

APPROPRIATION BILL

Congress approved a spending package for FY 2001 that includes 42 billion dollars for education programs. The appropriation bill exceeds last year's levels by 6.5 billion dollars. This is the largest increase ever in federal spending.

The following points are of special interest to us:

The bill contains a new 1.2 billion dollar program for school renovations. Thanks to efforts by the US Catholic Conference, private schools that have a child poverty rate of at least 40% will be eligible for an equitable portion of a school district's grant under this program. The money may be used to modify school facilities to meet the standards applicable to public schools under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, to meet standards applicable to public schools under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and to do asbestos abatement or removal.

Another major component of the bill provides 1.6 billion dollars for class-size reduction. A public school may use up to 25% of its grant under this program for professional development of teachers. Any funds for professional development are available on an equitable basis for services to teachers in private schools.

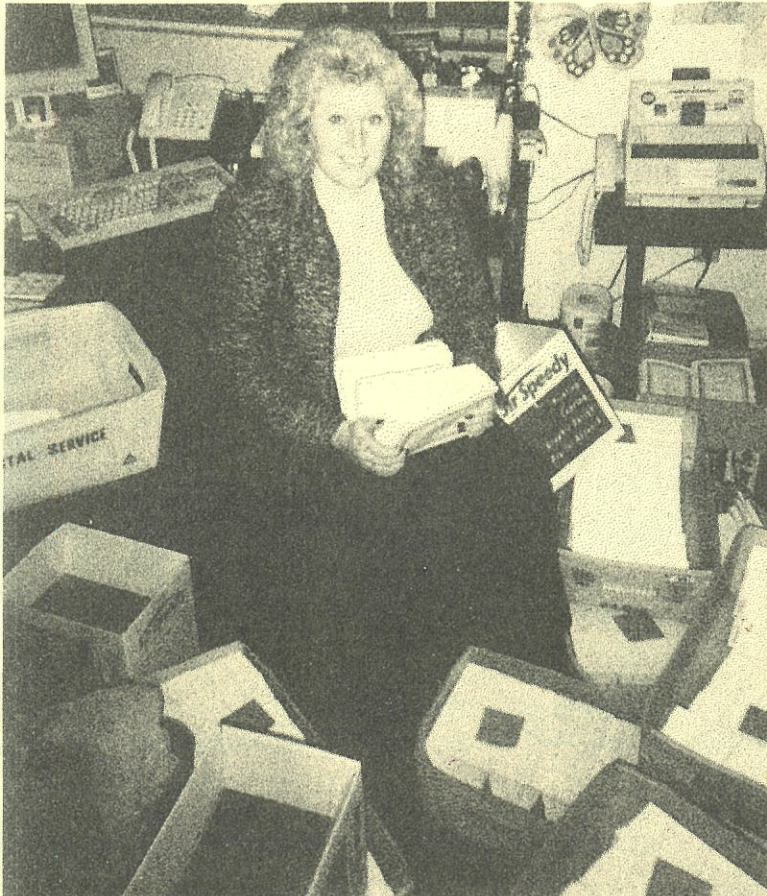
JUST WHAT YOU HAVE BEEN ASKING FOR!

Every time Sister Carol Cimino does a workshop for parents on the "10 Commandments for Parents", she is asked for copies of her talk.

Well, now is your chance. CSAANYS has put together brochures outlining the 10 Commandments for Parents that have helped save parents from going insane for years, you can now get copies for your parents; they are available in packs of 20 for \$10.00.

Call or write to CSAANYS for your copies.

Below is a picture of the CSAANYS secretary, Lori Kasiser, surrounded by your first membership directories. It took a lot of work preparing but, the directory was a big hit and made life a little easier for administrators.



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

On the national level there are some hopeful signs that help may be coming our way. House Republicans placed supporters of school choice at the head of Education and Workforce Committee and the Ways and Means Committee. President-elect Bush is readying an education package which aims to improve education. He calls it his number one priority and includes flexibility for states and local districts in their programs. The most politically sensitive component of his plan is to strip federal funds from the worst-performing schools and make them available to parents for private education, tutoring or "whatever offers hope." Call it voucher or school choice, it will spark debate in Congress. His nominee for Secretary of Education, Rod Paige, bodes well too. He has had experience as an urban school superintendent in Texas and has achieved success in improving education.

Constituent participation will be critical in advocating for the just and equitable treatment of students who attend non-public schools. This Congress will have to renew efforts to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which failed to happen in the 106th Congress. They will also begin the process of reauthorizing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

From March 4th to the 6th, Sister Catharine Ryan will attend the Annual Congressional Advocacy Days sponsored by the United States Catholic Conference in Washington, DC. She will meet with Congressional representatives from NYS to remind them of their accountability to our parents.

On the State level, Governor Pataki will soon release his 2001-2002 Executive Budget. His State of the State message indicated that education would be a major item. He promised a substantial increase in funds and to revamp the "dinosaur" state aid formula, in part by combining some 11 separate categorical programs into a single grant to school districts, giving them greater flexibility. We will need to be watchful so that the programs which benefit our children (textbooks, software, library, technology, etc.) are protected. More funding for the Teachers of Tomorrow is promised and we will need to continue advocating that teachers in the non-public sector be included. Of serious concern to us is the plan to encourage retired public employees to become teachers without sacrificing their pension benefits. This would have a negative impact on our schools who hire retired public school teachers. We will continue to ask for funding for Academic Intervention Services and we hope that some money will be included which will be available to us.

REMINDER

- The Regional School Support Centers are in the process of planning programs for teachers. Remember you are entitled to participate but you must request it. We have the Regional Network Directory. If you are not aware of your regional center, contact us and we will help you.
- Application dates for Leaders of Tomorrow Scholarships for Seniors: Monday, March 19, 2001 application returned to the High School Guidance Office and Friday, March 23, 2001, applications postmarked and sent to the CAPITAL AREA SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION.
- Send in your group registrations for the NCEA Convention being held in Milwaukee, WI on April 17-20, 2001 so we can get your badges to you in a timely manner.

