

CAPE OUTLOOK

Number 114

October, 1985



House Approves Child Nutrition Bill

On September 19, after beating back amendments that would have reduced child lunch subsidies, the House passed H.R. 7, a bill reauthorizing five child nutrition programs for three years. H.R. 7 includes an important provision for private schools which raises the tuition limitation for participation in the program to allow some private schools to remain in the program.

In 1981 the Administration abruptly reversed the 35 year history of fair and equitable treatment of private school students in the national school lunch program by proposing, in the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation bill, a provision which for the first time shifted the focus of assistance from the student to the institution. It eliminated federal child nutrition assistance from any school which charged a certain level of tuition (\$1,500 or more). No attention was paid to the social or economic composition of the student body. As a result, needy students attending any private school charging above the \$1,500 level have been arbitrarily hurt and disqualified from receiving such assistance. While the provision in H.R. 7 raising the tuition level to \$2500 provides temporary relief for some students, CAPE and its member organizations will continue to work to have the tuition limitation eliminated from the National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Acts.

EPA Gets Ready for the '86 Asbestos School Loan & Grant Program

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been working with CAPE and other private and public school groups to revise the 1985 application form for the grant and loan program under the Asbestos School Hazard and Abatement Act. In response to comments about last year's imposing application form, EPA has

made a variety of modifications which shorten and simplify both the application and the instructions for completing it. The agency plans to mail applications to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) across the country beginning in October. Applications must be completed and submitted to Governors by January 10, 1986.

With the \$50 million available in FY 85, EPA distributed loan/grant assistance to 198 LEA's for 412 abatement projects in 340 schools. \$4.9 million or 10.8% of that money was distributed for 38 projects in 26 private LEA's.

An additional \$50 million for FY 86 is expected to be appropriated by Congress. Money will be awarded to the schools which have the most serious asbestos hazards and the greatest financial need. Projects begun after January 1, 1984 are eligible for reimbursement. EPA also is encouraging applications from schools which applied in 1985 but were not funded.

Elementary Schools Next for Recognition

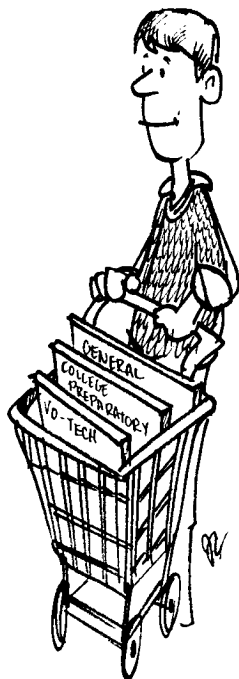
In a shift of focus designed to emphasize its concern for school quality at all levels, the Department of Education has decided to recognize distinctive elementary schools during 1985-86. In the first three years of the School Recognition Program (private schools entered the program after the first year), the Program identified only public and private secondary schools.

CAPE will again manage what will be a considerably larger program, there being nearly 2 1/2 times as many eligible private elementary schools. The Project Steering Committee is now at work on the basic ingredients of the Program, eligibility, criteria and the process of selection. It anticipates letters of invitation will be circulated prior to mid-October.

Beside giving appropriate attention to excellence in elementary education, the results of the Project will undoubtedly confirm the views of some experts that certain characteristics of quality in elementary education could strengthen high schools. (e.g. The ease with which teachers can shift subject focus to maximize the learning of students; teaching across subject area limits; the interdisciplinary training of teachers; the concern to treat each child as a unique learner.) It is hoped that once again a Project Report as well as regional conferences can help secure widely the outcome of the Project in the interest of school improvement.

Shopping Around - The Way it is in High School

A new major study of the American high school co-sponsored by CAPE member, The National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), has concluded that the vast majority of high school students merely go through school passively without being significantly affected or induced to work anywhere near their potential. *The Shopping Mall High School*, written by Arthur Powell of NAIS's Commission on Educational Issues, Eleanor Farrar, a policy analyst and David Cohen of the Harvard Graduate School of Education finds that the chief virtue of our high schools, like that of our shopping malls, is their ability to offer many different things to many different kinds of students - their remarkable accommodation to diversity. As the author put it in the introduction, there is a widely held belief in our country "that nearly everybody should attend high school, nearly everybody should graduate from high school and nearly everybody should find the experience constructive. We cannot emphasize too strongly the nobility of these three commitments or how seriously high schools take them." As a result, high schools do relatively well with high achievers and students with special needs but the vast middle, "unspecial" students, largely come out intellectually unscathed.



The book is based on themes which cut across the life of 15 schools (11 public, 4 private) derived from careful interviews with school heads, teachers, students and parents as well as from classroom observation. The schools represent a national distribution within guidelines set up by the Project.

The first of the three part study of high school, *Horace's Compromise* by TheodoreSizer, came out early last year. (Copies of both books can be obtained from Houghton Mifflin Company, Mail Order Dept., HC/FM, 2 Park St., Boston, MA 02108 for \$16.95 each.)

When Can Home Be School ?

At a one-day conference on Home Schooling this summer sponsored by Charles O'Malley's Office of Private Education, John Holt* said that "home is the greatest teacher training institution." A generation earlier another formidable educator, Millicent McIntosh, Headmistress of New York's Brearley School, and later President of Barnard College observed to her school parents that "the natural tensions of the home are the world's best educators."

Throughout the conference the theme of the centrality of the home in the education process was restated in many ways. "Students want trusting support: They want adults to pay attention. They want natural access to adults... and they are not empty containers to be filled."

In addition to providing an opportunity for home-school advocates to state the essential case for home schools, the presence of state education officials made it possible to discuss many practical problems arising when this unconventional method of schooling confronts regulations developed around traditional education.

Estimates of the numbers of home-schoolers range from around 12,000 to nearly a million, though the latter figure is ridiculed by people familiar with Census Bureau data on the school age population. In Vermont, a major home-school state, a little over 200 students are home-schooled. Other major home-school states are California, Washington, Oregon, Georgia

COUNCIL FOR AMERICAN PRIVATE EDUCATION/1625 Eye Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006

(202) 659-0016

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

[ISSN 0271-1451]

Robert L. Smith, *Executive Director*; Kellen Flannery, *Editor*; Jay Roudebush, *Art Editor*

OUTLOOK is published monthly (September through June) by the Council for American Private Education. Annual subscription \$8. Council members: The American Lutheran Church ◊ American Montessori Society ◊ The Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches ◊ Association of Military Colleges and Schools of the U.S.A. ◊ Christian Schools International ◊ 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 ◊ Seventh-day Adventist Board of Education, K-12 ◊ Solomon Schechter Day School Association ◊ U.S. Catholic Conference ◊ Associated state organizations in Arizona, California, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin.

(continued from page 2)

and Florida. The major issue, not surprisingly, is how much a state should try to control what is taught at home and how it should measure the outcomes.

At the meeting it was clear that there is no consensus about this but that in states where questions are being dealt with in a spirit which recognizes the legitimate interests of both parties, the home-school situation is working satisfactorily.

* The death of John Holt was reported as this article was being written. He was a tireless worker for good education and a constant source of thought and reflection on educational practice. We will miss him.

Capenotes

Among its recent activities on behalf of its constituency, CAPE:

...staff met with the Bureau of the Census in a 3 day meeting to design school curriculum and resource materials which would expose children in grades K-3 to the uses of census statistics. The Bureau hopes that the incorporation of census materials into the classroom will also increase awareness in the adult population (through parents) and will make the public more responsive to the census-takers.

...two well written publications recently received could be of special interest to private school principals: 1) "Financial Planning for Schools" in *Administrative Forum*, a publication of NAIS, covers a range of matters such as insurance of all kinds, development concerns and admissions, and is obtainable from NAIS, 18 Tremont St., Boston, MA 02108 2) "School Administrators and Law Enforcement: A Legal Memorandum" from the National Association of Secondary School Principals describes the important things school heads should know about a variety of school matters which bring them into contact with law enforcement officials. It includes a Model Statement.

...Former Executive Assistant Secretary for Private Education and currently CAPE National Advisory Board member Al Senske has been made Acting President of the Concordia Publishing Company in St. Louis, MO.

...As the result of conversations earlier in the year between President Reagan and President Nakasone of Japan, the Americans and Japanese are studying education in both countries toward findings ways each might learn from the other. CAPE is serving as a conduit to the study for any ideas or interests private schools may have regarding Japanese education. Please let us hear from you if there is something you would like to have passed on to the study which is now underway in Washington.

Legislative Update

In September, Congress began work on an array of issues including economic sanctions against S. Africa, immigration reform and appropriations bills. Again this year, Congress will not clear the 13 regular appropriations bills that fund most government programs before the October 1 start of the fiscal year. The problem will have to be solved by passage of a continuing resolution (CR). The CR is a measure that extends funding for all those programs whose regular spending bills have not cleared by the start of the new fiscal year. This year's CR gives Congress until November 14 to finish work on the appropriations bills. Until the FY 86 appropriations bill for Department of Education is passed, education programs will be funded at the FY 85 level of \$19.1 billion.

Recent Action...

Higher Education Act Reauthorization...

At press time, the House Postsecondary Education Subcommittee has held 33 Washington and field hearings this year on the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. The Act officially expired Sept. 30, the end of the fiscal year, but will be extended through next year by another statute. During the summer recess Committee staff prepared a draft bill for consideration this fall. The Senate Education Subcommittee began its hearings in September. On behalf of its member associations, CAPE submitted formal statements on issues of importance to private elementary and secondary education. Critical concerns continue to be the family allowance for school tuition in the determination of federal financial aid, private school teaching relative to Carl D. Perkins Scholarships and better school-college dialogue.

Handicapped Children's Protection Act

The House Education and Labor Committee on Sept. 19 marked up HR 1523, a bill to amend the Education of the Handicapped Act to allow parents of handicapped children to collect attorneys' fees for administrative hearings. On July 29 the Senate passed a similar bill, S.415. Both bills were introduced in response to last year's Supreme Court decision in *Smith v. Robinson*, in which parents of handicapped students were denied attorneys' fees.

Upcoming Action...

The Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee will hold a hearing October 29 on the 10th Anniversary of P.L. 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975.

Academic Fitness: "Look Where Your Mind Can Lead You"

The Presidential Academic Fitness Awards Program was conceived in 1983 to "place renewed emphasis on academic excellence among our students in primary and secondary schools". In its pilot year 10,000 high schools across the nation participated and 230,000 graduating seniors received recognition for their academic achievement. In the 1984-85 school year, middle, junior high and elementary schools were included in the program, tripling the number of schools participating. Of the 32,566 schools involved, more than 27,000 were public and 4,000 were private. Over 750,000 students (58,291 private) met the criteria for the Presidential Academic Fitness Award: all had attained a B+ average or its equivalent and all were at or above the 80th percentile on nationally recognized achievement tests.

This year, in an effort to further increase public awareness of the program among students, parents, teachers, and administrators in both the public and private sectors of education, the Department of Education has undertaken a unique marketing effort which includes public service announcements on t.v., radio spots, posters and magazine and newspaper ads. The unifying theme in this campaign, "Look where your mind can lead you", emphasizes the importance of a solid education to future pursuits."

For more information on how your school can participate, contact: Presidential Academic Fitness Awards, U.S. Department of Education, P. O. Box 23749, Washington, D.C. 20026-3749

Ed Department Reorganizes for Research

The Department of Education's reorganization of its research activities was described by Dr. Chester Finn, Assistant Secretary for Educational Research and Improvement and Counselor to the Secretary, as a means to put in the most effective possible condition the Department's "primordial responsibility" of measuring and disseminating how well education is doing. Speaking at the September 27th Koffee Klatch of the Office of Private Education, Finn said this first major departmental organization initiative rearranges the five main branches of a restructured office for educational research and improvement — The Office of Research, Office of Statistics, Programs for Improvement of Practice, Information Services and Library Programs.

With respect to private education's interest in research, Finn said that all parts of the educational system would be of concern to his office and that, not believing in any form of discrimination, private education will not be singled out for special attention. He noted that Secretary Bennett's interests in content, character and choice correspond to those of many in the private school world.

On another subject of interest to private school educators, he acknowledged that there is a fine line between the need to know on the part of the Department and rights of privacy within the private school community. He said the Department would be sensitive to 'intrusive' inquiry and might, perhaps, set up a means to review questions regarding it.

CAPE OUTLOOK

COUNCIL FOR AMERICAN PRIVATE EDUCATION
1625 Eye Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006