

## NEWS FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

President Bush signed into law on January 8, 2002 new educational legislation. The new law, NCLB, represents an important step in the right direction for educational policy but much remains to be done to ensure quality education for all children. A close look at the legislation shows that our schools benefit in some ways from its provisions. Michael Guerra, President of the National Catholic Educational Association, noted that the law fell short in providing support for low-income parents and lacked support for greater educational choices. Mary Ellen Russell, Director of the Office for Catholic School Parental Rights Advocacy at the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, was encouraged by the language of the act and the benefits granted to our students. Information about the law will be forthcoming on a regular basis but the following are items of interest now.

1. What is NCLBA? - The initials stand for the title of the law - NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT. Included in this is the reauthorization of the ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act) with which we are all familiar. Adjustments have been made in the content of some of the titles.
2. What significant provisions impact private schools?
  - a. The language in the act clarifies the specific supplemental programs in which participation is possible. A remnant of the President's school choice proposal allows parents of children in failing public schools to use Title I funds (approximately \$500 to \$1000 per child) for supplemental educational services such as tutoring, after-school and summer school programs offered by nonprofit providers including faith-based institutions and private schools. Providers of the services must be qualified to do so and be consistent with instructional and academic standards.
  - b. Equitable services are open to private school students in programs such as Reading First, Even Start, Bilingual and Migrant Education, Technology and Remedial Programs.
  - c. The legislation also stipulates, for the first time, that religiously affiliated schools can run Community Learning Centers that provide counseling, academic programs, recreation or other activities as part of after-school or summer programs in areas with high concentrations of low income families.
  - d. Private school teachers can participate equitably in Mathematics and Science Partnerships and professional development programs. Key to this is specific language, which mandates public school districts to consult with private school officials concerning the nature and delivery of service, which address the needs of the teachers.
  - e. General provisions that govern federal programs that have traditionally included benefits for students have been strengthened. New provisions require that services be delivered in a timely manner. Stress is on consultation before decisions are made. In the event that a district is unable or unwilling to provide equitable services, the act clarifies the condition under which the Secretary of Education can by-pass those agencies and arrange direct services to private school students.

We hope that provisions will be implemented and all children will benefit. The law also includes protection of the private schools from federal control.

Also on the federal level, advocacy efforts will next concentrate on the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disability Act (IDEA).

## PRESIDENT PROPOSES EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

In a move consistent with his commitment to leave no child behind, President Bush recently proposed an education tax credit to help children trapped in failing public schools transfer to a school that works, whether public or private.

Under the president's proposal, which was part of his 2003 budget, parents would be allowed to take a tax credit for 50 percent of the first \$5,000 of qualifying education expenses for each child enrolled in a public school identified for school improvement under the No Child Left Behind Act. Qualifying education expenses include tuition and fees associated with attendance at a private school or at a public school outside the child's district.

The tax credit would be refundable, which means parents who are so poor that they pay no taxes would still receive the full benefit.

## STATE EDUCATION NEWS

In January, Governor Pataki released his 2002 Executive Budget Proposal. As expected, it reflects the difficult fiscal situation in the state. We realize that Senate and Assembly Budgets are yet to be announced and we are all well aware of the lengthy negotiations before a budget finally emerges. Since it is an election year we may see a budget a bit earlier. Here are the education provisions in the Governor's budget that will impact us:

- ◆ Academic Services - 1 million dollars for AIS, identical to last year's appropriation. Funds will be allocated based on a plan developed by State Education Department. Last year's appropriation has never been disbursed so the two appropriations may be co-mingled into one program for 2002-2003.
- ◆ Mandated Services Aid - An increase of 4.6 million provided from \$65.4 to \$70 million for expenses of 2001-2002 year.
- ◆ Textbook Aid - Aid capped at 2000-2001 level or \$57.30 per pupil. (Remember aid was to have increased to \$78.00 per pupil this year, but it did not)
- ◆ Software Aid - Frozen at 2000-2001 allocations of \$14.98 per pupil. (This also is short of \$23.90 expected)
- ◆ Library Materials - \$6.00 per pupil
- ◆ Learning Technology Grants - \$3.29 million continued for approximately 60 projects.
- ◆ Teacher Centers - Center funding reduced to \$10 million.

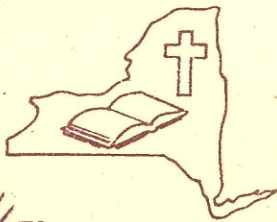
Even though chances of increased spending are improbable, it is necessary that in our advocacy work we keep our elected leaders aware of our needs and rights in education. On the state level, under the umbrella of parental rights in education, we are advocating:

- ◆ Increased funding for AIS to private, religious, and independent schools.
- ◆ Inclusion of private, religious, and independent schools in Computer Hardware Aid.
- ◆ Expansion of transportation services to private, religious and independent schools.
- ◆ A program of vouchers, scholarships, and/or tax credits to enable all parents to select a school best suited for their child.

A digest for busy administrators!

# CSAANYS

## Easter



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### MATTERS OF PRINCIPAL

By Sister Carol Cimino, Executive Director

#### Rare Commodities

The 2000 US census revealed that there are now two distinct generations over the age of 65 in the United States. Furthermore, more and more workers are retiring at age 55 (and that's looking younger every day!). So why is it getting harder and harder to get volunteers?

It used to be that mothers (and, maybe even a few fathers) would come to school to provide supervision so teachers could get a coffee break, or to watch the playground or the lunchroom, or to run the library, or even tutor students. Principals tell me that there are no longer those stay-at-home parents available to volunteer.

Consider that there exists this group of competent, still energetic, experienced adults, all of whom don't have to be at any particular place at any particular time. This represents a wealth of talent and energy for us, if only we can attract these people to do something for us at no cost to us.

Maybe it's because of the hidden messages we give when we ask for volunteers.

Often, we use jargon. For example, we might ask for someone to help in the ESL program, or to supplement the ESEA, or to help manage AIS. These acronyms are common parlance for school professionals, but they may be daunting for those not versed in educational argot.

The word "volunteer" may be unwelcome, too. Use terms such as "making a difference", or convene the "Saint May's Club" or "Futures for Our Kids" to call for volunteers as "cyberdeputies" or "crayon creators". In other words, describe what the responsibility is without using the amorphous "volunteer".

Put photos (with permission, of course) of volunteers actually doing their job on your web site, or pamphlet or poster to show the dynamic nature of the job. Invite prospective volunteers to an open house to see the program in action. Remember the primary directive: people respond to people, and not to causes.

Make prospects feel welcome and useful; orient them to the school (by now you should have a volunteer handbook), ask for references, and be sure to supervise them. Finally, reward them. They are unpaid and know that, but a luncheon, a student thank-you concert or even a small gift can make them feel that they are appreciated.

Volunteers do us a favor by supplementing our programs. We pay volunteers, especially retirees, a favor by inviting them to work with young people. Our effectiveness in doing so makes wonderful things happen.

#### Directory Correction:

St. Clement's Regional, Saratoga Springs  
E-Mail: [stclem@nycaps.rr.com](mailto:stclem@nycaps.rr.com)



### SUMMER CONFERENCES

\* **Brick by Brick: Building the Kingdom of God** is the theme for the gathering of theology teachers, theology department chairs, campus ministers and administrators to be held at the University of Dayton. The Secondary Schools Department and the Department of Religious Education at NCEA sponsor the conference every three years. The dates for this year are June 27-30, 2002.

For further information, contact Molly Dunn at 202-337-6232 or e-mail: [mdunn@ncea.org](mailto:mdunn@ncea.org) to secure your place by April 1<sup>st</sup>.

\* **Weaving a Tapestry of Faith** at the University of Rochester is the theme for 13<sup>th</sup> annual institute on Catholic Education.

The dates are: July 8-9, and the focus is on families and Catholic schools. Featured speakers are - Michael Garanzini, SJ and John Findlater.

Registration is required and due by June 24th. For more information, call 585-275-8270 or 585-275-7833.

### COVERDELL EDUCATION SAVINGS ACCOUNT

The school choice movement made major progress last year when legislation was enacted for tax relief to help with the cost of a child's education in a private (including religious) elementary and secondary school.

#### ESAs in Brief

- ◆ A Coverdell ESA is a trust or custodial account established to pay the qualified education expenses of a designated beneficiary. Up to \$2,000 annually can be contributed to the account.
- ◆ The buildup of interest within an account is tax free, and neither the principal nor interest is taxable upon withdrawal if used for a qualified education expense.
- ◆ Qualified education expenses include tuition, fees, books, supplies, and equipment at a public, private, or religious elementary or secondary school or college.
- ◆ Entities such as corporations, charitable organizations, and foundations can contribute to a student's account.
- ◆ Individual taxpayers with modified adjusted gross incomes under \$95,000 and married taxpayers with incomes under \$190,000 can make the maximum allowable annual contribution to an ESA. The allowable contribution is gradually reduced at higher levels of income.

**CSAANYS GOING HIGH-TECH**  
CSAANYS will be offering electronic newsletters to members in the 2002-2003 school year. Members will be receiving a letter outlining the benefits of the electronic newsletter soon.

Electronic Mail.

