

# Educators Hail Aid Extension

**Albany (RNS)** — The Catholic School Administrators Association of New York State has hailed the adoption by the state legislature of an omnibus education bill containing provisions for the extension of the textbook loan law to include students in grades kindergarten through 6.

Under the textbook loan provision, non-public school children in grades K through 6 would receive some \$4 million in services, while public school children in these grades would receive \$19 million.

"We're very very happy to see the state legislature, and particularly the leadership, put the bill (for textbooks) in the total education package," said Brother Peter A. Pontolillo, S.M., executive director of the association. "It will help both public and non-public school students."

The omnibus school aid bill was passed by the Assembly by a vote of 135 to 1 and by the Senate, 54 to 2. It will provide an increase in state aid to elementary and secondary schools totaling \$124 million for the 1973-74 school year.

Brother Peter said that latest available figures show there are some 436,000 non-public school students in grades K through 6 in New York State and 317,000 non-public students in grades 7 through 12. About 80 per cent of these are in Catholic schools.

The original textbook loan law, passed by the legislature in 1965, provided \$15 per pupil but applied only to students in grades 7 through 12, Brother Peter reported. The current allocation is \$10 per student.

Under the textbook provision, students apply to local public school boards for loan of textbooks. The books are ordered and distributed by the local public school boards. Payments are

reimbursed to the boards by the state. The textbook loan law has withstood court challenges over the church-state separation issue.

Formed last year, the Catholic School Administrators Association represents administrators in the 1,300 elementary and secondary

Catholic schools in New York State, with "an active membership of about 630," Brother Peter said. He said the organization is designed to serve as a professional organization for Catholic administrators as well as represent Catholic ideals of education to the public.

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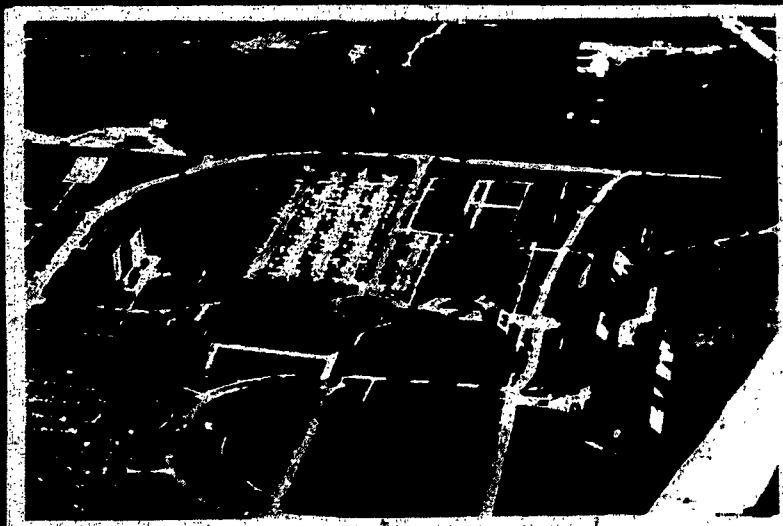
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