

CSAANYS NEWS

(518) 273-1205

CATHOLIC SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK STATE
406 Fulton Street • Suite 512 • Troy, New York 12180-3359



NATIONAL CONGRESS ON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

I was among the 250 school educators, policymakers, parents, and church and government leaders who were delegates to the first National Congress on Catholic Schools for the 21st Century, held in Washington, DC from November 6-10.

The Congress began with a prayer service at St. Matthew's Cathedral. From there the delegates went in procession to the Mayflower Hotel for the presentation of the first Elizabeth Ann Seton Awards for outstanding contributions to American education. Honorees were: Cardinal Anthony Bevilacqua for his long time support of Catholic schools; Barbara Bush for her concern for family, children, and literacy; Dr. Lynne Cheney for contributions to academic excellence through the National Endowment for the Humanities; Mr. Peter Flanigan for outstanding corporate behavior; The Knights of Columbus for lay leadership on behalf of Catholic Schools; and Religious Orders of the United States for their pioneering efforts in Catholic Schools.

As New Yorkers and Catholic School Administrators we have special reason to rejoice in the choice of Cardinal Bevilacqua who was ordained as a priest of the Diocese of Brooklyn, Peter Flanigan, who provides scholarship aid to many of our inner-city students in New York City, and to the Knights of Columbus, who, through the McGivney Grants, have helped support CSAANYS' Parents/Promoters Workshops 1990-91.

The three full work days of the Congress featured keynote speakers and small group work on five identified themes: Leadership, Identity, Governance & Finance, Political Action, and School and Society. From each of these groups came 5 belief statements and 5 directional statements, each of which is supported by 3 strategies.

Beginning with this issue of CSAANYS NEWS we will include a report on one of the keynote speakers. In addition, we shall enclose a copy of the beliefs, directions, and strategies for one of the 5 themes. In this way, we hope that each member school will feel informed and encouraged.

A MODEST PROPOSAL FOR THE CONTINUANCE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

The first speaker at the National Congress on Catholic Schools for the 21st Century was the Reverend Andrew M. Greeley. Father Greeley, a well-known sociologist, has always been an outspoken advocate for Catholic Schools in the United States.

Why, asked Father Greeley, when 30 years of research show that Catholic schools are excellent, is there a crisis? Recent Papal and hierarchial documents plus evidence of success gives no choice but to be pro-Catholic School.

Community is the key. The school is where the parish meets the children. There ought to be a "theology of the Catholic Schoolyard" because it's a sacred place "par excellence".

Yet, Father Greeley states, "The decline of Catholic schools is the result of a loss of nerve in the Catholic clerical culture...Is nothing in the American Catholic experience worth saving? Where is our leadership? Who is defending the Catholic Schools from affronts by Albert Shanker?" In fairness to clerics - many priests and bishops, especially - have a real fear of financial ruin because Catholics give less than 2% of their income to Church support.

Therefore, Father Greeley proposes "the laicization of Catholic Schools; that is, the transfer of control of and responsibility for the Catholic Schools to the laity of the parish and of the diocese - lay parochial schools." This is Father Greeley's "Modest Proposal".

Father Greeley sees laity running the whole thing. He sees them as hiring the principal and having the superintendent work for them. Pastors, relieved of the burden of financial responsibility can become spiritual guides. The laity can "own" that money spent on the Catholic school is an investment; that paying Catholic high school tuitions for students that can't afford it benefits the Church in the long run.

Father Greeley closed his presentation by asking, "Does my 'modest proposal' have much chance? I don't know, but I do know we need radical reform!"

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SOBOL SWINGS THE AX

That was the headline of the May 23, 1992 Albany Times-Union article that reported the elimination of up to 17 full-time assistant commissioners' jobs at the State Education Department. There is still some confusion about the exact number of persons cut, but the T-U named Sam Corsi as one. Mr. Corsi, who heads the Office of School Improvement, Grants Management and Compliance, has also headed the Office for Nonpublic Schools since the retirement of Joan Bourgeois in December.

Mr. Corsi's departure leaves us wondering if Commissioner Sobol intends to eliminate the Office for Nonpublic Schools altogether. Accordingly, we have asked the CSAANYS Executive Board members to write to the Regents requesting that the position be restored or retained.

Although Commissioner Sobol has not made any proposal regarding the Office for Nonpublic Schools, a change in the status of that office needs to be monitored closely by the nonpublic school community. The office has served us well since inception, and has given New York State the edge in recognizing that a pluralistic mix of educational settings is a boon to the students of New York.

We will keep you posted as the Commissioner's plan becomes more clear.

REPORT ON REGIONAL WORKSHOPS

In March, CSAANYS ran two regional workshops, one in Rochester and one in Lake Placid.

In Rochester, 45 principals gathered at the Gateway Conference Center on Friday, March 27. After a business meeting at which pending Federal and state legislation was discussed, attendees had a choice of 4 workshops on topics of leadership styles, school development, teacher formation and principal stress.

A sunny March 30 found 30 principals at the Lake Placid Hilton for a format similar to the one in Rochester. A special spirit of camaraderie was fostered in the mountains as a number of principals elected to arrive Sunday and take advantage of the low room rate offered by the Hilton.

Evaluations were unanimous in enthusiasm for a repeat of regional meetings for next year. The CSAANYS Board also agreed that the number of these meetings should be expanded so as to allow more of our principals an affordable in-service day built just for them.

Accordingly, we are considering regional meetings for the following sites:

- Lake Placid Hilton
- Rye Town or Tarrytown Hilton
- Saratoga Springs-Holiday Inn
- Rochester-Holiday Inn

All regional meetings will be held during February & March. As dates, places and speakers are finalized, we'll report them to you.

In this day and age of tight budgets, a CSAANYS regional meeting is affordable. During the cold winter months when the going is rougher than usual, CSAANYS regional meetings are a bright spot on a principal's calendar. Plan now to attend!

PARENTAL NOTIFICATION FOR STUDENT SUSPENSIONS

On April 29, the Board of Regents approved an amendment to the Regulations of the Commissioner that will require school district officials to notify parents immediately when students are suspended for five days or less for disciplinary reasons.

Existing regulations require parental notification for suspensions of more than five days. Chancellor Emeritus Genrich of Buffalo suggested the amendment so that parents of all suspended students would be notified within 24 hours of a school's disciplinary action.

The amendment will take effect June 15. It will require districts to send written notices of suspensions of five days or less by hand delivery or overnight mail so that they will reach parents within 24 hours of the suspension. The notices must describe the reason for the suspension and inform parents of their rights to request an immediate informal conference with the principal.

The State Ed Dept. estimates that 2% of the students in grades 7-12 are suspended each week. The total number of suspensions for a school year is about 67,000.

The Ninth Annual Convention of the New York State Federation of Catholic School Parents will take place in Rochester, October 23, 24, & 25, 1992. A full schedule of activities and events will be forthcoming.

SED TAKES OVER THE FEDERAL EVEN START PROGRAM

As of July, 1992 the federal Even Start program will be taken over by the State Education Dept. This program, recognizing that some parents lack the skills needed to assist in early learning for their children, provides simultaneous educational services to children and parents. Eligible are children who reside in an elementary school attendance area designated for participation in the Chapter I basic program, and their parents. The components of this family literacy program are: a) instructional services for parents; b) appropriate early childhood services for children birth to 7; c) assisting parents in teaching their children.

An important addition to this program's eligibility requirements is that Community-based Organizations may apply for the 1992-93 cycle. As in the past, Local Educational Agencies are eligible.

Preliminary figures indicate the funding will be in the neighborhood of \$7 million.

Applications & regs. forthcoming by July 1, 1992. Contact: Mary Bondarin (518)474-4947.

LINKING PRESCHOOL TO SCHOOL

Many young children experience two different care systems before they enter first grade. Preschool programs stress personal caring, family involvement, and whole-child approaches. But when children move to kindergarten, the settings are generally larger and less personal. For children and their families, the transition between the two environments is often confusing. This confusion can be made worse by a lack of communication and coordination between preschool and elementary school educators.

Among the points to consider:

* Preschool educators are trained in early childhood education, which focuses on developmental skills, while school educators often are oriented to academic curri-

cula. This spawns vastly differing educational philosophies.

* Prekindergarten and school must establish better communication to assure better continuity.

* High-poverty schools are more likely to have pre-school units, a full-day kindergarten, an academic emphasis, personal contacts with families, and parental participation in decision-making.

* But high-poverty schools also rely more heavily on less desirable practices, such as retention, formal assessments of preschoolers.

TEACHER INPUT & EXPERIENCE

Today's teachers want to upgrade their skills, but they need access to quality professional development programs that take their interests and experience into account.

"The challenge is for schools to create the time and resources so that professional development is the normal part of daily work life," says a report from the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. Teachers - "need to be interested, successful and supported in their learning and such intrinsic motivators are critical to program success."

The best professional development programs are tied to teachers' work and allow for teacher input in the training process. Professional development programs also are more effective at the school site and when they take place at regular intervals over time.

The best schools, according to the authors, emphasize training throughout the work week and encourage collaboration at faculty and academic department meetings.

CHILDREN OF SUBSTANCE ABUSERS

Schools and communities need to step up their prevention and intervention efforts for children of substance abusers, says a new study from the Western Regional Center for Drug-Free Schools & Communities.

About 14.8% of today's youth are children of substance abusers, including 12.5% who are children of alcoholics. These children are more likely to report health problems such as headaches, asthma, and hypersensitivity.

Children of substance abusers are at risk of future substance abuse themselves. Yet future risk often depends on the age of a child at the onset of the parent's problem, the social isolation of the family, the degree of family stress, and other factors. In some cases, children appear to cope well with a parent's alcoholism. But more research is needed on the plight of children whose parents use drugs. Some parents may not meet the clinical definition of alcoholism but still pose trouble for their children. For schools, the key issue is whether a child "exhibits problems related to parental alcohol abuse, or feels troubled by it, to the extent that his or her development is impaired."

There is a continuing tension between research and practice on substance abuse, primarily because research has not kept pace with a rapid expansion of treatment programs. The report urges researchers to continue work to identify factors that promote positive adjustment in these children. Educators then can adapt this research for school-based prevention programs.

20 YEARS AGO...

It's hard to believe, but CSAANYS turned 20 years old on May 14. To mark the anniversary, we'll be having a special event at the Nonpublic Schools Administrators Conference in November, and special anniversary lapel pins have been struck and will be given to CSAANYS members. In addition, each newsletter of the 1992-93 school year will contain a "Looking Back" feature in which we'll recall some of the burning issues of 1972-73, issues that are still of vital interest to us.

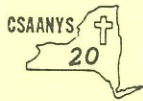
So be sure to tip your hat, or your coif or veil, or whatever, to salute 20 years of service by CSAANYS

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A GLANCE BACK



The first issue of the CSAANYS Newsletter V.1, No. 1 dated August, 1972 stated: "At long last we now have a State organization for all Catholic school administrators on both the elementary and secondary school levels. It has been a long time in the making and we hope that this organization will be able to serve all of our Catholic school administrators educationally, informationally, professionally and politically. At the last meeting of the Executive Board on June 19 at Albany, NY, the Board appointed Bro. Thomas Draney, CFC, the former Principal of Bishop Gibbons H.S. in Schenectady, as Field Representative. In this capacity Bro. Draney will aid the Executive Secretary, particularly in the area of recruitment of membership and he will act as traveling liaison between the Executive Secretary and the membership in each Diocese. At the same meeting a budget was voted in the amount of some \$30,000 in an effort to get the organization rolling into high gear."

Now twenty years later CSAANYS still maintains its attitude of service, its small hardworking staff, and a bare bones budget.

SED UPDATE

As reported in CSAANYS News (June/July 1992) the New York State Education department is undergoing a major reorganization. Thankfully, the reorganization provides for the continuation of an Assistant Commissioner for Nonpublic School Services to act as a liaison between nonpublic schools and the Department.

At their June 26, 1992 meeting the Board of Regents approved the appointment of Sam Corsi as Assistant Commissioner for Nonpublic School Services.

We believe that the letters of the CSAANYS Executive Board were part of the unified cries of discontent from the nonpublic school community which made a salutary impact on the Board of Regents.

STUDENT MOTIVATION

What motivates students to study and achieve? What holds them back? How can we influence these factors? The Office of Educational Research & Improvement (OERI) has just released a booklet that examines these and related questions.

Four main themes emerged:

Students have few incentives to study. Ideally, all students should learn as much as their ability and effort permit. Yet, most schools only reward high academic achievement. The labor of less-talented students is seldom acknowledged. The grades they receive for their efforts do not inspire further effort.

Many school policies discourage student effort. To increase graduation rates, some schools offer credit for less-rigorous alternatives to core subjects.

Peer pressure may discourage effort and achievement. Typically, peer pressure motivates students to stay in school. But at times, high grades can be a source of peer ridicule, and high achievers may face strong social sanctions.

Good intentions often backfire. In their attempts to protect their pupils' self-esteem, teachers often excuse disadvantaged children from the effort that learning requires. This obscures the connection between effort and accomplishment, shields children from the consequences, and sets the stage for later failure.

HELP!

Did someone request a workshop for Temperament and Teaching for 30 people on FRIDAY, NOV. 6, 1992? Please notify the CSAANYS office.

SCIENCE-BY-MAIL

This program consists of "challenge packets" that encourage children (grades 4-9) to work in groups or alone on topics (for '92-'93) such as photography, cartography and simple machines. What's different about the program is that students are assigned a scientist "pen pal" whom they may consult to help answer questions. Enrollment is \$44. per four-student "team". Write: Liberty Science Center, Liberty State Park, 251 Phillip St., Jersey City, NJ 07304-4629 (201)451-0006

MEDIATION VS IMPARTIAL HEARING

by Joe Makowiec

LAKE PLACID - Parents of special education students with learning disabilities may request mediation to resolve differences over any aspect of a student's classification or individual education plan (IEP). Mediation is offered as an alternative to impartial hearings, although parents do not give up their right to, and may still request, an impartial hearing, after or instead of mediation.

New York State Education Department's Office for Special Education Services (OSSES) has been conducting a pilot program in four areas throughout the state for the past year. According to Jim Viola of OSSES, in only two cases have the parties failed to come to an agreement as a result of mediation.

Mediation is a process designed to allow for dispute resolution in a non-judgmental, neutral environment. All parties to a dispute are allowed to have a calm airing of views. Mediators, who have been trained in listening and conflict resolution skills, are present to help maintain calm, to clarify, suggest, and observe. The objective of the mediation process is to get the disputing parties to come to a mutually acceptable agreement. Except for the agreement, all proceedings of a mediation are confidential. Community Dispute Resolution Centers (CSRC) are located in most counties in New York State and are chartered by the New York State Office of Court Administration.

Parents must request special education mediation in writing. The local CDRC will then schedule a meeting, arrange for a neutral site, and assign mediators. Mediation must be done within two weeks, in contrast to 45 days for an impartial hearing. The representative of the school district's Committee on Special Education must be empowered to commit the school district at the mediation.

In an impartial hearing, both sides present their case to an impartial hearing officer, who then hands down a decision. Impartial hearing officers are appointed and paid by the school district. Most parties in impartial hearings hire counsel, a transcript is kept and a court reporter must be paid.

At present, a school district must request to belong to the mediation program. OSSES is training mediators statewide to allow more districts to take advantage of the program.

Students in nonpublic schools are "eligible to receive the full range of special education programs and support services available under a combination of Federal and State programs." (Handbook of Services to Pupils Attending Nonpublic Schools, 1990)

Joe Makowiec, is a mediator for Rensselaer County's Community Dispute Settlement Program. He is an alumnus of McQuaid Jesuit High School, Rochester. He recently provided this information to our CSAANYS office.

ENERGY CONSERVATION REBATE PROGRAM

The New York State Energy Office is pleased to provide energy conservation rebates for facilities owned by not-for-profit organizations. This service offers a simple, straightforward way to receive assistance for making energy efficiency improvements. This program requires minimal paperwork, includes simple eligibility requirements and provides quick turnaround. Private not-for-profit schools may apply for rebates.

Applicants can receive up to 50% of the cost of eligible conservation improvement projects, up to a maximum of \$25,000 annually.

* To simplify the application process, the Energy Office has identified twelve ECMs that require only the submission of an application and contractor estimates. An additional twenty ECMs require minimal information to enable the Energy Office to calculate energy savings on the applicant's behalf and to determine whether the measures are cost-effective. (These 32 ECMs do not require an energy audit or technical study.)

* The organization must recoup the cost of the improvement through energy cost savings in no less than one year and no more than ten years.

* Minimum estimated project cost is \$1,000 and maximum total project cost is \$50,000.

* The cost may include necessary minor repairs and alterations related to an ECM

* The proposed improvements may not be initiated prior to application and must be made in buildings or spaces that are occupied at the time of application.

* Organizations may submit one application per building or facility per 12-month period.

* An applicant may receive a utility company rebate and an Energy Office rebate but the combined rebates may not exceed 80% of the total project cost.

* The rebate will be released as a single payment once the Energy Office receives documentation that all the work has been completed and the contractor or supplier has been paid.

For more information please call the toll-free hotline at 1-800-423-SAVE(7283)

on the lighter side...

Assemblyman Richard Brodsky (D, 86th district) has proposed a bill that would require NYS schools to teach chess skills. The Assemblyman contends, "if you teach chess skills, you teach students how to think, how to read, how to be successful and come back from failure". Commissioner Sobol responds, "King's pawn to king's four."