questions for members of the Federal Interagency Committee on Education and, Hodgkinson says, underscores the need for interagency coordination of research, development, dissemination, and evaluation.

PRIVATE SCHOOL STUDENTS  
URGED TO AID INDOCHINESE  
CHILDREN IN ADJUSTMENT

Private school children are being asked to help Indochinese refugees by participating in "Project "FRIENDSHIP." The project, sponsored by the President's Advisory Committee on Refugees, will make our youth aware that refugees need friends to introduce them to our culture and language, Roger D. Semerad, Executive Director of the Committee, explains. In addition, national youth organizations will be assisted in developing friendship drives and other assimilation programs.

Current estimates set the number of refugee school-age children at 40,000, with 10,000 in California alone. To assist in providing services for these children, HEW is allowing \$300 for each refugee child in school districts enrolling 100 or fewer refugees; where the enrollment burden is heavier, the allotment is \$600. Funds may be used to provide English-language instruction, culturally sensitive paraprofessionals, special instructional materials, and inservice training for teachers, for example. Technical assistance and teaching materials are available through HEW-established clearinghouses.

Catholic, Hebrew, and Lutheran organizations, among others, are deeply involved in refugee resettlement efforts; it is anticipated that private schools will enroll substantial numbers of refugee children. Local education agencies may get and use HEW funds to provide special services to refugee children in private schools but are not required to do so.

BRITISH GOVERNMENT-AIDED  
SCHOOLS FACE HARD CHOICE:  
GRANTS OR INDEPENDENCE?

Economic and political problems beleaguer the government-aided independent schools of Great Britain, according to Donald Lindsay, Director of the Independent Schools Information Service (ISIS), based in London. "They have been given until September, 1976, to choose between independence and entering the State system as comprehensive, non-selective schools."

ISIS speaks for about 1,600 schools that are either fully independent or receive grants from the Government's Department of Education and Science. The latter group are known as direct grant schools in England and Wales, as grant-aided schools in Scotland. Fees of about 78,000 children in these schools are paid in whole or in part by public funds.

"There is a big ISIS campaign to save the direct grant and grant-aided schools," Lindsay says, supported by "the deeply felt anger of parents and teachers" at the government's decision to stop grants. An improved Direct Grant system is not, he feels, an idle dream.

ISIS publishes fact papers on the historical place of non-government schools in British education, the significance of government grants to the viability of these schools, the traditional major role of charity in independent schools, and the case for educational vouchers; it also sponsors a 22-foot caravan-type mobile display unit. Outside there is a "mass of prospectuses, which are always a draw"; inside, displays and interviews.

---

OUTLOOK is published monthly (September through June) by the Council for American Private Education.

Council members: The American Lutheran Church • American Montessori Society • Association of Military Colleges and Schools of the United States • Friends Council on Education • Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Board of Parish Education • National Association of Episcopal Schools • National Association of Independent Schools • National Catholic Educational Association • National Society for Hebrew Day Schools • National Union of Christian Schools • U.S. Catholic Conference.

**COUNCIL FOR AMERICAN PRIVATE EDUCATION**  
1625 Eye Street, N.W. (Suite 1010)  
Washington, D.C. 20006  
(202) 659-3236

Robert L. Lamborn, *Executive Director*

---