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Bulletin 6/7/60

Theater for Students 'Probable' for 3 Yrs.

The repertory theater program for high school students probably will continue for three years, Charles A. O'Connor Jr., Providence superintendent of schools, said today.

Mr. O'Connor said he has "been encouraged to believe that the program would be funded for at least three years." However, both he and William P. Robinson Jr., state commissioner of education, said they are able to apply for funds on a one-year basis only.

"These requests may be submitted for one year at a time only, like our other programs," Mr. Robinson said. He said he had confirmed this understanding today with Dr. Albert Bush-Brown, president of the Rhode Island School of Design and a member of the board of the National Council on the Arts.

The Endowment for the Arts already has submitted budget requests for the second year of the program. In its proposal to a House subcommittee on appropriations, the endowment stated:

"It is anticipated that at least three years will be required to test the benefits of this program in a given area. The second

year of operation is, therefore, essential."

With the filing of an application last week for funds from the federal elementary and secondary education act and the

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announcement that the Foundation for Repertory Theater in Rhode Island would back the project with \$30,000 to \$40,000, the theater seemed virtually certain for the city. Under the program, expected to start in September, about 40,000 high school students would see four plays annually.

It is expected that the first year of the program will cost \$785,000. Of this, \$165,000 has been committed by the Endowment for the Arts while the remainder will come from the Aid-to-Education Act and the state repertory group, parent organization of the Trinity Square Playhouse. The latter group has pledged \$30,000 to \$40,000.

Current thinking in Washington, Mr. O'Connor said, is that the communities in which the three repertory theaters are established should develop sufficient interest in the program after three years of operation to fund it locally.

"All these youngsters who see this will be graduating from high school after three years," Mr. O'Connor said. "Between their own personal appreciation and what they can build up in their families, well if this doesn't build up interest I don't know what will."

Mr. O'Connor said that a student who participates in the full three years of the program will see 12 plays. In addition he said, it is his understanding that public performances will be presented three times a week.

The application now on file calls for the theater to be housed in the RISD auditorium. Since the program was first announced nearly a year ago, both the auditorium and the Albee Theater had been considered likely sites for the theater.

Providence has been repeatedly assured by Rep. John E. Fogarty that it would be selected for the theater site if a house was made available for the project. The application indicates that the RISD auditorium would fulfill this stipulation.