

Teaching Grant To Willowbrook

By **ROBERT FOSTER**

The Department of Health Education and Welfare has awarded Willowbrook State School its first federal grant for a special program which will enable the institution to employ additional special personnel for the intensified training of a number of severely retarded children, it was announced today by Congressman John M. Murphy.

The grant for \$97,871 was authorized by the National Institutes of Mental Health of the Public Health Service and will go into effect May 1 for a one-

year period. It will be renewable for 10 years.

Though the school operates on a \$13-million yearly budget, Dr. Jack Hammond, director, termed the grant "much more than a drop in the bucket."

Specifically, the project will entail selecting a group of 50 of the school's children between the ages of 5 and 9 who are severely retarded (unable to feed, clothe, or care for themselves) and establishing small groups for an intensified training program aimed at improving their potential for learning.

The program will be staffed by special teachers, occupational, recreational and physical therapists. The grant will primarily be used to pay their salaries.

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DR. HAMMOND said the grant money will probably be received by the school July 1, the beginning of the federal fiscal year.

He said he is already looking for professionals for the project and issued a plea for teachers and therapists to contact him. The program will be-

gin as soon as the staff is found, he added.

The 75-page project synopsis titled, "Toddler Training and Stimulation for Maximum Potential," was submitted to the Public Health Service last September, but Dr. Hammond explained he began gathering material and outlining the program shortly after he became the school's director two years ago. He said it was the first time the school has applied for a federal program grant.

The maximum ever awarded by the government for a project such as Willowbrook's has been \$100,000, Dr. Hammond said. Currently there are a number of federally-funded research projects in operation at the school. However, the funds allocated for those is "much smaller" than the money awarded for the training program, Dr. Hammond said.

Dr. Hammond stated his program will attempt to demonstrate that the severely retarded child needs "more, not less, educational stimulation than the average child." He said he is also working on a similar program for pre-school children at the institution.

Yesterday, Hammond received a call from Albany that he is to receive an additional 23 teachers for the school's academic program. This would increase the teaching staff by more than 30 per cent, Dr. Hammond said. The total number of personnel at the school, including the additional teachers, is almost 2,500. There are about 6,000 patients.