

## Performance pay needed to get the best out of teachers, says report

Reducing class sizes, raising teacher salaries across-the-board and teacher certification are ineffective or even counterproductive measures for getting better results from teachers, says a new report from an Australian academic.



Andrew Leigh

To lift teacher performance, Australian National University economics academic Andrew Leigh recommends:

- carefully designed systems of performance-based teacher pay;

- rewarding teachers who choose to work in the schools that need them most;
- streamlining or expediting certification requirements to expand the pool of people who can be hired as teachers.

Speaking to *Subtext*, Dr Leigh said too much focus was currently placed on pedagogy – how and what teachers taught.

“We need incentives to attract and retain the best, most lively, engaged and talented people in front of classes and then we can start looking at what they are teaching,” he said.

“In Australia, the rewards for teachers who are doing a good job are very small. In fact, it is hard to think of another profession where the rewards for skill and achievement are as low.”

Dr Leigh said there was much consensus that teachers’ test scores were declining.

Teacher quality had dropped significantly since the 1960s and 70s, and research suggested that more competitive salaries for women might have pulled highly skilled women out of teaching and into other occupations, such as medicine or law; and that collective bargaining agreements that compressed teacher pay scales and eliminated the possibility of performance-based pay for highly effective teachers also had some effect.

The report, ‘Lifting Teacher Performance’, says there are large gaps between the best and worst teachers,

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# Bulk-funding works – NZ’s 1990s experience

**Teacher unions have come out saying bulk-funding damages education, following the National Party’s release of plans to reintroduce it – but the evidence shows New Zealand’s experience with bulk-funding in the 1990s was largely positive.**

Two studies carried out in the late 1990s found a great majority of respondents expressed strongly favourable views about their schools’ participation in bulk-funding.

They reported positive outcomes, including financial advantage and increased flexibility, especially in matters of staffing, the ability to self-manage and improved teacher/student ratios.

In one survey, 94 percent of respondents felt their schools had been mostly advantaged by bulk-funding, and 80 percent indicated their school would prefer to continue with bulk-funding.

A study from the Education Review Office in 1999 noted the office was satisfied with the performance of a greater proportion of bulk-funded schools than centrally resourced schools and that, by 1999, the boards of bulk-funded schools were operating better than those of centrally resourced schools.

By the time bulk-funding was cancelled, more than 30 percent of

schools – with over 40 percent of teachers and students – were bulk-funded.

In the latest *PPTA News*, PPTA president Debbie Te Whaiti says the reintroduction of bulk-funding would see parents pay more school fees and force schools into high-risk ventures (such as recruiting international students) and hiring ‘cheaper’ teachers.

National Party education spokesman Bill English described the PPTA’s arguments as “absolute nonsense”.

He made the following points:

- Since the abolition of bulk-funding, parental fees and contributions had increased by 35 percent to over \$200 million annually.
- Claims that schools would be forced into recruiting more foreign fee-paying students were wrong. Since bulk-funding was abolished, the number of international students had increased from 5,000 to 17,500, generating an extra \$85 million annually.

- If the PPTA was worried about foreign students, it should attack Labour’s school funding policies.
- The union’s claim that schools would have to hire ‘cheap’ teachers (presumably new graduates) didn’t stand up either. More than 3,000 ‘cheap’ teachers are already employed in our school system and the PPTA “hasn’t made a peep about them”.

The PPTA articles on bulk funding are at <http://www.ppta.org.nz/internal.asp?CategoryID=100007&SubCatID=100046&SubCat1ID=100383> and <http://www.ppta.org.nz/internal.asp?CategoryID=100007&SubCatID=100046&SubCat1ID=100395>

Bill English’s statement is at <http://www.national.org.nz/Article.aspx?ArticleID=4272>

An Education Forum hot topic on bulk funding is at [http://educationforum.org.nz/text-hot\\_topic\\_20-53](http://educationforum.org.nz/text-hot_topic_20-53)

## School choice researcher Caroline Hoxby in NZ

*Eminent Harvard academic and school choice researcher Caroline Hoxby visits New Zealand at the end of June as a guest of the Education Forum.*

Professor Hoxby will meet with politicians, officials and academics, and will be a keynote speaker at the New Zealand Association of Economists conference. Professor Hoxby is well-known for her research on school choice, including: whether students in private



schools, using a publicly funded voucher or paying tuition, perform better than their peers in public schools; and how competition affects the students who remain in public schools.

More information on Professor Hoxby’s visit will be posted on the Education Forum website (<http://www.educationforum.org.nz/>) in coming weeks.

Many of Professor Hoxby’s research papers can be viewed at <http://post.economics.harvard.edu/faculty/hoxby/papers.html>

Details on the 2005 New Zealand Association of Economists conference are at <http://www.nzae.org.nz/conferences/>

# Competition



## *Book identifies quality in ECE and how best to choose it*

*A book looking at how New Zealand parents can best choose an early childhood centre for their children has just been released, and we have three copies to give away.*

*How to Pick Remarkable Quality Childcare and Education* is by researcher Sarah-Eve Farquhar and gives guidelines for parents, teachers and service providers on what early childhood education quality is and how to make informed decisions about it.

The book backs up Dr Farquhar's video on the same topic that was released last year.

To win one of our three copies, simply email us at [subtext@educationforum.org.nz](mailto:subtext@educationforum.org.nz) with your name and postal address.

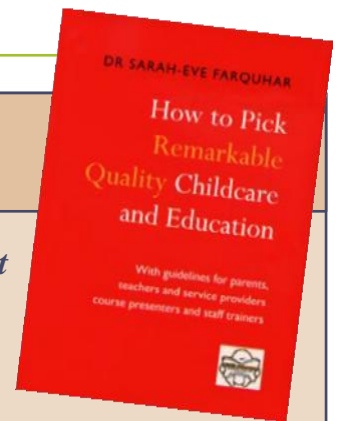
The competition closes at the end of Wednesday 8 June 2005 (NZ time) when we will put all the entries into a draw and pull out three winners.

"The concept of quality childcare or early childhood education has achieved such prominence that it is rarely questioned," said Dr Farquhar.

"Hence the current government and unions argue that quality childcare is vital for all children's later academic success and that a lack of affordable quality childcare is a barrier.

"But the concept of quality should be questioned because not all children are the same and neither are all families. The experience, values and wishes of parents and needs of children as individuals should not be ignored."

To purchase a copy of *How to Pick Remarkable Quality Childcare and Education*, visit Dr Farquhar's website at <http://www.childforum.com>



## *Performance pay needed to get the best out of teachers, says report Continued from page 1*

and this has significant consequences for student achievement.

Switching from an average teacher to a teacher at the ninetieth percentile was shown to raise students' test scores and was calculated to be twice as large as a 10 percent cut in class size.

The report says research highlights the potential of teacher performance-based pay and alternative certification to raise teacher quality and outcomes for students in hard-to-staff schools.

Dr Leigh told *Subtext* that teachers had a "perfectly reasonable belief" that it was hard to measure their performance, but tools developed in the US measuring teachers on how their students improved in tests worked well.

"Policymakers are often slow to implement such approaches because they challenge the status quo of public education and are therefore controversial. It's a strange area where the progressives' position is actually a conservative one," he said.

"There seems to be a consensus in Australia that schools are doing okay and we shouldn't rock the boat. But the reality is that literacy and numeracy scores have stagnated or fallen since the 1970s – despite resources doubling.

"It is time for policymakers to live up to the same standards they have set for educators and ... put research-based teacher quality policies – performance based pay, incentives to teach in

hard-to-staff schools, and alternative certification routes – into action," Dr Leigh said.

- 'Lifting Teacher Performance' is based on US data. It is published by the Washington DC-based Progressive Policy Institute, with PPI analyst Sara Mead the co-author.

The report is online is at [http://www.ppionline.org/documents/teachqual\\_0419.pdf](http://www.ppionline.org/documents/teachqual_0419.pdf)

A related paper by Dr Leigh, 'The Progressive Case for Reforming Australia's Schools', is at <http://econrssh.anu.edu.au/~aleigh/pdf/ProgressiveCaseforSchoolsReform.pdf>

# Air NZ's inhouse training earns its wings

**Training and professional development provide more than just up-to-date skills for a company and its workers. In today's tight labour market, the benefits of such training can also be key to retaining staff. We profile Air New Zealand's inhouse staff training programmes.**

As general manager of capability development Murray Strong explained: the company's training programmes provided recognised qualifications and ongoing learning and stimulation, and so played an important role in the company's human resources strategy for helping retain staff.

"Ongoing staff training is vital not only to ensuring safety and standards but it also works as a good incentive for staff to stay with the company," he said.

More than 40 percent of Air New Zealand's 10,500-strong global workforce took part in some form of company training every year.

Whether it be specialised aviation industry training, management leadership training or general office skills, Mr Strong and his team focused on providing inhouse training to keep staff at the forefront of their professions.

"We have a level of service and standards that need to be met at a minimum. Staff can then staircase up to higher qualifications if they want to," Mr Strong said.

Air New Zealand ran two Qualifications Authority-accredited private training establishments (PTEs) to provide a wide range of unit standards

courses for its cabin crew and engineers.

In Christchurch, the Air New Zealand People Development and Training organisation provided training for cabin crew, and the Auckland and Christchurch based Airways Training Centres looked after engineering training.

The company was also developing a private/public partnership with



Massey University to provide degree-level courses.

It had recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Massey to provide degree-level training for engineers and was looking to do the same for pilots and cabin crew. A Bachelor of Aviation Management would be the result.

This month Air New Zealand increased its pilot training programme with the purchase of a Boeing 777 flight simulator, reportedly worth \$20 million,

to train pilots to fly the new Boeing 777-200ERs, the first of which arrive in New Zealand in late August. The "zero flight time simulator" means pilots can train without stepping into the actual aircraft until their first day in the cockpit, the *New Zealand Herald* reported.

Air New Zealand also worked closely on training initiatives with the Aviation, Tourism and Travel Industry Training Organisation.

Given the company's focus on training its own staff, it is not, perhaps, surprising that its PTEs had opened up commercial opportunities for the company.

With its engineering facilities highly-regarded and used by a number of airlines for their planes' repairs and maintenance, a growing

number of them were now sending their engineers to New Zealand for training.

The company was looking at developing that side of the training business, as well as training other airlines' pilots on the company's flight simulators at times when the company did not need them for its own training.

For big firms, such as Air New Zealand, inhouse training is key to ensuring staff meet the strict quality standards that are the lifeblood of their

### *Inhouse training: a productive initiative*

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reputation. But more and more smaller firms, too, are understanding the value such programmes can bring.

An Industry Training Federation and Business NZ survey last year found that 89 percent of enterprises indicated they provided staff training.

Though the main form of training was through external programmes (85 percent of respondents) many also used inhouse training programmes (79 percent) and one-off seminars (67 percent).

### **Competenz training awards**

Meanwhile, Competenz, the engineering, food and manufacturing industry training organisation, recently held its second national training awards with the top corporate award going to Transfield Services, another big employer with a focus on inhouse training.



Transfield, a maintenance contractor whose business includes work for the Army, a number of councils and train track repair, runs a railway line workers' school. The company's New Zealand general manager, Tony Fisher, told the *New Zealand Herald* last month that the school was a way of finding employees when advertising was not enough.

Of a recent 20-student class,

about 35 percent had come off the unemployment benefit to do the course. All had passed and received a Qualifications Authority-approved qualification and all were offered jobs, the *New Zealand Herald* reported.

A New Zealand Herald story on Air NZ's new flight simulator is at [http://www.nzherald.co.nz/index.cfm?c\\_id=3&ObjectID=10127514](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/index.cfm?c_id=3&ObjectID=10127514)

## School choice policies increasing throughout the United States

**An annual survey of school choice in the US finds it on the increase.**

- Students in six states and the District of Columbia can receive government-funded scholarships to attend a private school of choice.
- Six states offer tax credits or deductions for education expenses or contributions to scholarship programmes.
- Forty states and the District of Columbia have charter school laws.
- Fifteen states guarantee public school choice within or between districts.
- Some states have choice programmes that are optional for districts, target only specific populations, and/or require parents to pay out-of-district tuition.
- Twenty-one states have dual enrolment programmes enabling high school students to attend college classes for high school and post-secondary credits at minimal or no expense to the student.
- Home-schooling is legal in every state.

The Heritage Foundation's 'Choices in Education: 2005 Progress Report' is at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Education/bg1848.cfm>

A new, interactive website on US school choice progress, research, news and commentary is at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Education/SchoolChoice/schoolchoice.cfm>

# For-profit school managers on the rise

**Education Management Organisations (EMOs) have been prominent recently with a number of market moves increasing their reach. We highlight international news.**

## EMOs increase in past 12 months

EMOs – US for-profit companies that run schools – are growing bigger and more numerous.

An annual profile shows 59 EMOs managing 535 schools, enrolling approximately 239,766 students in 24 states and the District of Columbia, an increase of eight firms and 39,363 students over the previous 12 months.

Of the EMO-managed schools profiled, 86 percent were charter schools, up from 81 percent in 2003-2004 and 74 percent in 2002-2003.

There were 14 large EMOs managing 10 or more schools, and they accounted for 81 percent of the schools under management and 89 percent of the students.

Virtual schools, also known as online charter schools are schools where instruction is delivered primarily via the

internet and with little or no contact with certified teachers. Approximately 2,400 virtual schools serve 40,000 to 50,000 students.

*Details on the Arizona State University Education Policy Studies Laboratory's profile of EMOs is at <http://www.asu.edu/educ/eps/CERU/Documents/EPSSL-0504-101-CERU-press.pdf>*

## Three companies hired to turn-around 20 Hawaii schools

Hawaii's Board of Education has approved a US\$7.9 million plan to help struggling schools improve test scores that includes hiring three companies to train teachers and overhaul curriculum at 20 affected schools.

The companies will prepare restructuring plans for each school, with the changes taking effect before the start of the next school year.

The effort was reported to be the

most intense remedy that the state has applied yet for the schools under the No Child Left Behind Act. The contracts follow years of testing in which the schools consistently fell short of state standards for maths and English.

*A story on the plan is at <http://the.honoluluadvertiser.com/article/2005/May/06/In/In01p.html>*

## Edison awarded two more Philadelphia schools

Edison, the world's largest EMO, has been given a contract to run another two schools in Philadelphia in addition to the 20 it already runs there, adding to its overall stable of more than 135 schools.

The extra contracts came on the back of news that Edison had raised test scores at the schools it manages.

Six other organisations also run schools in Philadelphia, though none ran as many as Edison.

*A Washington Post article has more information at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/05/15/AR2005051500809.html>*



## Hood's 'revolutionary' reforms making headlines

*Kiwi vice-chancellor of Oxford University John Hood has gained a high profile and made national headlines recently with his push to reform the finances of the world-famous institution.*

*Fights, Camera, Action, says the Guardian at <http://education.guardian.co.uk/administration/story/0,9860,1485190,00.html>*

*The outsider stirring a revolution at the heart of Oxford University, says The Times at <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2-1620976,00.html>*

*Vice-chancellor 'trying to run Oxford like a corporation', says the Independent at <http://education.independent.co.uk/news/story.jsp?story=633052>*

*Oxford dons reject appraisal plan, says the BBC at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/4557109.stm>*

*Oxford dons oppose individual reviews, says the Financial Times at <http://news.ft.com/cms/s/b239f9b6-c671-11d9-b69b-00000e2511c8.html>*

*Dons win first round in reform struggle, says the Independent at <http://education.independent.co.uk/higher/story.jsp?story=639475>*

# MPs share their visions for future of ECE

**More funding for early childhood, improving adult/child ratios and a review of group sizes were signalled by Education Minister Trevor Mallard this month, but the controversial '20 free hours' from 2007 stays in place.**



**Trevor Mallard**

At a seminar organised by the Early Childhood Council for the main political parties' education spokespeople,

Mr Mallard said Labour was committed to the 20 free hours early childhood education (ECE) per week for three- and four-year-olds in community-based centres from 2007.

Affordability also needed to be tackled at other points in the system – “Working parents may need education and care for children under three years of age, or additional hours for their three and four year olds. These hours need to be affordable.”

Mr Mallard's comments came before the Budget, in which increased childcare subsidies and extended eligibility criteria were announced.

Labour was also expanding the scholarship scheme for early childhood teacher trainees to attract potential teachers.

Following a question from the floor, Mr Mallard said he had seen “some incredibly good work” in the private sector, and was impressed with quality in some larger businesses, but the sector “reflected the breadth of quality”.

National Party education spokesman Bill English said there was no research base for the 20 free hours.

“We have a very progressive system of funding that allows flexibility and choice, and we can't see why the government allows a policy giving free childcare to only some parents that cuts right across that funding system.



**ECE centre owner Lucia Oldenhof with Bill English**

“Parents will not wear this lightly; and how are kindergartens going to cope and supply the extra hours?”

Policies that don't work don't last, and this is one of those policies.”

The government should set the standards for a “quality floor” in ECE and then let parents make the choices about which service they used, Mr English said.

He said the lack of ECE policy oriented towards parents was a concern.

“I have been through stacks of government policy documents for ECE and the invisibility of parents and families is worrying – and these are policies laying the long-term platform for the future of the sector.”

He said the large amount of resources going into ECE was good.

NZ First spokesperson Brian

## PTEs maturing, need fewer audits, says MOE



A Ministry of Education indicator of general confidence in the management of PTEs is the length of the NZQA audit cycle. This varies from less than a year for PTEs with significant audit concerns to three years for well-performing PTEs. The general trend is towards longer cycles which shows a maturing sector and development of management capability.

Source: *The Tertiary Education Strategy 2002–2007 Monitoring Report 2004*

# 'Parent power' gets the best results

Parents should decide on school curricula since every child has different educational needs and parents are the ones who know their own children most intimately, says Sydney-based educator and writer Ross Farrelly.



**Ross Farrelly**

Parents would only be able to do this if school funding was placed in their hands, and if there was sufficient diversity in the educational marketplace to allow them to make a meaningful choice, Mr Farrelly said.

"The ability for parents to choose where they spend their education dollar and a school system which gives schools the freedom to tailor their curricula to the needs of parents and students are the most effective means to elevating

the standard of education," he said.

This was highlighted in 2004, when the then New South Wales education minister, Andrew Refshauge, admitted that in the light of low academic standards of indigenous students, he could not say that the 'one size fits all' approach to school curricula was the best model.

Instead, he proposed to let schools with a high concentration of Aboriginal students develop personalised study plans for individual students and give Aboriginal parents a say in selecting teachers and managing public schools, Mr Farrelly said.

Meanwhile, the British government

this month reinforced its commitment to 'parent power' announcing in the Queen's speech legislation to overhaul the curriculum and give fresh powers to parents to open new state schools and close failing ones.

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A Guardian story on the UK government's plans for parent power is at <http://education.guardian.co.uk/policy/story/0,15572,1485889,00.html>

*MPs share their vision for future of ECE Continued from page 7*



**Brian Donnelly**

Donnelly said funding criteria based on centre ownership should be removed. He was also concerned that current policies encouraged an inadequate mix of skills for teachers and much degree curricula was not harmonised with the needs of children.

"Many graduates are au fait with the works of Karl Marx but they do not know how to wipe a child's nose."

Act spokesperson Deborah Coddington said Act would preserve

the market model for ECE that was being eroded through Labour's discriminatory funding.

"Parents will let centres know if they are not getting the service and quality they want – that is the best way to judge quality."

Green Party spokesperson Metiria Turei said she supported a range of private sector centres as a way to provide choice in the sector – Kohanga Reo and Steiner centres, for example – but government funding should be prioritised towards non-profit centres. She said teacher quality was critical – ECE teachers needed more pay and more access to professional

development; and appropriate qualifications were also important.

United Future's Bernie Ogilvie described the 20 free hours as a discriminatory policy that did not promote natural justice.

His party would guarantee 20 free hours to all children at any teacher-led provider. He said this would cost \$62 million, but the cost of the current policy would also be substantial because hundreds of new buildings would be required at centres that qualified for the free childcare funding.

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More information on ECE initiatives in the Budget 2005 is at <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/ViewDocument.aspx?DocumentID=23104>

## Improving education for the benefit of students is a rare phenomenon

*Education Matters: Government, Markets and New Zealand Schools*  
by Mark Harrison

“... a closely argued, well researched analysis of the New Zealand education system and reforms required if it is to provide for the next generation,” says Ross Farrelly, education commentator, Australia.

“Harrison’s analysis and suggested reforms are rigorous, well reasoned and focused entirely on improving education for the benefit of students – a rare phenomenon when so many vested interests have a say in modern education. One can only hope his suggestions are heeded by politicians with the vision and conviction to at least attempt to implement some of them.”



## National promises to free up private tertiary education

**National will fund all tertiary institutions on the same basis and free up private providers to create new courses, says its education spokesperson, Bill English.**

Mr English said private training establishments had played a crucial role in providing new opportunities in education.

“Tertiary education is ultimately about personal aspirational choices. No bureaucratic machine can possibly control all these choices and nor should it.”

Writing in the May edition of *Peptalk*, the newsletter of the Association of Private Education Providers, Mr English said the Tertiary Education Commission had a complex process for controlling tertiary education that was very expensive and not working.

“The Government needs to control its expenditure and quality standards. Neither of these jobs have been done in the last six years. Government should stick to the jobs it can and should do, and spend less time trying to tell providers and students what to do.”

May’s Peptalk is at <http://www.nzapep.co.nz/PEPTalk/PEPTalk%20May%2005.pdf>

## Students rate English universities

**Six out of 10 final-year students have taken part in a survey rating their academic experience at university.**

The survey was ordered by the UK government when top-up fees were legislated for and is designed as information for applicants to university next year.

Some 170,000 final year undergraduates in 141 universities and colleges in England took part.

Meanwhile, Oxford has replaced Cambridge as the UK’s top university in the *Guardian* newspaper’s ranking of the top tertiary institutions for 2005.

The survey was compiled in association with Brunel University from official information published on universities and higher education colleges.

The *Guardian*’s 2005 university survey results are at <http://education.guardian.co.uk/universityguide2005/0,15903,1455246,00.html>

A *Guardian* story on the student survey is at <http://education.guardian.co.uk/higher/news/story/0,9830,1485805,00.html>

# briefs

## Quote of the month:

“...one press release every eight days for the past four and a half years, all of them dealing with basically the same core issue: free education.”

A Victoria University student magazine *Salient* feature takes an indepth look at the New Zealand University Students' Association – what it does, who it represents, what drives it, the quality of its research and what NZUSA achieves – at <http://salient.org.nz/index.php?a=1554&c=17>

### Focus needed on better tertiary education teaching, learning and research, says report

Better teaching, learning and research is needed to see more tertiary students completing qualifications and achieving at a higher level, a government report says.

The first annual monitoring report tracking the progress of tertiary education between 2002 and 2004 against the government's Tertiary Education Strategy has recently been released.

The report also shows that participation in tertiary education is increasing but more needs to be done to increase minority group participation.

The 'Tertiary Education Strategy 2002-2007 Monitoring Report 2004' is at <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/index.cfm?layout=document&documentid=10358&data=1>



### Country snapshots online

The Education Forum has started a series of profiles looking at how private education fits into different countries' education systems.

The 'Country Snapshots' – written by EdInvest, a World Bank organisation – cover a diverse range of countries and give a detailed overview of each country's education system.

We will regularly update the Education Forum website with new Snapshots at [http://educationforum.org.nz/list-school\\_choice\\_and\\_private\\_schools-20](http://educationforum.org.nz/list-school_choice_and_private_schools-20)

### Voucher schemes improve schools, Harvard study shows

Schools that face competition from vouchers “will unambiguously improve,” a Harvard University study argues.

The study looks at two voucher programmes in the US: a Milwaukee programme that suddenly made low-income students eligible for vouchers, and a Florida programme where schools getting two “F” grades in three years faced competition from vouchers.

The study argues that the threatened public schools unambiguously improve under the Florida-type programme and this improvement exceeds that under the Milwaukee-type programme.

The report, 'Impact of Voucher Design on Public School Performance: Evidence from Florida and Milwaukee Voucher Programs', by academic Rajashri Chakrabarti, is at <http://ideas.repec.org/p/ecm/nasm04/221.html>

### New report finds extensive body of research supporting school choice

A new survey of school choice research finds that an extensive amount of it exists, and that the results are largely positive.

Author Gerard Robinson, senior fellow at Marquette University's Institute for the Transformation of Learning in the United States, said there was an emerging consensus that school choice programmes lead to: improved academic achievement, especially among African American students; positive results in public schools; and high levels of parent satisfaction.

The report is at <http://www.schoolchoiceinfo.org/topics/item.cfm?id=39>

### UK's top up fees to fund staff pay increases

UK universities could spend three quarters of the income they gained from top-up fees on staff and facilities, *The Times Higher Education Supplement* has reported.

## Policies to help low-income students with loans complete degrees

A new US report looks at students who borrow to finance their education but do not complete their studies, and recommends ways to prepare, support and guide students – especially low-income students – in completing their education.

The report is at <http://www.highereducation.org/reports/borrowing/index.shtml>

## Poor families in India turn to private education

Private schools are proving to be the best educators for many poor families in India, an Indian newspaper editorial argues.

The editorial is at <http://www.thestatesman.net/page.arcview.php?clid=3&id=102589&usrss=1>

Information on an ongoing study into private schools for low-income Indian families by Newcastle professor James Tooley is at <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/egwest/research/india.html>

A 2004 Subtext story on a loan scheme helping low-income Indian schools finance infrastructure is at [http://www.educationforum.org.nz/documents/e\\_newsletter/12\\_04/Dec04\\_India.htm](http://www.educationforum.org.nz/documents/e_newsletter/12_04/Dec04_India.htm)

## Free pre-school education – good or bad?

In 2002, when Florida voters approved a ballot measure calling for universal pre-school education by 2005-06, the state joined a handful of states in which all children were eligible for free, publicly funded education in the year prior to school. A new report looks at how the initiative has gone.

'Half Empty or Half Full?: Florida's voluntary pre-Kindergarten Standards' is at <http://www.fordhaminstitute.org/doc/Fwd%20v%20n1.pdf>

## China approves more student loan schemes

The Chinese Provincial Education Office has signed a second batch of cooperative contracts with two banks to approve student loan schemes to 39 higher institutions in Liaoning Province, the *China Education Daily* has reported.

The move follows ongoing increases in student loan schemes throughout China.

Together with 50,000 students who received loans in the first batch, about 1 million low-income students will now receive access to loans in the provincial scheme.

## Home-schooling gets good results

An indepth news article looking at the successes and growth of US home-schooling and arguing for education reform is at <http://www.reason.com/0504/fe.gb.homeschooling.shtml>

[homeschooling.shtml](http://www.reason.com/0504/fe.gb.homeschooling.shtml)

The article shows home-schoolers scoring above average SAT scores:

- In 2002, when the national average SAT score was 1,020, home-schoolers averaged 1,092.
- In 2004, home-schoolers scored an average of 22.6 on the ACT college entrance exam. By comparison, public school students scored an average of 20.9.

## 'Union supported' think tank finds negative impact from charter schools

A new book from the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) argues that the average impact of charter schools is negative and that there is no evidence they recruit students who are more challenged academically than students in traditional public schools. The left-leaning EPI is financially supported by several trade unions and its board of directors includes a number of union heads including the American Federation of Teachers president.

US school reform organisation the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation says the EPI is union supported and anti charter schools and says "taking shots at choice-style education reforms is [the authors'] vocation and possibly their greatest source of pleasure".

The *Economic Policy Institute* book, *The Charter School Dust up*, is at [http://www.epinet.org/content.cfm/book\\_charter\\_school](http://www.epinet.org/content.cfm/book_charter_school)

The *Thomas B. Fordham Foundation* discussion of the book is at <http://www.edexcellence.net/institute/gadfly/issue.cfm?id=190#2269>

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