

# HOW TO SPEND AID CONFUSES SCHOOL

## East Meadow Is Unable to Use \$426,000 for Rooms Without State Penalty

Special to The New York Times.

EAST MEADOW, L. I., July 29—The East Meadow School District has a \$426,000 Federal-aid windfall that it cannot use for classroom construction without reducing its future state emergency building allowances.

The problem can be solved by using the entire amount to build a swimming pool, an administration building "or a building of such construction that the pupil capacity of the district is not increased."

The last method of spending the money—a belated final payment of a Federal emergency grant—has been recommended by officials of the state's School Financial Aid Planning Bureau.

The nature of state and Federal school aid laws applicable to the situation was detailed in a recent letter from Elvryn W. Thomas, bureau associate, to Dr. Edward J. McCleary, superintendent of East Meadow schools.

Mr. Thomas wrote that "it is our desire that you use these Federal funds for such construction that it would be kept out of our emergency building advances entirely." He pointed out that if the district decided to use the Federal windfall for payment of prior debt, the cost allowances for buildings already completed with state money would be recomputed. However, if the money were used for a swimming pool or administration building, the district would not be penalized.

### Application for Aid

The situation started with the district's application for \$1,000,000 under the Federal assistance law to build the Woodland Junior High School. It qualified because of its number of children of Mitchel Air Force Base personnel and those of defense industry employes.

A first grant of \$600,000 was received and construction started. When it seemed that no more money was coming from the Federal Government, New York State stepped forward under terms of its emergency aid law No. 3603-C and the school was completed with state funds eighteen months ago.

The district's enrollment has increased from 467 in 1945 to 14,000. Its bonded indebtedness for the construction of schools to meet the influx now totals \$25,000,000.

The entire district's taxable assessed valuation totals only \$70,000,000. The ratio is so low that it cannot pay either on the principal or interest of its indebtedness from its own tax money.

According to next year's budget, the district will receive \$3,578,648, or approximately 60 per cent of its income, from state and Federal aid and \$2,372,500, or less than 40 per cent, from the local taxpayers.

### Comment by Official

An East Meadow school official said that the Board of Education "has not explored what it is going to do with the \$426,000."

Asserting that the district literally was "on relief" in that all its fine buildings had been built with emergency money, he said that Mr. Thomas' recommendation "has an Alice in Wonderland quality, which is almost unbelievable."

The official said that under the laws applicable to the situation, East Meadow schools "can now give lush finishing treatment to school buildings which districts who are paying their own way could not possibly afford."

By the time school begins in the fall, East Meadow will have twelve school buildings.

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