

CAPE OUTLOOK



'vaü-chər, n: 1. a piece of supporting evidence
'vaü-chər, n: 2. a written authorization

The House Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary and Vocational Education is concerned with the first definition. The Administration is content with the second.

The dichotomy became apparent early in the course of the Subcommittee's April 6 hearing on the President's proposal to allow school districts and states receiving federal aid for educationally disadvantaged children to establish voucher programs. Under this plan, parents of eligible children could use vouchers to pay for the education of their children in private schools or public schools located outside their home districts, or, if electing to remain in the district, use them for compensatory services provided by their local educational agencies.

The Administration said the bill would improve the scholastic achievement of educationally deprived children by fostering diversity and competition among school programs directed to the needs of such youngsters and by increasing the involvement of the private sector in providing programs for them.

Subcommittee members, however, were unwilling to share the Administration's optimism for its plan. They sought hard evidence that the program would, as promised, meet an educational need.

"Who are the advocates? Where are the studies? Where is the evidentiary base on which this program is founded?" asked Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.).

"What's the driving engine behind this program, educational or ideological reasons?" inquired Rep. Dale Kildee (D-Mich.).

Committee members voiced concerns about the financial and programmatic changes that a voucher system would bring to the currently successful Title I program. They expressed doubts as well about the

philosophy, financing and administration of the voucher program itself, calling attention to uncertainties surrounding its anti-discrimination provisions and possible church-state entanglements.

Pleading with the Committee "to be more open-minded," Education Secretary Terrel H. Bell called the proposal "a simple measure intended to introduce more flexibility into the elementary and secondary education system of this country, and with the approval of school officials, to give the parents of educationally disadvantaged children the same choice that other parents have in selecting a different and more educationally advantageous school program for their children. . . ."

CAPE member organizations whose schools have Title I students have also raised a number of questions about the proposed legislation. Among these are: How will the Title I voucher plan affect the carefully developed arrangements with local educational agencies for the delivery of Title I services to private school students? How will private schools handle admissions and curricular questions involving voucher students? To what extent is the private school which accepts a Title I voucher student subject to regulatory activity in relation to teachers, materials, subject matter, and so forth?

If the predictions of Rep. Gus Hawkins (D-Calif.) prove accurate, however, all the arguments, pro and con, will become moot. During his questioning of Secretary Bell, Hawkins opined, "The chances of this bill getting started are pretty nil."

Bell and the Board: A Conversation

Secretary of Education Terrel H. Bell and the CAPE Board of Directors met for the seventh time on March 15, the second day of the Board's annual spring meeting.

The session began with an expression of appreciation by the Board for the Secretary's "unprecedented willingness" to host such gatherings during its semi-annual Washington meetings.

Education vouchers, which all agreed were "the touchy item on the agenda," were the focus of protracted discussion. In response to the articulation of CAPE's fears that a voucher program might disrupt good Title I working relationships between private schools and LEAs, and, at the same time, jeopardize the chances of passage of tuition tax

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credit legislation, the Secretary said, "We don't think it will have any impact on Title I relationships because the local boards and superintendents have total control over the decision to permit the voucher. Furthermore, we think it will strengthen the chances of tuition tax credits because it addresses the refundability aspect of that legislation." He added, "The President holds the strong conviction that the benefit of the marketplace is missing in education."

With respect to tuition tax credits, Bell repeated his belief that "they are the President's number one priority" and reiterated his promise that the Department "will be pressing them hard" in the 98th Congress.

Lunch and the Private Schools

"We've got to do something about it," said House Education and Labor Committee Chairman Carl Perkins (D-Ky.) on March 10, and, ten days later, he did.

The "it" in question was Section 808 of the 1982 Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act, which disqualified any private school charging an annual average tuition of \$1500 or more from participating in the National School Lunch and Child Nutrition programs.

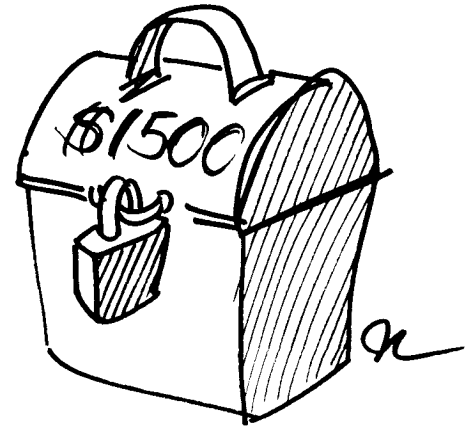
The restriction represented a drastic departure from the practice followed for the past 35 years of allowing all eligible public and private school students to share in the benefits of the child feeding programs.

Representing the interests of Catholic and other private schools to the House Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary and Vocational Education, Richard E. Duffy of the U.S. Catholic Conference said "The apparent purpose of this proposal was to reduce Federal expenditures by removing subsidies for families who could afford to provide for the nutritional needs of their children. It obviously was assumed that any family which can afford \$1500 for tuition to a private school could well afford to pay for a child's lunch. This is a subtly specious and false assumption, because there are many low income families making great sacrifices to send their children to a private school."

Duffy further noted that a great many high tuition private schools strongly encourage the enroll-

ment of low income students through their scholarship programs.

Charging that the new provision interjected "a distinction between public and private school students in the national school lunch and child nutrition programs," Duffy concluded, "We believe this provision is discriminatory and should be removed."



Mr. Perkins' promised action took the form of H.R.2243, a bill he introduced on March 22, which would amend the National School Lunch Act to delete the phrase eliminating from the program "private schools whose average yearly tuition exceeds \$1500 per child."

Schools and Single Parent Families

Single-parent families are still families, and a single parent is not necessarily a bad parent, "but they need all the help they can get," advised Dr. Benjamin Spock at a press briefing at the Home and School Institute's National Conference on Single Parent Families and the Schools. Co-sponsored by CAPE and other educational organizations, the March 24-25 conference was called to address facts and questions about contemporary family life and schooling.

Although Spock, author of *Baby and Child Care*, told reporters that the problems of single-parent children differ only in degree, but not in kind, from the problems of all children, he did comment that children become especially anxious, restless and demanding in the first two years after a divorce in the family.

Spock outlined an educational bill of rights for all children:

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(202) 659-0016

A coalition of 15 national organizations serving private schools (K-12)

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that their schools give them the feeling of being appreciated and loved;

that their schools take advantage of their curiosity, initiative and natural desire to learn;

that their schools promote each child's maturity;

that their schools reflect a spirit of encouragement, rather than oppression;

that their teachers respect them;

that their teachers recognize and be tolerant of each child's unique family situation and any unusual stresses stemming therefrom.

Conference speakers and participants agreed that schools must accommodate to the reality of single-parent families, whose number is increasing with each passing year. (In 1982, 22 percent of all children lived in one-parent families, an increase since 1970 of 62.4 percent, or 5.3 million children.)

It was suggested that schools become brokers of community social service resources so that they may secure for single-parent children the help they need. It was further recommended that school personnel make themselves available to parents after regular hours, that they learn to involve parents meaningfully in school affairs, that they provide afternoon activities and counseling for children, and that they deal with whichever parent is responsible for a child on a day-to-day basis. ("Receive fathers in a non-surprised way," said Marion Wright Edelman, president of the Children's Defense Fund.) Above all, conference participants were cautioned, neither teachers nor textbooks should be allowed to make single-parent children feel that they are peculiar creatures in the "normal" world of two-parent families.

Legislative Update

Computer Education Centers

House Elementary, Secondary and Vocational Education Subcommittee hearing April 21 on H.R. 1134 to provide for National Centers for Personal Computers in Education.

Draft Registration/Student Aid

House Education and Labor Committee on April 13 approved delay until February 1, 1984, of effective date of law denying federal student aid to young men not registered with Selective Service. House Military Personnel and Compensation Subcommittee expects to consider "delay bill" in May.

Social Security

Bill signed by President Reagan April 20. Calls for mandatory inclusion of nonprofits by 1/1/84. By September 1983, nonprofit schools which have not participated, or which have terminated their participation in the social security system, should have received instructions from the IRS or SSA. Thereafter, all nonprofit schools will be contacted by the agencies.

Math/Science

Senate Subcommittee on Education, Arts and Humanities marked up its print of S.530, the Education for Economic Security Act, on April 20. By a vote of 10-0, it reported the bill, as amended, to the full Committee on Labor and Human Resources.

Bill would authorize \$400 million to be distributed to states on basis of school-age population to be used, at the elementary/secondary level, for inservice training and retraining of teachers to improve teaching skills in math and science.

Having met these training requirements, school districts may request use of funds to be spent on computer learning, foreign language instruction, and instructional materials and equipment in math and science.

School Asbestos

House Elementary, Secondary and Vocational Education Subcommittee oversight hearing on school asbestos hazards April 27.

Tuition Tax Credits

S.528 (Dole, R-KS).

Senate Finance Committee hearings April 28.

H.R. 1730 (Gradison, R-OH).

Pending in Ways and Means.

Capelog

CAPE convened on April 14 the second meeting of organizations working on the identification and recognition of unusually effective private secondary schools (*Outlook*, April/May, page 2).

The committee reached agreement on the following guidelines and procedures for the project:

Schools may be nominated and evaluated by their private school organizations or may nominate themselves and be evaluated by an at-large Secretariat.

Schools must practice racially non-discriminatory admissions policies and have IRS 501(c)(3) status to participate.

Criteria for selection will be based both on purposes and goals common to good private schools and those unique to individual organizations.

On-site school visits will be conducted over a two-day period by a team of two members, one from an organization associated with the school being examined, and one from an "outside" organization (budget permitting).

The final number of schools chosen will reflect the diversity within the private school world and the relative size of its component parts.

At its next meeting, set for May 16, the committee will consider, among other matters, specific details of the nomination form and selection criteria as well as the numbers and types of schools to be identified.



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