

More freedom for England's schools to run affairs

All schools in England are to be encouraged to become "trust schools" with greater autonomy to run their own affairs.

A white paper released this week by the British Labour government says trust schools will be able to appoint the majority of the governing body, control their assets, become their own admissions authority and potentially vary the national curriculum.

A trust can run more than one school and successful schools will be allowed to expand. The trusts will be backed by business charities, faith groups, universities and parent and community groups.

The government said a range of organisations including KPMG, Microsoft, the Open University, the Church of England and a number of trusts had already agreed to work with it to develop the approach.

Local education authorities will become less involved in the day-to-day running of individual schools and more involved in raising standards.

Parents will be able to ask for new schools to be set up to reflect local need and demand and local authorities will be duty bound to consider their requests.

A new network of advisers will be established to ensure every parent knows what choices are available.

The *Guardian* has reported that failing schools will be closed if they do

not improve after a year. A new provider will be found to run the school through a trust if no changes are made.

Wide reforms possible in Australia

In Australia, similar reforms have been proposed recently.

Education Minister Brendan Nelson wants to abolish zoning and bring in taxpayer-funded vouchers for struggling students to spend in private schools; and Opposition Labor leader Kim Beazley has called for more school

choice and specialist secondary schools for maths, science and trades.

The Australian government's proposal follows a plan announced earlier this year to give out \$33 billion in school funding to the states and territories if they provided more information about student and staff performance in publicly available school reports.

The British white paper is at <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/highlights/article06.shtml>

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Australian business PTE to set up in NZ

A growing Australian private training provider plans to bring its business and industry training services across the Tasman and be in operation out of Auckland by December.



Fiona Fitzpatrick

Melbourne-based Futurum has started accreditation procedures with the New Zealand Qualifications Authority but will at first operate on a fees-for-service basis.

The company focuses on offering workplace-training services to companies.

Managing director Fiona Fitzpatrick said there were “so many commonalities and similarities in language and delivery of education services between Australia and New Zealand” that it was a logical step to grow across the Tasman. Clients with a presence in New Zealand had also requested Futurum’s services here.

Growth into the government sector in Wellington was a possibility.

Ms Fitzpatrick said Futurum’s business style was to create partnerships with other private providers and it would be looking to continue that in New Zealand.

She said the success of her business, which operated in all eight Australian states, came from its focus on client service and providing innovative training solutions.

“The vocational education and training sector is constantly changing and you have to be willing to take risks and be continually achieving to do well.”

She said her most successful clients were those companies that were committed to good staff, and training was a key component of that.

“It’s not just getting staff on the bus but keeping them on the bus, and our focus is helping companies retain their staff and improve their business.

“Training has a huge influence and can really turn things around for a company by getting staff engaged and productive.”

Futurum started life 16 years ago focusing on literacy skills and Ms Fitzpatrick used to operate two office-building floors of literacy training rooms.

Today, Futurum still provides those services but the two floors of classes have gone as the business model has evolved to focus largely on workplace training and with an emphasis on supervisory and management instruction.

The company’s 90 staff, of which about 50 are trainer contractors, are spread across Australia and provide training services to many of

Australia’s most well-known companies in warehousing and distribution, manufacturing, hospitality and tourism, the food industry, health and community services, retail, and business and financial services.

The regulatory hurdles that Futurum jumped each time it wanted to start up in another Australian state as a private training provider meant the company was well versed in meeting government requirements for operations, and Ms Fitzpatrick was confident moving into New Zealand would be a similar experience.

The Futurum website is at <http://www.futurum.com.au/>

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The full text of Tony Blair’s speech about the education reforms is at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/4372216.stm

The Guardian story on the white paper is at <http://education.guardian.co.uk/policy/story/0,15572,1600437,00.html>

Dr Nelson’s proposals are at <http://www.dest.gov.au/Ministers/Media/Nelson/2005/09/tran2280905.asp>

Australian bank's ECE moves gain attention

News broken by *Subtext* last month that Australian investment bank Macquarie was buying up New Zealand early childhood education (ECE) centres for its Forward Steps chain brought strong interest from media.

The *Dominion Post* ran the story on the front page. The *National Business Review* interviewed bank executive director Tony Fehon who said the bank was looking possibly to buy up to 50 centres in New Zealand and a similar number in Australia in the next year or so. It currently has 20 North Island centres and four in Australia.

In the *Dominion Post* article, ECE union representative Lynne Bray said the union was appalled that the education of children was being treated as a business where big profits could be made.

Listener columnist Joanne Black said union opposition to the bank's purchases was perplexing.

"Isn't quality of service the paramount thing? If children are happy and thriving and the parents content, why is ownership an issue?" she wrote in her column, headlined 'Filthy Capitalist Kids', in mid-October.

Early Childhood Council chief executive Sue Thorne told *Subtext* last month that the bank's move was likely to be the start of an ongoing trend

in the sector towards chains of ECE centres.

The *Dominion Post* story is online at <http://www.stuff.co.nz/stuff/0,2106,3427836a7694,00.html>



OECD praises UK tertiary reforms

The UK's plans to introduce graduate contributions to the cost of studying from 2006 is an "excellent example" of how additional resources can be made available without relying solely on public funding, the OECD has said.

Universities are to charge annual tuition fees in the range from zero to £3,000, with the payment deferred until students have graduated and are earning an income.

The OECD describes the plan as helping "students from all backgrounds to overcome credit constraints and it gives insurance as the speed of repayment depends on

the graduate's income."

It also says a higher cap on university fees may eventually be required to provide additional financial resources to attract and retain the best academic talent. Consideration should also be given to increasing the funding for universities that have shown a track record of successful collaboration with businesses.

To compete with the best universities worldwide further changes are required, including streamlining university governance procedures and clearer guidelines concerning intellectual property rights.

More information is at http://www.oecd.org/document/43/0,2340,en_33873108_33873870_35456619_1_1_1_1,00.html

First national survey of British student satisfaction could ring changes

The first national survey of student satisfaction with British universities was released last month, with the results having the potential to force unpopular courses to improve or close, British higher education minister Bill Rammell has said.

The survey run by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) along with the National Union of Students saw an unexpectedly high 60 percent response rate with 80 percent happy overall.

HEFCE wants universities to use the survey to compare themselves.

Mr Rammell said the survey would, over time, identify courses and institutions that were not coming up to scratch and students would vote with their feet. This would provide a powerful tool for those courses and institutions to improve or to cease to function.

“Students will want to know that the investment they are making represents the best value for their money. This knowledge will put them in a strong position to bring about further improvements in colleges and universities,” he said in a statement.

The survey results have been posted online at the Teaching Quality Information (TQI) website, an on-line resource giving access to official information about the quality of tertiary education in the United Kingdom. The website is designed to help students make decisions about what and where to study.

New Zealand’s Tertiary Education Commission last year announced a scheme – the Student Component Performance Measure (SCPM), to be introduced in 2006 – where part of a tertiary institution’s funding would be subject to success based on three

indicators, one of which was student satisfaction.

Camilla Belich, the New Zealand University Students’ Association co-president, said the association was very supportive of the SCPM in giving students a say over institution quality. The association would support initiatives that allowed students to have a say about how institutions were run.

Ms Belich said the association ran its own three-yearly survey of student views on their institutions’ services.

“They can act as an incentive to

improve quality,” she said.

The TQI website is at <http://212.135.140.45/sites/tqi/home/index.cfm>

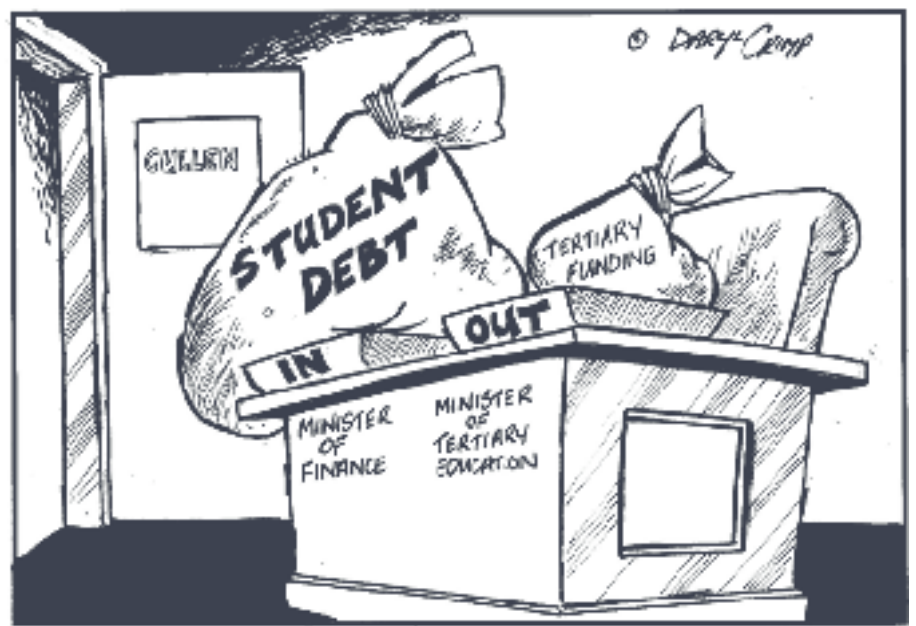
A statement from Bill Rammell is at <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/hefce/2005/nss3.asp>

A Guardian story is at <http://education.guardian.co.uk/higher/news/story/0,9830,1575105,00.html>

Information on the New Zealand SCPM scheme is at <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/index.cfm?layout=document&documentid=8754&data=1>

New tertiary education minister

As well as holding on to his finance portfolio, Michael Cullen takes on one of the more contentious portfolios – tertiary education. He will face a difficult political juggling act convincing students that student loans are a good investment for their future and the best way to help ensure institutions have adequate finances. Cartoonist Daryl Crimp saw it like this. . . .



Stitching up success for fashion students

Leading New Zealand fashion companies and design houses have hired 18 out of 21 graduates from the New Zealand Institute of Fashion Technology's latest Pattern Design programmes. It's indicative of the success of the institute, which has become a magnet for firms wanting graduates with relevant skills and a focus on the workplace.

The institute (NZIFT) has turned out close to 2,000 graduates to date for a variety of manufacturers in the sewn products industries, including fashion houses, upholsterers, canvas products suppliers, wetsuit designers and sailmakers. High-end brands such as Karen Walker and Pumpkin Patch are among the many employers who have employed NZIFT graduates.

"We find that the institute graduates have a really good foundation knowledge of design and putting garments together. It's something that we don't have to teach them. They already understand basic cutting skills and pattern knowledge."

*Brigid Wells, Head of Design,
Michele Ann Ltd*

With centres in Auckland, Christchurch and Wellington, NZIFT owners Kevin Smith and Val Marshall-Smith work closely with industry to determine the technical skills they require.

"We focus on a highly professional approach to quality in skills training, and also on our students' individual needs," Mr Smith said.

Most classes have only around 12 students, and the tutor is with them for

about 36 hours a week. This compared well to public institutions where there could be up to 50 in a class, with a tutor fronting up for around 12 hours a week, Mr Smith said.

Classrooms at the institute replicate a workroom environment and course hours are closely aligned to industry



Brigid Wells (left) and NZIFT graduate Lauren Graham.

hours, helping to better prepare the students for industry workplace environments.

Another important factor is the requirement for workplace experience for all courses. Students don't find that

too hard to meet, with many top end companies, impressed by the institute's reputation for training, providing work experience placements – many of which turn into employment.

"We've been employing their graduates for the last three years. Overall, we've been pretty happy with the graduates that have gone through. It appears to be a pretty good course. We've had graduates from this school, and also from a four-year course in the public training sector. We thought their skills were about the same – what does that tell you? I feel the short-term courses seem to be best because you can do the course and get into the industry, and then go back and expand your knowledge if you want. With the longer courses, it takes them a long time to graduate, and you're still a junior."

Guy Thornton – owner of Guy Thornton (an Auckland pattern making, sampling and grading business)

"Because we've condensed our programmes to 26 weeks, we're having students from all over New Zealand willing to travel to main centres to train

Stitching up success for fashion students

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with us because they know they can be working within a year,” Mr Smith said.

“Sometimes the public sector trainers sector claim we are only ‘training’ where-as they are ‘educating’. But I have argued at conferences that if we are taking skilled and well-trained people into industries within six months to a year and contributing to our society, then I think we are in ‘education’ – and I’ve had standing ovations for that!”

“What I like about students from the institute is that they have good basic skills.”

Gail Kerwin, production manager, Pumpkin Patch

Mr Smith is a past president of the New Zealand Association of Private Education Providers and has a good overview of the private training sector. He said critics of private training did not understand the sector, which produced in-demand graduates with high technical skills for industry despite the stumbling blocks placed before it by the government.



“We can learn from the experience in Ireland where initially they put all their money into the high level of education, thinking they would liberate Ireland from years of poor growth. But they discovered very quickly that they needed to educate all levels of the workforce.

“New Zealand’s private training sector can service this country so well if it is just given a little more of an even playing field with the public training sector,” he said.

“In 2001, for example, there was a moratorium on future expansions of private education for 18 months, and our business was frozen. It was insane as we were given less than an hour notice of this. We have struggled through those sorts of policy restrictions for years.

“We have such strong and ongoing support from industry but despite this it has been very difficult for us – like many private trainers – to keep our business going.”

Mr Smith said many leading fashion companies and manufacturers had been restricted from filling domestic and export orders by a lack of skilled staff over the past decade. This could be

turned around if the government gave more encouragement to the private training sector.

“It was a very practical course. I felt quite ready to come into the workforce. I didn’t want to go back to university for three years. Definitely it paid off. Now that I look back, I feel I was more prepared having done a one-year course with the institute, than I would have been doing a three-year course at university.”

Hayley Harmon – institute graduate 2003, now employed in the fashion industry in Auckland.

He likened New Zealand’s private training industry to “the giant in Gulliver’s Travels, tied down to the ground by government restrictions.”

The NZIFT website is at <http://www.nzfashiontech.co.nz>

The Design and Arts College in Christchurch is another PTE offering fashion design courses. Its website is at <http://www.dac.ac.nz>

Make public schools more like private ones; bring in more school choice, conference hears

Public schools should be run like private schools, and more school choice is needed, two education experts told an Australasian education conference last month.

Barry McGaw, the Australian who heads the OECD's education directorate, told the 'Schooling for the 21st Century' conference in Sydney that public schools should be run like private schools to ensure they did not become "a residual provider bogged down in bureaucracy".

Dr McGaw, told the *Sydney Morning Herald* that parents and teachers should be put in charge of Australia's 7,000 public schools to stem the drift to private education.

He said more competition between public schools would bring more innovation in teaching practices and creativity.

"If we have toll bridges that are publicly funded and privately constructed, why can't we have publicly funded and privately run schools?" Dr McGaw said.

Prominent school choice supporter, Stanford University academic Terry

Prediction that vouchers on the way in Australia

Australia's schools are on the verge of a revolution that will end "the Berlin Wall" between the public and private systems and deliver greater choice to parents, former Australian competition watchdog chief Allan Fels has predicted.

A story in *The Australian* is at http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/common/story_page/0,5744,16732977%255E13881,00.html

Moe was another key speaker at the conference, organised by the Australia and New Zealand School of Government.

He said education reform was often blocked by powerful groups seeking to secure their own welfare – even at the expense of the welfare of students.

Professor Moe related some of the opposition he experienced when trying to set up a voucher scheme in Milwaukee, where predominantly poor black families wanted their children

out of under-performing schools and demanded vouchers to achieve this.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* interview with Barry McGaw is at <http://www.smh.com.au/text/articles/2005/09/28/1127804549537.html?oneclick=true>

More information about the conference and Professor Moe's address is at http://www.educationunbound.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=127&Itemid=5

The conference web page is at <http://www.anzsog.edu.au/21cschools.html>

Edison schools match or exceed gains of comparable public schools

Most public schools operated for at least four to five years by the for-profit company Edison Schools have shown student achievement gains that match or exceed gains in schools with similar student populations, a Rand study finds.

Edison is the largest private educational management company in the United States. The great majority of the more than 140 schools that Edison has run since it began operating schools in 1995 are included in the study.

The schools that had the strongest instructional leaders and the fullest implementation of Edison's curriculum – providing strong offerings in subjects such as science and music along with core instruction in maths and reading – showed the largest gains in student proficiency; as did Edison schools that faced fewer constraints on their ability to implement the Edison design.

More information is at <http://www.rand.org/news/press.05/10.11.html>

Education contracting in the spotlight

Education contracting was highlighted by many of the world's foremost education policy economists, political scientists, policymakers and practitioners at a recent conference.

At the Harvard University Program on Education Policy and Governance/World Bank conference – ‘Mobilizing the Private Sector for Public Education’ – Neil McIntosh, from leading education services consultancy CfBT looked at England's experience in breaking the state monopoly on schooling.

He said that the government in England had been increasingly contracting out its own activities for over ten years but it had excluded the direct provision of schooling. A substantial sector of service suppliers had built up, primarily to manage services at least one step removed from pupils and parents.

Harry A Patrinos, a senior researcher at the World Bank, argued that there was a paucity of research for models other than voucher-like programmes and called for rigorous impact evaluations

of education contracting models in developing countries.

Education Forum policy advisor Norman LaRocque told the conference that education contracting could: increase efficiency through competitive pressure; allow governments to access specialised skills; overcome operating restrictions; permit quicker response to new needs; and facilitate experimentation with new programmes.

Education contracting is carried out in New Zealand through the Alternative Education (AE) scheme, where the government contracts with private schools to deliver education programmes to young people, aged 13½ to 15 years, who have become alienated from school.

AE began in 1997 and more than 3,100 students were enrolled in it at

some time during 2003. At the start of 2004, there were 200 AE providers, up from around 120 in 2001/02. The world's largest public/private partnership programme is the Private Finance Initiative in the United Kingdom where 102 education deals had been signed, with a value of approximately \$US3.6 billion.

An Education Forum hot topic looking at the conference, and education contracting more broadly, is at http://educationforum.org.nz/text-hot_topic_27-28

A complete list of conference papers is at <http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/pepg/conferences/MPSPEpapers.htm>

Two more public/private partnerships announced in UK education

The United Kingdom is home to much public/private partnership (PPP) activity, including the world's largest PPP programme, the Private Finance Initiative, where 102 education deals have been signed, with a value of approximately \$US3.6 billion. We look at two recently inked PPP deals.

PPP for school construction in Scotland

A private firm is partnering with a Scottish local authority to build nine new schools in a partnership project.

PFI Infrastructure Co is investing £3.6m for 50 percent of the share capital and associated subordinated debt in ABC Schools to build the schools for Argyll & Bute Council in Scotland, with a capital cost of £63m. The project, estimated to reach a total cost of around £206.6m, is to be completed by late 2007.

More information is at http://www.privatefinance-i.com/news/news_details.asp?chn=0,0,0,0&sref=01250011581943522528&id=17706

Maths training centre setup in PPP deal

United Kingdom government ministers last month announced a £15m public-private deal with Plymouth University to set up a national centre for training top maths teachers. The centre will be run jointly by the university's Centre for Innovation in Maths Teaching and a private company, Tribal Group.

A Guardian story on the project is at <http://education.guardian.co.uk/training/story/0,7348,1586105,00.html>

Information on the Private Finance Initiative scheme is at http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/documents/public_private_partnerships/ppp_index.cfm

‘Contract schools’ on the rise around the world

Private firms or community-based organisations operating public schools under a management contract with the local school board are a growing global phenomenon. We highlight some prominent schemes and look at recent reports out of the United States.

‘Contract schools’ remain publicly owned and publicly funded, but are managed by a private sector operator in return for a management fee. As part of the contract, the firm or organisation is generally required to meet specific benchmarks in areas such as student attendance and performance, and community involvement.

Contract schools are leading education innovators in Colorado

Denver Public Schools is well-known throughout the United States as an education district willing to innovate and diversify – including giving some control over schools to outside providers – in order to get results.

The city’s four contract schools, for example, each have distinct identities:

- Escuela Tlatelolco Centro de Estudios is a non-sectarian, non-public school serving public school students in grades seven through 12.
- The New America School serves high school-aged immigrants who have limited English proficiency.
- Connections Academy is an online school for students in kindergarten through to eighth grade.
- The Rocky Mountain School of Expeditionary Learning provides an experiential K-12 programme.

Colorado provides a good foundation for such innovation as the state has no laws hindering school districts from contracting, and friendly

charter school laws which offer freedom from many regulations.

A new study, by Marya DeGrow (a research associate at the Colorado-based Independence Institute), looking at Denver’s four contract schools, is at <http://i2i.org/articles/6-2005.pdf>

Chicago’s radical plan to improve schools gets strong response

Chicago, which is looking to create 100 new schools over the next six years to rejuvenate its failing school sector, last month received 57 proposals from groups wanting to start schools.

Groups were asked to submit proposals for one of three types of schools:

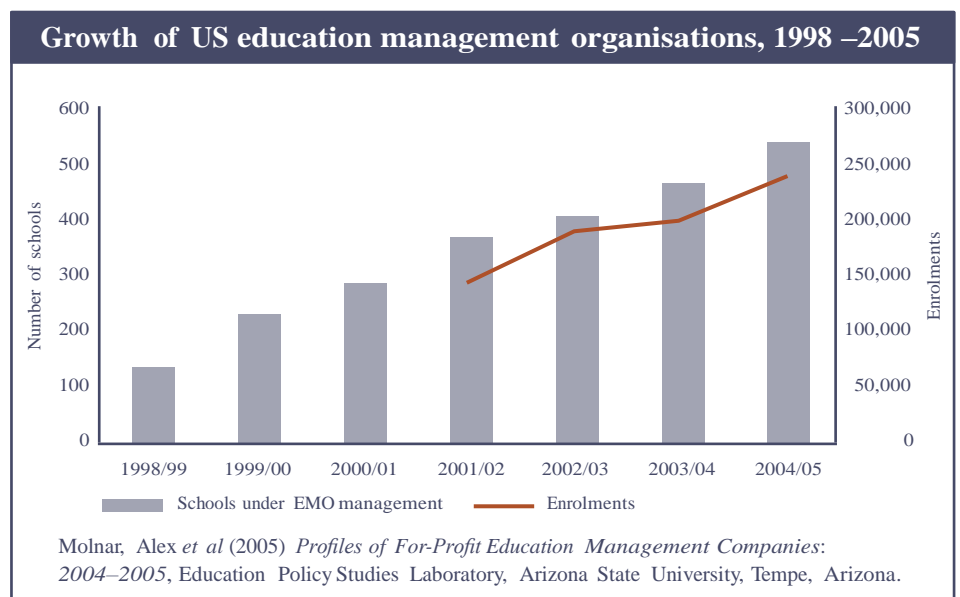
- charter schools, independently operated public schools;

- contract schools, managed by an independent organisation, similar to charters; and
- performance schools, which are schools managed by Chicago Public Schools, but which have increased levels of autonomy.

All of the new schools will have performance contracts or five-year agreements requiring them to meet specific performance standards, while allowing for greater autonomy on issues like budgeting, length of school day, curriculum and staffing.

Final recommendations are expected on the proposals in November.

A press release on the proposals is at http://www.cps.k12.il.us/AboutCPS/PressReleases/August_2005/proposals_rcvd.htm



Opinion: Now is the time to undo govt bias against private education

With a new government and new Ministers of Education – Steve Maharey and Michael Cullen (tertiary education) – appointed, now is a good time for policies toward the private sector in education to be reconsidered, argues Education Forum policy advisor Norman LaRocque.



Norman LaRocque

Collectively, over the past six years, education policies have been loaded in favour of public education – and with no justification.

Private education has a long history in New Zealand as a force for good, helping to improve education

outcomes and create opportunities for people from all walks of life.

Having the private sector deliver school services is an important feature of the education landscape in many countries. The Netherlands, Australia, Japan, Korea, Spain, Denmark, Sweden and Ireland all have significant private school sectors, as do many developing countries.

A rethink of policies toward the private education sector would put the

government in good company. The UK's Labour government – once a dogged opponent of private education – has recognised the valuable role that the private sector can play and is introducing policies expanding its role.

'Contract schools' on the rise around the world Continued from page 9

Prominent contracting schemes around the world

- Contract schools in the United States: many education management organisations (EMOs) run public schools under contract. Major EMOs include Edison Schools (98 schools, 66,482 students), National Heritage Academies (51 schools, 26,133 students) and White Hat Management (38 schools, 18,318 students).
- Concession Schools of Bogota, Colombia: the government provides a building and the private sector operates the school under a government concession. Schools are managed under a 15-year contract

and operators are subject to a performance-based contract.

- SABIS: a network of 31 schools located in 11 countries across the Middle East, Europe and North America. Each school is financially and administratively independent, but operates under a management agreement with SABIS.
- Transformed schools (in the Haidian District of Beijing, China): former public schools whose operation has been turned over to private operators in an effort to improve their academic performance.
- The Fé y Alegría network of schools in Latin America: began in Venezuela in 1955 and has since spread to 14 other countries.
- Alternative Education: a New Zealand programme funding the delivery of education in non-school

settings for school-age children who have fallen outside the education system. Schools are funded on a per-student basis through contracts with the Ministry of Education. Schools can either deliver the education themselves or contract with state or private providers (either for-profit or community-based).

A recent Dominion Post feature on an Alternative Education school in Wellington is at <http://www.stuff.co.nz/stuff/0,2106,3396856a11,00.html>

An Education Hot Topic on the contracting of education services is at http://educationforum.org.nz/text-hot_topic_27-28

A paper by Norman LaRocque on education contracting is at <http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/pepg/PDF/events/MPSPE/PEPG-05-07larocque.pdf>

briefs

Quote of the month:

“Education will be invigorated when no school can rely on captive pupils; when public funds reward success and the qualities that people want in their schools can permeate them all.”

John Roughan, journalist, in his NZ Herald column, 1 October 2005. The column, ‘Let schools run themselves like successful businesses’, is available for a subscription fee at <http://www.nzherald.co.nz/search/story.cfm?storyid=BC06B77C-39E4-11DA-8E1B-A5B353C55561>

Cambridge university aims to raise £1bn to reduce dependence on govt funding

Cambridge University will attempt to raise £1 billion by 2012 to “diversify” its income streams and reduce its heavy dependence on funding from the government.

The university described the ambitious target as the largest attempted by a UK university but insisted it could not afford to continue to rely on state funding that was “vulnerable to shifts in political priorities” and regulatory intrusion.

A BBC article on the plan is at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/cambridgeshire/4272902.stm>

A Guardian article on the plan is at <http://education.guardian.co.uk/universityfunding/story/0,14337,1576684,00.html>

More focus on apprentices and trainees in Australia

The Australian government is to legislate to bring in minimum wages for apprentices and trainees and review systems in a bid to encourage more school-based and part-time apprentices, the *Australian Financial Review* has reported.

Training schemes were to be made more flexible, including shorter lengths of training periods.

Better investment in training helps economic growth, paper says

Better investment in training to raise students’ and workers’ literacy and numeracy – investment in “human capital” – helps economic growth, a new paper says.

The Canadian-based CD Howe Institute argues that Canada needs a comprehensive skills strategy to boost its wages and economic growth.

It cites figures showing that a country’s literacy scores rising by 1 percent relative to the international average is associated with an eventual 2.5 percent relative rise in labour

productivity and a 1.5 percent rise in GDP per head. These effects are three times as great as for investment in physical capital.

And raising literacy and numeracy for people at the bottom of the skills distribution is more important to economic growth than producing more highly skilled graduates.

The study, ‘Public Investment in Skills: Are Canadian Governments Doing Enough?’ by Serge Coulombe and Jean-François Tremblay of the University of Ottawa, is at http://www.cdhowe.org/pdf/commentary_217.pdf

School choice – diversity or segregation?

Public education supporters say school choice policies lead to the segregation of students by race, social class, gender, ability and language, a new book looks at the truth of that claim.

School Choice and Diversity: What the Evidence Says, edited by Janelle Scott, examines the different contexts and conditions under which school choice policies increase or diminish student diversity. Chapters are provided by prominent education policy researchers, including those who both favour and oppose school choice.

More information is at <http://store.tcpress.com/0807745995.shtml>

Teacher accountability and incentives examined in report

Reforms in Latin America increasing teacher accountability and introducing incentives to motivate teachers to raise student learning are examined in a new study.

‘Incentives to Improve Teaching’ by Emilianita Vegas looks at education reforms that alter teacher incentives and the impact on their teaching quality and student learning.

More information on the report is at http://publications.worldbank.org/ecommerce/catalog/product?item_id=4804669

Financial assistance for childcare helps workforce participation

Assistance with the cost of child care is important in promoting choice for women to participate in the workforce, particularly if they have non-school age children and are on a low wage, an Australian study finds.

The Australian government study is at http://www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/content/prps_25.htm

Private business school awarded university status in the Netherlands

Nimbas Graduate School of Management has been awarded university status by the Dutch government, the first institution in the country to be elevated in this way for 20 years, the *Financial Times* has reported.

Teacher merit pay proposed in Massachusetts

A plan in Massachusetts includes teacher performance pay and could add bonuses of US\$5,000 or more to deserving teachers' annual salaries, *The New York Times* reported.

According to *The Times*, Massachusetts is part of a nationwide trend of states moving away from setting teachers' salaries on years of service. It reported that Arizona, Florida, Iowa, New Mexico and North Carolina currently had programmes that reward teachers for classroom performance.

Supplemental education services reviewed

In the United States, the No Child Left Behind Act requires school districts to provide supplemental educational services (ie, extra tutoring) to children from low-income families who are enrolled in schools that have not made adequate progress for three years or more. A new US government study reviews the implementation of some services and provides some examples of promising approaches.

The study is at <http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/disadv/supplementalyear2/index.html>



Outsourcing a growing trend in US tertiary education, but doubts remain

Outsourcing, or at least collaboration with outside vendors, is a potential avenue to help tertiary institutions rein in costs and find more efficient ways of managing certain tasks, but many institutions are wary of it, a new report says.

'Is Outsourcing Part of the Solution to the Higher Education Cost Dilemma: A Preliminary Examination,' reviews existing information about the extent to which colleges and universities turn to outside vendors to do tasks traditionally done by employees.

The Institute for Higher Education Policy report is at <http://www.ihep.org/Pubs/PDF/outsourcing.pdf>

Single sex schooling – is it better?

A major review of research into single-sex versus coeducation schooling has come up with equivocal results into the advantages for both types of school.

The US government study is at <http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/other/single-sex/index.html>

Same-gender teachers boost student results, study says

Being taught by a teacher of the same gender significantly improves the achievement of both girls and boys, as well as teacher perceptions of student performance and student engagement with the teacher's subject, a study finds.

Because US middle-school teachers in most academic subjects are female, the results suggest that the gender dynamics between teachers and students at this level amplify boys' large underperformance in reading.

The National Bureau of Economic Research working paper, 'Teachers and the Gender Gaps in Student Achievement', is at <http://papers.nber.org/papers/W11660>

Education Forum

PO Box 10 539

The Terrace

Wellington, New Zealand

Telephone: +64 21 607 636

Fax: +64 4 471 1304

Email: info@educationforum.org.nz

Web: www.educationforum.org.nz

Subtext Editor: Norman LaRocque –

nlarocque@educationforum.org.nz

Writer: Adam Shelton – www.facttactic.co.nz