

## QUICK READING

Busy administrators have trouble enough reading the day's mail, but the May 8, 2000 issue of Newsweek deserves a look. The cover article is entitled "God, Sex, Race and the Future: What Teens Believe". The article on teens' ideas about God is most interesting. For example, the article mentions that, although 78% of teens said they believe in God, only 50% attend church regularly. While this is not news, the issues raised by the youngsters interviewed deserve some thought by school administrators.

### WHAT IS THE IDEAL CLASS SIZE?

Students in classes of no more than 15 students do better than those in larger classes, a new study reports. The Wisconsin-based research involved providing poor students with access to smaller classes.

Known as SAGE, Student Achievement Guarantee in Education, the study demonstrated that between 1996-97 and 1998-99, 1st, 2nd and 3rd graders in 30 public schools performed better on a comprehensive test of basic skills than did students in larger classes. The study also found that African-American students showed even more improvement than white students, and that teachers were better able to devote time to individual students in SAGE classrooms.

The study compared the scores of 9,876 students on the Terra Nova edition of the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS) with scores of similar students in 16 non-participating schools. It found that students in the SAGE program scored on average 10 points higher than those in the comparison group.

Early studies by Gene V. Glass of Arizona State University in the 1970s had concluded that class size had little effect on achievement until it was reduced to about 15 students.

Our Catholic school smallness should prove a good "selling point", according to this study. The "bigger is better" proves untrue, therefore, when parents are selecting a school and they should be aware of this.

### SURPRISE FOR TEACHERS

In February of 1998, a long range plan was adopted by the diocese to raise the starting salaries for Catholic School Teachers of Syracuse to a level of \$20,000 in 10 years. Because of an unforeseen gift from the Heritage Campaign, the teachers will receive their increase seven years early. Sister Mary Anne Heenan, CSJ, Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Syracuse announced.

The current starting base salary for a Catholic School Teacher is between \$15,000 and \$16,000 per year in most cases. Sister Mary Anne hopes all schools in all regions of the Diocese will be near the \$20,000 base starting salary within one year.

### TEACHER RECOGNITION AWARD

The Board of Regents invites nominations for the Louis E. Yavner TEACHER Recognition Award to provide for the annual recognition of a teacher who has made an outstanding contribution to teaching about the Holocaust and about other violations of human rights. The award is given annually by the Regents in honor of the late Regent Emeritus Louis E. Yavner.

The general criteria for the award are:

- Distinguished contributions on a local, regional or statewide basis, to teaching about the Holocaust and other violations of human rights, including either historical or contemporary case studies.
- Residence of the nominee in New York State during the time of service.

The deadline for submission of nominations is July 31, 2000. The award winners will be notified in October. Nominations should be sent to:

Anita Behn  
Louis E. Yavner Award Committee  
Room 674, EBA  
State Education Department  
Albany, NY 12234

## REDSHIRTING KINDERGARTENERS

In the 1980s, the practice of "redshirting" children--delaying their entry into kindergarten until they are older--grew in popularity in many school districts. For many, it was perceived as a way to give some children an academic advantage or extra time to mature and develop.

A new study, however, suggests that the practice is without any real advantages. Elizabeth Graue of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and James DiPerna of Lehigh University of Bethlehem, Pa., studied the academic transcripts of 8,500 Wisconsin students moving from kindergarten to third grade in the 1990s. Seven percent of the students had been redshirted and 3 percent had repeated a grade.

By third grade, the redshirted children performed on par with and not better than their classmates. The retained students, however, continued to experience difficulties. Late starters were 1.89 times more likely than other third graders to need special help.

"If we're delaying entry into kindergarten, we're delaying early intervention," said Graue.

The complete study is scheduled to be published in the summer 2000 issue of the American Educational Research Journal.

### NEW WEB SITE FOR TEACHER JOBS

Private schools are wonderful places in which to teach. That's the central message of a new page on CAPE's Web site geared toward attracting teachers for religious and independent schools.

The site presents a wealth of information about the advantages of teaching in such schools and provides convenient links to the various job banks established by CAPE's member organizations. You can visit CAPE's newest Web page at:

[www.capenet.org/teach.html](http://www.capenet.org/teach.html)

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE  
REPOSE OF THE SOUL OF  
**CARDINAL JOHN J. O'CONNOR**  
ARCHBISHOP OF NEW YORK  
-DIED MAY 4, 2000-  
HE WAS A GREAT FRIEND  
OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION.