

Schools Fared Well In '67 Legislature

By LEONARD KREIDT
Education News Service

SACRAMENTO — Depending on who evaluates it, the 1967 California Legislature will be praised or condemned, but school children may properly be grateful for the efforts in their behalf by the state's 120 legislators.

The public schools fared well, not only in being afforded a record increase in financial support, but in the more directly felt academic areas as well.

Ray Johnson, acting chief of the Division of Public School Administration of the State Department of Education, says the \$145 million in new annual support for schools amounts to \$29 per pupil in the elementary through junior college levels. This sum will be allocated to districts on the basis of local tax resources, the wealthiest districts receiving no increase and the middle and low wealth districts getting a major boost in the state support.

"THIS AMOUNTS to three times the largest increase ever granted schools by past legislatures, and financing was assured by provisions in the tax legislation adopted earlier," Jack D. Rees, state executive secretary of the California Teachers Association (CTA), pointed out.

Bipartisan concern for the growing financial crisis in California schools led to this major step toward solution, Rees said, even though this has been a year of concern over all aspects of governmental financing.

Local educators will translate these funds into more and better education.

IN LINE with a dawning realization that educational emphasis needs to be redirected toward the beginners, the age for compulsory attendance was lowered from 8 to 6 years.

A program was set in motion to capitalize on the gains of preschool education. Characterized by the late Sen. J. Eugene McAteer as a "follow-through" program, it will involve pilot programs in kindergarten through grade 3 in

districts which have substantial numbers of children who "graduated" from preschool programs.

These new programs will be regarded essentially as compensatory education programs and will be conducted under the supervision of Dr. Wilson C. Riles, state director of compensatory education.

THE NEW laws are aimed at capable youngsters who, for one of two reasons, cannot cope with the standard existing curriculum.

One group is composed of children with a mother tongue other than English. When they return to school next month, they may find, if the local board so disposes, that they are free to pursue their studies in their mother tongue pending a workable knowledge of English.

DRIVER EDUCATION and training may undergo some changes as the result of a new law which establishes a division of driver education in the State Department of Education and sets standards for instruction and for instructor qualifications.

Precautions against adults infecting children with tuberculosis, which have been in effect for years in public schools, were extended to include private schools and nursery schools.

Although Gov. Reagan has not yet signed all of these legislative achievements into law, Capitol observers expect his approval will be forthcoming.

REGRETTABLY, a measure

which could have meant more and better education for children died in the final hours of the session when an Assembly - Senate conference committee failed to agree on amendments.

Carried by Sen. George E. Miller Jr. (D-Martinez), the bill would have allowed local districts to structure their curriculums to fit local needs and desires by eliminating a vast number of frequency and time mandates in the Educa-

tion Code's Division 7. What killed the measure was the insistence of a majority of Assemblymen that the daily hour of physical educa-

tion now mandated be retained. Miller held that this one rigid item in the curriculum defeated the purpose of the law.

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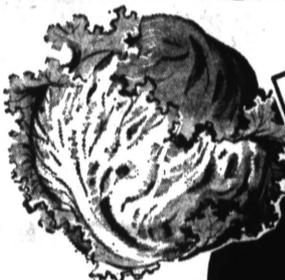
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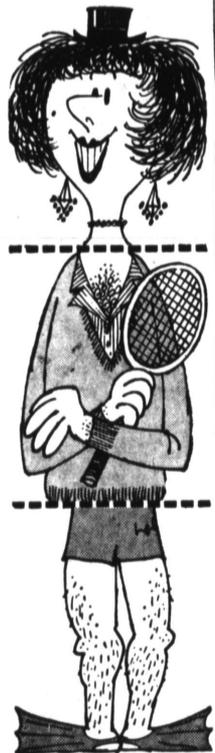
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