

# OUTLOOK

---

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

**Number 41 • May, 1978**

---

HOUSE TUITION TAX CREDIT  
DEBATE FOCUSES ON RIGHTS,  
DOLLARS, THE "GRASS ROOTS"

House debate on tuition tax credits is scheduled for immediately after the Memorial Day recess. In its present form, the bill would permit taxpayers credit for tuitions paid colleges and universities but not for those paid elementary and secondary schools. House rules, however, will permit debate on extending the coverage to include them, and that issue is the focus of increasingly intense activity.

Congressional staffers see last-minute attention focusing on three issues: (1) the extent to which the bill provides adequate assurances that credits will be restricted to families whose children attend schools which are in civil rights compliance; (2) the "facts" about current program expenditures for private school children and projected costs of the proposed tax credits; and (3) the extent of "grassroots" support for the legislation.

While both sides grapple with significant technicalities on the first two points, assessing the taxpayers' position continues as an important political undertaking. Congressional correspondence, long heavily weighted in favor of tax credits, is reported now to be running about 50-50. But the latest Harris poll reports that among the general population an 82-13 majority believes "it is very hard for middle-class families to afford to send their children to school, and relief for them is long overdue"; a 66-25 majority favors tax credits. Acknowledging the courts may have the last say, Harris concludes that "it looks as if it will be difficult indeed to stop the tuition tax credit from becoming law."

PELL ESEA AMENDMENT WOULD  
GIVE SUBSTANTIAL BENEFITS  
TO PRIVATE SCHOOL STUDENTS

Private school students would benefit from a broad range of federally funded services, should legislation proposed by Senator Claiborne Pell (D-R.I.) and adopted by the Senate Human Resources Committee May 9 become law. Proposed as an amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act during committee markup of the Senate's education bill (S. 1753), the program would be known as Title XII, "The Non-public Educational Assistance Act of 1978." Funds authorized under the program could only be used by private schools to provide the types of student services already found constitutional by the United States Supreme Court, Pell emphasized.

Private schools "play a vital role in the educational system of this country," have "contributed significantly" to the quality of education in America, and are essential to "a strong and diversified American system of education," states Title XII, maintaining that a federal grants program "is needed" to assist private education. The amendment authorizes the U.S. Commissioner of Education to provide grants to private schools for "secular" textbooks approved by state education agencies for use in public schools; state-approved standardized tests and scoring services; diagnostic speech, hearing and psychological services administered by and at private schools; guidance and counseling services; "secular, neutral and nonideological" instructional materials and equipment; and "necessary" transportation to and from private elementary and secondary schools.

Private school leaders see the proposal as further evidence of rising public interest in private education. They are studying its legal and programmatic implications.

D.C. PRIVATE SCHOOLS FORM  
CAPE-TYPE ORGANIZATION TO  
PURSUE SHARED OBJECTIVES

Adventist, Catholic, Episcopal, Quaker and independent school leaders in the District of Columbia have formed DC/CAPE (the District of Columbia Council for American Private Education) "to further the interests" of private schools within the District. Membership is open to private elementary and secondary school organizations in the District--and to all schools not members of a local organization--which are nonprofit and subscribe to nondiscriminatory admissions policies with regard to race, color, and national or ethnic origin.

DC/CAPE President Solon J. Candage, Headmaster of the Sheridan School, and Board members will be working immediately to see that private school interests are understood and considered by the D.C. Licensure Commission as it drafts regulations for private educational institutions from preschool through college. They will be cooperating with the D.C. Department of Health in an immunization program and, among other things, discussing student fares on District public transportation. Granting the District is a unique political entity, the new organization is seen as a useful model for others in urban centers who are interested in organizing such broadly-representative groups, paralleling existing national and state private school coalitions. Other officers elected at DC/CAPE's inaugural meeting are Kenneth Palmer of the Dupont Park Seventh-day Adventist School, Vice-President; and Sister Cornelia Boyle of the Archdiocese of Washington, Secretary-Treasurer.

CARNEGIE FUNDS CONSORTIUM  
STUDYING ACHIEVEMENT TESTS

Standardized achievement testing and its role in American schools will undergo close scrutiny by members of the newly-formed National Consortium on Testing, a coalition of 34 national education associations. Over the next two years, association representatives will examine the testing issue under a \$250,000 grant from the Carnegie Corporation. The group was formed after three years of meetings on testing cosponsored by the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the North Dakota Study Group on Evaluation. It is dedicated to "furthering a national inquiry into all aspects of standardized tests" and has as its goals increasing public understanding of standardized tests, furthering understanding of such tests within the Consortium's membership, and bringing about needed testing reforms.

The Consortium does not serve as a policymaking body. It undertakes research concerning the policy implications of standardized testing and recommends research and policy priorities to appropriate government agencies. Private schools are represented in the Consortium by CAPE. Vito Perrone of the North Dakota Study Group serves as Consortium President; staff work for the group is under the direction of Harvard education professor David Cohen, at the Huron Institute in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

JACKSON: HIGHER STANDARDS,  
PERSONAL COMMITMENT KEYS  
TO INCREASED ACHIEVEMENT

Pressure on students to excel is "a critical element" in "turning the crisis in education around," said the Rev. Jesse Jackson, founder of Operation PUSH and champion of minority education, speaking recently in Washington, D.C. A "high moral atmosphere," encouragement at home and school, and a strong student commitment to learning are all key elements in student success, according to Jackson. Students, he says, must "push for excellence," pledging to "strive to learn" as much as they can; parents must make sure their children study regularly; and teachers must "use all means available" to educate students and to instill in them discipline and respect. Such an approach makes all the difference in inner-city schools, he believes. Addressing top officials of the U.S. Office of Education and representatives of national organizations of education professionals, Jackson cited the marked success of Catholic schools in serving the inner city. His message: they set high standards, they care, and the students and their families know they do--and respond.

WISCONSIN PRIVATE SCHOOLS  
CONSIDER UNIFIED ACTION ON  
FEDERAL AND STATE ISSUES

Schommer, Director of Education of the Diocese of Green Bay and first WANS President, the conference brought together representatives of 556 member schools to discuss the state of private education and plan private school cooperation.

"Success Through Interdependence" was the theme of the First State Administrators Conference of the Wisconsin Association of Nonpublic Schools (WANS), held April 20-21 in Wausau, Wisconsin. Chaired by Msgr. Mark

WANS directors reviewed the organization's history and purposes, discussed WANS activities and presented a "laymen's" analysis of relevant legal issues. Of special concern, they noted, is the equitable provision of federal education program services to private school children. WANS efforts were instrumental in a recent U.S. Office of Education decision to provide compensatory education (Title I) programs to private school students in eight Wisconsin school districts through a "bypass" arrangement.

Formed in 1974, WANS, an "Associated Organization" of CAPE, serves eight member organizations representing 136,000 private school students--12% of the state's elementary and secondary school enrollment. Sixteen percent of Wisconsin's elementary and secondary students attend private schools. Dr. H. James Boldt, Superintendent of Schools of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, was elected to succeed Schommer as President.

LUTHERAN SCHOOL FEATURED  
ON SACRAMENTO TV PROGRAMS

in Fair Oaks, California, when presented with an unusual opportunity for public relations via local television. As a free public service, a Sacramento TV station airs a 30-minute weekly program called "Focus on Education." Since 1967, Faith Lutheran has been invited to participate nine times, each time mustering the talents of the entire school community in producing and presenting the programs.

"What have we to show the community that is unique, interesting and worthwhile?" was the question asked by faculty, parents and students of Faith Lutheran School

Among the themes explored have been "Education for the Whole Child"; "Lutheran Teachers, Who Are They?"; and "Home and School, A Team." In each program, scenes filmed at the school have been combined with a panel discussion to present a coherent message. Results have been positive, according to the school's principal, Robert Marty, who maintains the programs have helped strengthen Lutheran education in the community, as well as making teachers, parents and students more aware of their identification with the school.

EVANGELICAL URBAN MINISTRY  
RENOVATES OLD MILL, OPENS  
INNER CITY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

a new Christian school serving 70 students, grades K-6. The renovated four-story mill, complete with water wheel, is the only Christian school in Paterson and is a member of the National Union of Christian Schools (NUCS). The mill was purchased by the Evangelical Committee for Urban Ministries in Paterson; renovation was financed through a \$108,000 Comprehensive Employment Training Act grant, augmented by volunteer labor and donated materials.

Tool bins became toy bins; large wash basins became sand tables; work benches became desks; and an abandoned 19th century silk mill in the inner city of Paterson, New Jersey, became the Dawn Treader School,

Located in the Great Falls National Historic District of Paterson, Dawn Treader provides an alternative for neighborhood residents and serves as a "magnet" school for suburban parents wishing to educate their children in an interracial, urban setting. Head Teacher Fred Style sees the school as small, family-oriented and responsive, featuring a racially mixed student body and an individualized approach to learning. Its open enrollment policy is common to all NUCS members. The school's name is derived from The Voyage of the Dawn Treader, a fantasy novel for children by C.S. Lewis.

TRUTH, UNABUSED PRIVILEGE  
LEGAL TESTS OF PROPRIETY  
OF NEGATIVE RECOMMENDATION

Can a school administrator write a "negative recommendation" of a teacher or other employee without fear of a lawsuit? While tort suits arising from such statements are relatively uncommon, educational administrators should be aware of the increasing possibility and protect against it, believes Dr. Delbert Clear, Associate Professor of Educational Administration at the University of Wisconsin. Even recommendations made from one employer to another in person or by phone may not be held as confidential and are, therefore, not "safe."

The inclusion of negative information in a recommendation always has the "potential of defaming," but the capacity to include such information must be vigorously protected if recommendations are to be candid and useful, Clear maintains. The law, he says, "clearly provides protection" for "appropriate and professionally obligatory" negative statements. Skill in making recommendations that are both "educationally responsible and legally defensible" is needed by every school administrator, according to Clear, who provides in his paper, "Negative Statements in Letters of Recommendation: From Defamation to Defense," step-by-step guidelines for writing legally defensible statements. Truth, he says, is a complete defense. If a statement is true--based upon firsthand experience, supported by facts, and unrelated to personal negative feelings--it is defensible. A second test is that of "privilege." To be defensible under privilege, a statement must be made to accomplish the purpose for which the privilege was granted and must be made without malice. While negative recommendations should be given when needed, Clear concludes, administrators must take care that the legal protections against damage claims are "carefully built and tended" before making a statement.

PRIVATE SCHOOLS ELIGIBLE  
AS FULL PARTICIPANTS IN  
NATIONAL DIFFUSION NETWORK

"Private schools are part of the National Diffusion Network (NDN)--or they should be," writes Joseph Colmen in an NDN position paper. "Laws, regulations and policy mandate that private school children be given full opportunity to enjoy the advantages of the proven and approved educational programs in the NDN," he says. Established in 1974 by the U.S. Office of Education, the NDN links schools, intermediate service agencies, and state departments of education so proven programs developed in one school or district can be used in other schools or districts with similar needs.

"State Facilitators" link their states' schools with suitable NDN projects. They must, says Colmen, take into account the special needs of private schools and include them in NDN programs. Interested and capable private school people should be "located, trained and supported" as "surrogate facilitators," Colmen suggests. He urges private school people to "get involved," to learn about private schools' rights and responsibilities, and to "take the initiative" with the State Facilitator or the State Commissioner of Education if private school children are not receiving the "full benefit" of NDN programs. Many already are, and Colmen's paper, distributed to NDN personnel and State Facilitators and scheduled for broad distribution to private school people, should help increase participation.

---

*OUTLOOK* is published monthly (September through June) by the Council for American Private Education. Annual subscription \$6. Council members: The American Lutheran Church • American Montessori Society • Association of Military Colleges and Schools of the U.S. • Friends Council on Education • Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod • National Association of Episcopal Schools • National Association of Independent Schools • National Association of Private Schools for Exceptional Children • National Catholic Educational Association • National Society for Hebrew Day Schools • National Union of Christian Schools • Seventh-day Adventist Board of Education, K-12 • Solomon Schechter Day School Association • U.S. Catholic Conference. Associated state organizations in Arizona, California, Georgia, Kansas, Maryland, New Mexico, Oregon, Puerto Rico, Tennessee, Washington, and Wisconsin.

**COUNCIL FOR AMERICAN PRIVATE EDUCATION**  
1625 Eye Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20006 (202) 659-3236  
Robert L. Lamborn, Executive Director; Barbara Blaes, Editor

---