

OUTLOOK

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

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TUITION TAX CREDIT, BASIC
GRANTS BILLS WOULD ASSIST
PRIVATE SCHOOL PARENTS

Financial assistance to private school students and their parents would be provided through different but complementary bills introduced recently in Congress. One approach provides for the participation of private

school students in a basic grants program, the other provides for tuition tax credits for families having children in private schools. Both are intended to ease the financial burdens on parents and increase the educational choices for low and middle income families.

The basic grants bill (S. 1101), sponsored by Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.), would extend a program which now provides aid to college students to needy elementary and secondary school students. The program covers students from families with incomes up to \$25,000. The grants range from \$250 for students near the upper end of that scale to \$1800 for students from very low income families. Moynihan says that the same reasoning which justifies the program at the college level should now lead to its extension to elementary and secondary schools. "It is," he maintains, "the impulse to provide equality of educational opportunities to every American, and it is as legitimate and important an impulse at the primary and secondary school level as it is at the college level."

Tuition tax credit bills, which would include credits for the parents of private elementary and secondary school students, have been introduced in the House and the Senate. Both provide for escalating tax credits for tuition between now and 1982. Under the House bill (H.R. 366), sponsored by Congressman Bill Gradison (R-Ohio), parents would be permitted a tax credit of up to 35 percent of the tuition as long as the credit did not exceed \$50 in 1979 and \$100 in 1980. Under the Senate bill (S. 1095), sponsored by Senators Daniel Moynihan, Abe Ribicoff (D-Conn.), Bill Roth (R-Del.), and Bob Packwood (R-Ore.), parents would receive a credit of 50 percent of tuition; up to \$100 in 1981 and \$250 after 1982.

The House and Senate passed versions of a tuition tax credit bill last year but a conference committee failed to reach an agreement acceptable to both bodies. The House bill would have provided credits at all levels; the Senate bill was limited to college students.

D'ALESSIO PLEDGES SERVICES
TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS, SEES
HEW "ATMOSPHERE" FAVORABLE

"This post puts me in a unique position to not only be of service to government and the private school community but also to be a facilitator of partnerships between the public and private sectors," said Dr. Edward R.

D'Alessio at his swearing in as the first Deputy Commissioner for Non-Public Education in the U.S. Office of Education. Reflecting on his 12 years in private education at the national level, D'Alessio, who took office last month, said, "At no time has the atmosphere at both HEW and the Education Division and in particular, the Office of Education, been more conducive for maximizing the potential participation of private school students in those federal educational programs for which they are eligible than it is now." The Administration's commitment to this intent was affirmed last February when HEW Secretary Joseph Califano announced the appointment and outlined D'Alessio's responsibilities. The new office, he said, would help guarantee that "private schools receive all that they are entitled to under the law and that HEW's Office of Education pays full and prompt attention to their concerns."

SCHOOL ENERGY GRANT PLANS
REQUIRE PRIVATE SCHOOL
AUDITS, AGENCY MEMBERSHIP

New federal regulations which will govern cost-sharing technical assistance and energy conservation grants to schools went into effect last month. State energy agencies are developing state plans which must be submitted to the regional office of the Department of Energy by August 15, 1979. Private schools will be included in the preliminary energy audit which must be completed prior to developing the state plan, and private school representatives will be included as members in the School Facilities Agency which each state must establish as a consulting body.

Schools may apply for energy conservation grants only after they have been audited and have implemented any conservation procedures that do not require expenditures of money. They should apply through their state energy offices; which will evaluate, rank, and forward applications to the Energy Department once in each grant cycle. The first such cycle began in April and will run through February 1, 1980, unless subsequent changes are made by the Secretary of Energy. Congress has appropriated \$300 million for schools and hospitals, which are also included in the program, and has designated \$200 million of that to be allocated before the end of fiscal year 1979. The Energy Department, however, has asked Congress to extend the deadline so funds will remain available "until expended."

PRIVATE SCHOOL STUDENTS,
STAFF MEMBERS TO BENEFIT
FROM CHILD NUTRITION ACT

Private schools will receive \$2.7 million in 1979 for nutrition education programs for students and teachers, and for management training for food service personnel. Under the Child Nutrition Act, which Congress passed

two years ago, states will receive 50 cents for each child enrolled in schools or in child care institutions with the proviso that no state will receive less than \$75,000 per year. The bulk of the money will go to private schools in seven states: New York, Pennsylvania, California, Illinois, New Jersey, Ohio, and Michigan.

The final regulations, which went into effect last month, call for the states to appoint a "full time nutrition specialist" with a master's degree or equivalent experience and for the states to make a concerted effort to "reach all children" with nutrition information. This includes children in private schools. The state plans will provide more detailed information on how the states propose to reach the schools.

NORTH CAROLINA LEGISLATURE
DEFINES STATE REGULATORY
POWER OVER PRIVATE SCHOOLS

The North Carolina legislature has passed bills circumscribing the regulatory responsibilities of the State Department of Public Instruction regarding the state's 350 private schools. The legislation, enacted in May,

provides that the state may require schools to operate nine months a year; submit standardized tests of their choice at certain grade levels; and comply with fire, health, and safety rules. They will be required to notify state authorities when they plan to open and close and to keep attendance and immunization records. They will give their own minimum competency tests, a prerequisite to graduation. All schools which comply are exempted from further regulation and their students are considered in compliance with attendance laws.

The legislation evolved out of an attempt by the State Department of Public Instruction last year to force private schools to comply with state regulations requiring the schools to report annually on materials, curricula, teacher certification, and health standards. In September, 1978, the North Carolina Superior Court for Wake County ruled that the state's efforts to enforce minimum standards were not a violation of the schools' constitutional rights, that while state officials were not empowered to inquire whether the schools used textbooks they could monitor school attendance records, the general content of the curriculum, and teacher certification. Both sides appealed to the State Supreme Court; the bills were approved five days before the Court was to hear the case; and the case was dismissed.

DES MOINES PRIVATE SCHOOL
CONFERENCE ATTRACTS 1500

Some 1,500 private school representatives, about half the membership of the Iowa Association of Nonpublic Schools, attended a state-wide meeting in Des Moines recently. The conference was proof, says William Levenhagen, President of the state group and Principal of Central Lutheran School in Newhall, "that in spite of our doctrinal differences, we are standing together and speaking as one voice to the state." The Iowa legislature, he reports, has recently passed a bill to fund transportation and textbooks for private school students. Founded in 1965, the Association brings together educators from Catholic, Christian, Lutheran, Mennonite, and Seventh-day Adventist schools.

FORK UNION "ONE-SUBJECT"
PLAN DESIGNED TO ASSURE
CONCENTRATION ON BASICS

For almost 30 years the students in grades 9-12 at Fork Union Military Academy in Fork Union, Virginia, have studied under a one-subject plan. The purpose of this approach, according to Colonel Kenneth Whitescarver, Fork Union's President, "is to discipline the mind, rather than to furnish it--to train it in the use of its own powers." He attributes much of the school's success in college preparation to the plan and its emphasis on basics.

Students concentrate on a single subject for eight consecutive weeks, mathematics for example. Then they take another subject for the next two months. By the end of April, they have completed the required four courses. If their work is satisfactory, they turn to a fifth subject for the remainder of the year. If it isn't, they use this period to overcome their weaknesses. Whitescarver reports that while the one-subject plan appears simple in concept, it was developed by the 81-year-old school after careful analysis of conventional teaching methods and in an effort to avoid their defects.

The school believes the system has these advantages, among others: (1) it obviates any tendency on the part of students, when doing homework, to study the best-liked subject first and the least-liked last; (2) it avoids conflicting demands on students' time; (3) instructors can spend more time helping students with individual problems and (4) failures can be made up during the same academic year. One readily apparent disadvantage: "The program is not much help if a student doesn't get along with a teacher."

FEDERAL, STATE PROGRAMS
FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED
GAINING ATTENTION, SUPPORT

Education of the nation's gifted and talented students, often discounted in the past, is being actively supported by both federal and state governments. The Administration's proposed budget for fiscal 1980 calls for \$3.78 million in support of the federal gifted and talented program, the same as in 1979; state appropriations--all but eight states have appropriated funds for this purpose--totaled \$89,418,167 in 1978-79, an increase of 41 percent over the last three years. The OE Office of Gifted and Talented reports that private school students have participated in these programs but there is no detailed information on the extent of that participation.

The statistics on state appropriations have been collected over the last three years by the Council for Exceptional Children to provide the federal government with information regarding model state policy, legislation, administrative plans, developmental processes, and public awareness activities developed to provide appropriate educational opportunities for gifted and talented children.

Private schools are eligible to receive funds for model projects for the gifted and talented under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1978. It is anticipated that regulations governing applications for these grants will be issued by the U.S. Office of Education before the end of June. The regulations will detail procedures for private school applications through their state education agencies.

STRONG LEADERSHIP, HIGH STANDARDS, FOCUSED PROGRAM, HALLMARKS OF GOOD SCHOOL

What is the difference between a good school and a bad school? Clearly stated goals, a principal who exercises leadership in instruction, and a staff that sets high goals for students, according to reports presented

at the American Educational Research Association convention in April. Schools were better, it was found, when they were "run for a purpose rather than from force of habit."

Gilbert Austin of the University of Maryland at Baltimore said the principal was the key figure in the 30 schools he studied in his state. In the best schools, the principals established clear instructional goals, took part in classroom teaching and supervision, and set high standards for both staff and students. Most of all they were visible. They devoted about 50 percent of their time assuring the quality of instruction and relatively little in their offices. Students apparently adopted similar attitudes toward accomplishment. "When third graders were asked whether success depends on hard work or luck, the students in the better schools were far more likely to say 'hard work'," Austin reports.

The Austin study is corroborated by a study of schools with especially good compensatory education projects. These schools, according to George Mayeske of the U.S. Office of Education, had "clearly stated instructional objectives" and a teaching style that was "intense" and "clearly related to the objectives."

META-ANALYSIS OF STUDIES SHOWS STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IS RELATED TO CLASS SIZE

Students achieve significantly more when class size is reduced to 15 or less, according to Drs. Gene V. Glass and Mary Lee Smith of the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development in San Francisco.

The Glass and Smith findings contradict previously published studies which, they say, are "old, huge, and widely believed to be inconclusive." After analyzing 300 reports, publications, doctoral dissertations, and similar documents, Glass and Smith, basing their conclusions on "nearly 100 comparisons of achievement from well-controlled studies," say they established clearly that reduced class size should produce increased academic achievement.

In Meta-Analysis of Research on the Relationship of Class-Size and Achievement, the first in a series of reports on this subject, Glass and Smith report that most of the previous studies compared class sizes in the range of 20 or more students. By comparing classes of 30 and 15 students, they find a trend has gone unnoticed. "The research synthesis reported here does demonstrate the trend: very small achievement advantages are expected when small reductions are made in class size in the 20-30 pupil range and large advantages when class size is reduced below 20." Students achieving at the 55th percentile in a class of 20 could be expected to achieve at about the 65th percentile in a class of 10.

The second report in the series will present the results of a meta-analysis of studies relating class size to classroom processes, student attitudes, and teacher satisfaction. Related field studies are currently being conducted at schools in Charlottesville, Virginia, and Oakland, California, to determine how class size influences student achievement.

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