

OUTLOOK

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

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HOUSE PASSES TUITION TAX
CREDIT LEGISLATION; SENATE
DEBATE EXPECTED MID-JULY

The first tuition tax credit legislation ever to pass the U.S. House of Representatives did so June 1 by a vote of 237 to 158. H.R. 12050 allows tuition tax credits of 25 percent for tuitions paid for full-time students attending private elementary and secondary schools and public and private colleges. Maximum credit for school tuitions is \$50 per student in 1978, \$100 in 1979 and 1980. For college tuitions, the maximum credit is \$100 in 1978, \$150 in 1979, and \$250 in 1980. The bill originally provided credits only for college-level tuitions, but floor debate was permitted on an amendment to include elementary and secondary school tuitions, and an amendment to that effect was offered by Rep. Charles Vanik (D-Ohio) and adopted 209 to 194. Cash refundable credits for families who pay limited or no taxes are not provided in the House bill, nor are credits for tuitions paid public elementary and secondary schools or vocational schools.

The Senate tuition tax credit bill (S. 3946), however, does include provisions for public, part-time, and vocational school students. Expected to reach the Senate floor by mid-July, the bill provides tuition tax credits of 50 percent for all levels of education. Full-time vocational and undergraduate college students would receive a maximum credit of \$250 beginning this year. Public and private elementary and secondary school students would receive credits up to \$500 beginning in 1980. In 1981, graduate and part-time students would become eligible. Any taxpayer due a tuition tax credit greater than his taxes owed would receive a cash refund. Six tuition tax credit bills have passed in the Senate since 1967.

SCHOLARS ARGUE FOR SOCIAL
IMPORTANCE OF PARENTAL
CHOICE IN U.S. EDUCATION

Scholars advocating parental choice in education, especially for low- to middle-income families, are speaking out across the country. "Parents and children have a better sense of what's a good school context for them," says sociologist James S. Coleman, "than do professionals who must deal with a very large number of children." Legal scholars John E. Coons and Stephen D. Sugarman, authors of Education by Choice, hold the state has "virtually emasculated" the family's options in education. Thomas Sowell, economics professor at the University of California at Los Angeles, believes that if tuition tax credit legislation is passed, low- to middle-income people will be able, for the first time, to choose their children's schools.

Coleman, a University of Chicago professor who headed a major mid-1960s desegregation study, spoke recently at a forum on desegregation at Georgetown Day School in Washington, D.C. Tuition tax credits would increase the range of choice for low-income parents, particularly in the big cities, he said, disagreeing that such legislation would promote segregation and benefit mainly mid- and upper-income families. Asked to comment on the charge that programs which help blacks attend private schools are "detrimental" to public education, Coleman denied it, contending "anything that allows an individual to have greater opportunity can't be bad for the country." A stronger private school presence would force public schools to do better, in his judgement.

Coons and Sugarman, professors at the University of California at Berkeley and authors of the constitutional theory adopted in Serrano v. Priest, believe education choices should

be made by those who care most about the child and have to live with the consequences of their decisions. Under welfare, families are allowed to select their children's food and clothing. Only in education has it been decided parents do not know best. Those who choose parenthood today usually accept their role fully, including the responsibility to make decisions on their children's education, say Coons and Sugarman. They would give parents a scholarship to cover tuition for each child. Public and private schools could compete for students. Acknowledging difficulties, they see provision for some form of realistic parental choice in the education of their children as vitally important.

Sowell, discussing tuition tax credits recently during a Round Table sponsored by the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research in Washington, D.C., held that since low-income people drop out of school at a high rate, any bill that concentrates the money at the college level, as the Administration's bill does, is "seriously biased against low-income people." Religious organizations, he pointed out, operate schools as they do hospitals, as a social service. The schools serve many people in ghettos; they offer the poor the only alternative to a public school education. Without choice, Sowell argues, the child of a poor person is a captive--"there is no reason for anyone to pay any attention to him." The "mere fact" that people have the option to go to private schools "changes the balance of power in a very critical way."

ERIC's 140,000 DOCUMENTS
"ACCESSED" THROUGH MONTHLY
JOURNALS, CLEARINGHOUSES

"These two reference journals can be of tremendous help to teachers and administrators in using the 140,000 documents in ERIC," says Robert Chesley, Senior Associate of the Dissemination Resources Group of the National Institute of Education (NIE), referring to Resources in Education (RIE) and Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE). ERIC (the Educational Resources Information Center), operated by NIE, makes available "unpublished, hard-to-find" documents on all phases of education, he reports--documents dealing with new management and teaching tools and techniques.

RIE abstracts and indexes about 1,000 documents a month, including research reports, conference proceedings, curriculum guides and materials, and other unpublished literature. CIJE indexes over 700 education journals monthly and provides short resumes of most articles. Both journals are indexed by author, "descriptor" (subject), and institutional source. The 16 ERIC clearinghouses--clearinghouses select, index, and abstract documents--frequently publish bibliographies, newsletters, and other "products" providing analyses of available literature. RIE and CIJE are available on a subscription basis and individuals may be placed on clearinghouse mailing lists upon request.

PRIVATE SCHOOL LEADERS IN
STATE FORM CONNECTICUT-
CAPE: VOICE OF 300 SCHOOLS

Eight Connecticut private school organizations joined this month to create the Connecticut Council for American Private Education (Connecticut-CAPE). Formed "to promote the interest and betterment of private (nonpublic) schools" within the state, Connecticut-CAPE's charter members serve nearly 300 Independent, Lutheran, Hebrew, Montessori and Catholic elementary and secondary schools. At the organization's first meeting Alan N. Houghton, Executive Director of the Connecticut Association of Independent Schools, was elected President; Rev. James G. Fanelli, Superintendent of the Archdiocese of Hartford School Office, Vice President; and Vernon C. Koch, Principal of Immanuel Lutheran School (Missouri Synod), Secretary-Treasurer.

Among Connecticut-CAPE's stated functions is "providing a framework for communication and cooperation" among private schools within the state and between these schools and public schools, government agencies, and other organizations concerned with education. The Council plans, among other things, to conduct research and collect data on the state's private schools to be used by the group's Public Policy Committee in preparing policy statements.

PRACTICAL WORK EXPERIENCE,
COLLEGE PREPARATORY STUDY
BENEFIT ADVENTIST STUDENTS

"We believe the student who works is a better student," says Mildred Summerton, Principal of Wisconsin Academy, a Seventh-day Adventist school in Columbus, Wisconsin.

The school's 225 students work half-days to gain business and labor experience. Some produce frozen bread for Dakota Bake-'N'-Serve, a privately-owned company located on the school's 560-acre campus. Others raise corn, hay, and alfalfa for the school dairy herd. Some manufacture lawn furniture for Harris Pine Mills, located on campus and owned and operated by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Still others assist in school office, custodial, food service, and grounds maintenance tasks. Students are paid for their work; most apply the money to school board and tuition expenses.

While work is an important part of Wisconsin Academy's program, academic goals receive equally close attention, and between 60 and 65 percent of the school's graduates go on to college. The combination of work and conventional college preparatory courses prepares them well for college, maintains Summerton. "Our students learn discipline, integrity, and responsibility" and develop "a real leadership ability" that serves them well "whatever they decide to do after high school," she says. Across the country, 1300 Seventh-day Adventist schools enroll approximately 80,000 students.

MOUNTAIN CHILDREN ATTEND
PRIVATE SCHOOL CREATED TO
MEET THEIR SPECIAL NEEDS

On a remote West Virginia ridgetop known as "The Knob," thirteen children, ranging in age from 5 to 16, attend The Big Laurel School of Learning, a new community-run private school. In September, all the students will enroll in the

Mingo County public school system; the county, in turn, will pay The Big Laurel School to provide their education, for the school meets the needs of the tiny mountain community as public schools have not.

Before the school was built two years ago, students traveled miles to attend public schools. The unpaved road down from The Knob was impassable nearly four months of the year. Students missed school and fell far behind in their work. Agreeing with the community that attendance at public schools caused students and their families undue hardship and that the new school has alleviated the problems, Mingo County recently signed a contract with the private school to provide the children's education. Under the contract, the county will provide The Big Laurel School at least \$800 per student per year--the equivalent of the county's public school per-pupil instructional expenditure. With operating funds and community support assured, the school hopes to become fully certifiable by the fall of 1979.

ST. LOUIS CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
PREDATED, SERVED AS PUBLIC
SCHOOLS; NOW ENROLL 90,000

In 1818, twenty years before the first public school opened in St. Louis, Missouri, Louis W.V. DuBourg, Bishop of the Louisiana Territory, established the city's first Catholic school. Today, the more than 200 Catholic schools

in the Archdiocese of St. Louis enroll 90,000 students and constitute one of the nation's ten largest Catholic school systems.

St. Louis' Catholic schools "took roots" in "favorable educational soil," says Father William Barnaby Faherty, who has documented their growth in From One Generation to the Next--160 Years of Catholic Education in Saint Louis. They received financial support from local, state, and national governments and served for a time as the only "public" (tuition-free) schools for St. Louis' poor. Firmly established, they weathered the rise of the public school system and the anti-Catholicism of the mid-1800s, adapted to accommodate late 19th-century immigrant groups, and dealt successfully with the challenges of urban education and integration of this century. Today, about 8 percent of their students are black, many are non-Catholic, choosing the schools as an inner-city educational alternative. St. Louis' evolving Catholic schools, says Father Faherty, have "generations yet to serve."

B'NAI B'RITH'S HOLOCAUST
MATERIALS DRAW PUBLIC,
PRIVATE SCHOOL INTEREST

"Teaching about the Holocaust can help us create more caring human beings, ones who having learned the tragic lessons of the past will help prevent their recurrence," maintains Dr. Eleanor Blumenberg, Western Director of Education of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of B'nai B'rith. The Holocaust, she believes, provides an "all-too-vivid" illustration of such themes of current importance as abuse of power, misuse of the media, racism, religious intolerance, dehumanization, and genocide. Students, she says, must be made aware of its implications.

The ADL has encouraged the development of required Holocaust curricula for America's schools. A national conference on teaching the Holocaust, cosponsored last fall by ADL and the National Council for Social Studies, spurred the development of pilot courses in more than 50 school districts, and the interest of private school educators "has been extremely high," Blumenberg reports. ADL publications on the Holocaust have been widely distributed by newspapers, school systems, and education organizations. An "ADL Holocaust Program Clearing House" maintains current information on publications, media, and curricular materials, and a newsletter announces publications and films on the subject. ADL welcomes inquiries about publications and model curricula. The issue, Blumenberg says, "presents a tremendous set of challenges and an even greater number of teaching opportunities."

ECS REAFFIRMS "CRITICAL
ROLE" OF PRIVATE SCHOOLS,
APPROVES CLOSE COOPERATION

The Education Commission of the States (ECS) will extend cooperation to private school organizations and private schools "in the same manner" as it is extended to public school organizations and public schools, following an ECS Policy Committee decision at the Commission's annual meeting in Indianapolis June 14-17. The Commissioners, while opposing tuition tax credits, reaffirmed ECS' "belief in the critical role" which private elementary and secondary schools play "in maintaining diversity of opportunity and freedom of choice." Policy Committee action followed consideration of a resolution presented by the Council for American Private Education (CAPE) which stressed "the complex public policy considerations" involved in drafting and administering federal and state legislation relating to private schools and mandating provisions to serve children attending private schools.

As it has in the past with such underrepresented groups as women and minorities, ECS will encourage member states to consider appointing private school representatives as Commissioners. Extending practices already initiated by the ECS staff, private school representatives will be invited to participate in Commission-sponsored workshops, seminars, and conferences, as well as to serve on task force advisory committees. At the recent conference, a panel discussed "Private Schools and the Minorities"; Dr. Marlin Schulz, Director of Multicultural/Bilingual Education of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, is currently a member of the ECS Task Force on Desegregation Strategies; and Dr. Robert Lamborn, CAPE Executive Director, is a member of the National Advisory Committee of the ECS State Energy Education Policy Project, as well as a nonvoting ECS commissioner.

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