

School Choice in the UK and Overseas

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November 2006 saw the first batch of additional regulations from the Education and Inspections Act 2006 come into force. This mammoth Act will not have completed its gestation period until after July 2008 making this a regulatory roll out of epic proportions. The Government's previous strategy of dramatically increasing funds for education, increasing inspection and increasing control over procedure has failed to deliver the desired results (as outlined in previous Civitas reports). Now this latest attempt at school reform will ensure that the entire sector will be in a constant state of revolution for over two years as new procedures replace the old.

This report concentrates on the aspect of the bill that is meant to give schools the option of greater independence. This is then contrasted with the international evidence for school reform, the evidence that this bill was originally based on.

Trust schools

Trust schools appear in the Education and Inspections Bill as a minor alteration to the 'Foundation school' concept which was devised to allow some schools independence from local and central government, specifically in the areas of employment of staff, management of school property and admissions arrangements. The new initiative allows independent organisations, such as businesses, community groups or higher education institutions, to become part of the governing body of a school. The argument for their introduction is that 'schools do best when they work in partnership and collaboration with others, pointing to the experiences of Specialist schools and Academies serving deprived areas.'¹

This policy, at its best, could reflect the way in which schools were traditionally established by organisations such as churches, colleges and charities and work to regenerate bonds between schools and families. It could also offer more diversity and experimentation in the state education sector as different groups address the diverse needs of local schools. The initiative also allows trusts to expand into federations or networks of schools, offering the perfect opportunity for successful groups to extend their management. This could happen so long as, at the same time as bringing in Trust schools, the state management could take a step back.

Unfortunately, Trust schools as they have emerged are defined in the main by what they are not:²

- Trusts **cannot** be created without consultation with local authorities, local parents and (if necessary) the schools adjudicator³
- They are **not** independent of local authorities⁴
- They are **not** independent of central government; the secretary of state has the power to remove and add trustees to foundations⁵
- They do **not** have, nor are they able to introduce, their own student selection criteria⁶
- They are **not** independent of any National Curriculum requirements
- They are **not** exempt from any part of OfSTED's intrusive inspections regime

In addition, the Education and Inspections Bill has managed to increase the number of mandatory procedures and powers that government organisations have to intervene. The

admissions code has now been tightened, which includes a ban on interviews, and its enforcement strengthened so that now ‘admission authorities must “act in accordance” with the Code, rather than having to have regard’ to it.⁷ OfSTED now has a new role investigating complaints made by parents. Foundation schools (including Trusts), in particular, now need to establish ‘Parent Councils’ to consult on school policy and have a new duty to ‘promote community cohesion’.⁸ This suggests that not only are statutory duties established with the aim of providing a school’s pupils with additional rights, but also of getting schools to conform with nebulous social objectives. This educational ‘mission creep’ can only disrupt the already tough challenge schools face in educating their pupils.

A Trust, in this context, only adds another layer of management to a school on top of the statutory procedure that is already in place. Considering the number of detailed procedures that the bill requires of local authorities and schools, none of which Trust schools are exempt from, it is difficult to imagine what significant difference in policy they could enact.

So why create them? The regulatory impact assessment of the Education and Inspections Bill emphasises how ‘it would be for the body forming a Trust to meet the costs of its establishment and any ongoing administrative costs’ and that ‘Trust members and directors would be unpaid’. Trusts, therefore, cost the government nothing. However, they do offer the opportunity for responsibility, if not control, to be delegated from the government to a different management team. Trusts will be given the duty to follow all the procedures that the government has set out. If those procedures are not carried out (or even if those procedures are carried out but the results for students remain unacceptable), the responsibility will rest with the Trust. When Trusts fail, the Secretary of State even has a ready-made power to take decisive action to intervene: remove the Trust⁹.

So the actual benefits of Trusts are:

- Their management work for free
- They take responsibility but do not have any power
- They are expendable, allowing a minister to take bold decisive, if ultimately ineffective, action whenever a school is failing, by breaking up their managing Trust

Measured Against The Overseas Evidence

The 2006 bill allows government to retain control of school organisation. However, the missed opportunity is the greater engagement of parents. The original intent of the bill was to put parent choice at the centre of the reform. Ruth Kelly’s foreword to the original white paper ‘Higher Standards, Better Schools for All’ explained ‘we must... put parents at the centre of our thinking, giving them greater choice and active engagement in their child's learning and how schools are run’.

Several European countries have managed this through a simple mechanism of making parents interest in a school the primary consideration when allowing new schools to open or successful schools to expand and giving local government a limited advisory position. The government’s own report on overseas evidence,¹⁰ which was commissioned to back up the recommendations of the original white paper, admired, for

example, how parents' 'right to supply' education to their children is enshrined in the Dutch constitution. These rights extend to 'the freedom to found schools; to receive public funding; to organise teaching; and to determine the principles on which schools are based.' The government's proposals, expressing a desire for schools to federate under the new trust system, reflects, in particular, the positive evidence of 'chains' of successful schools operating in the Netherlands since they introduce economies of scale and allow greater risk management.

The regulations as set out in the actual Education and Inspection Bill, by contrast, have the outward objective of allowing parent choice but put roadblocks between the choice and their being carried out. Schools are not able to set up in areas with an excess of demand for good education, like commercial enterprises. Instead they have to be 'commissioned' by local authorities: 'Local authorities will act as commissioners of school provision and as the champions of parents and pupils in their area, responding appropriately to their needs.'¹¹ In other words, the parents and pupils will be 'consulted' on their views by a local authority, which will then decide what is best for their needs *on their behalf*. Independent organisations will not be able to engage with parents directly and will have to negotiate with local government. Hence 'the local authority will take responsibility for school organisation decisions... with the Schools Adjudicator continuing to settle any disputes. Of course, in reaching any decision the local authority (and the Adjudicator) will continue to take into account the impact on overall standards in an area, which may include effects on neighbouring schools and value for money.'

So local authorities still make planning decisions by default and anyone opposed to them will have to take the case to a higher authority. Despite their being 'a presumption in favour of school expansion' in the case of good schools, the local authority will be able to put up any number of objections to such expansion. When holding a competition for the commissioning of a new school, local authorities will have the option of proposing traditional foundation or community schools that they will run themselves. Essentially, the situation for running current schools and opening new ones remains the same as before. Local authorities are now called 'commissioners', parents and charitable bodies remain as walk-on extras.

How did the major point of this reform become so sidelined despite the original intentions? To get some idea, we can examine three specific examples of school choice schemes overseas and how the government has interpreted their results.

Charter Schools in the US

Charter schools are perhaps the closest relative to the proposed trust schools. They differ from trusts in that the schools can be run for profit as well as charitably and that, once contracted, they are given significant managerial independence from government. Like trust schools, they are commissioned or 'chartered' by a local authority to provide an education and funded by the state on a per-pupil basis. The theory is that their continued chartering is predicated on the school attracting pupils and reaching standards set for them. The amount of independence charter schools are given varies from state to state (and only 40 US states have a charter school system at all). They are not meant to replace the system of public schools, so much as introduce competition into the state-funded sector in order to drive up standards. Charter schools are particularly likely to be commissioned in deprived urban districts. They are a hot topic, with activists both supporting and opposing the introduction of charter schools. Free-

market school reforms are considered a threat to the public sector monopoly that teachers and their unions currently enjoy and, as a consequence, the charter school debate is not merely an argument about results but also about ideology.

The Prime Minister's Strategy Unit's report describes the evidence for the success of charter schools as 'mixed' and goes on to claim that this demonstrates the importance of proper government oversight of the system. But this misses out an important element of the charter school debate in the United States: it is not that the success of charter schools depends just on which state policies you are looking at but even more on what methods are used to gather results and who is doing the study. Taken as a whole, most studies on charter schools have revealed slow but steady improvements over traditional public schools, particularly as the new system has become more established:

'Nationwide, a higher percentage of students in established charter schools are judged proficient on the state reading and math examinations than in the nearest traditional public school. If a charter school has been operating for more than nine years, ten percent more students are scoring at or above the proficiency level in both subjects.'¹²

However, one specific and prestigious report produced by a government agency -the National Centre for Education Statistics- (based on data from a study nicknamed 'the Nation's Report Card') contradicts this general trend and even claims the opposite. The different studies' conclusions are inconsistent and the evidence is not so much mixed as polarised. It would therefore be useful to know which side of the debate (if either) is actually using good methods to come to their conclusions.

The latest edition of the NCES report¹³ came in August 2006. Anti-choice advocates seized upon it to advance their attack on school choice. The *New York Times* reported this as 'Fourth graders in traditional public schools did significantly better in reading and math than comparable children attending charter schools.'¹⁴ The report concluded that charter schools produce results worse than ordinary public schools, with reading results 4.2 percentage points and maths 4.7 percentage points lower than public schools. In using this as evidence to condemn the charter school system, however, a crucial caveat that the report's authors inserted was missing from the debate: 'the data are obtained from an observational study rather than a randomized experiment, so the estimated effects should not be interpreted in terms of causal relationships.'¹⁵ Hence the report could claim very little about the efficacy of charter schools, it could only correlate certain factors to other factors.

How did this report find that charter schools produced worse results than the standard public school system? It was by using the baroque methodology of 'Hierarchical Linear Modeling' that was employed, according to the authors, 'because such models accommodated the nested structure of the data (i.e. students clustered within schools) and facilitated the inclusion of variables describing student and school characteristics.' In brief, the method involves taking a 'snapshot' of student performance (in this case, 4th grade students) and comparing them against identifiable student and school variables that are also likely to affect student performance. The study then attempts to abstract these variables (using multiple regression models), leaving what is meant to represent the average difference between a charter schooled and a public schooled pupil. Hence, rather than a randomized study that reviews the performance of a set of students in a charter

school against a public school control group, this study takes a non-randomized sample and then attempts to account for the selection by off-setting the known variables that may bias the study. This is a complex task that could lead to a number of problems:

1. A variable is accounted for but by using an erroneous model (due to previous research being limited or erroneous).
2. A variable that should be accounted for is ignored (60 variables are considered in this particular study, thus it would be easy to miss another important one out through simple human error).
3. An 'invisible' variable that cannot be measured by normal means biases the study.
4. A variable is incorrectly measured or accounted for.

The authors warned of one such invisible variable:

'charter schools are "schools of choice." Parents may have been attracted to charter schools because they felt that their children were not well-served by public schools, and these children may have lagged behind their classmates. On the other hand, the parents of these children may be more involved in their children's schooling and provide greater support and encouragement. Without further information, such as measures of prior achievement, there is no way to determine how patterns of self-selection may have affected the estimates presented.'¹⁶

Hence, the fact that this study contained no longitudinal element (i.e. performance improvements measured over time) means that one variable cannot be accounted for at all by the study: previous performance. Since previous performance could be correlated to the attendance of charter schools (but how we cannot say from this study), the variable would remain 'cloaked' beneath the very variable the study is trying to measure: namely the *effect* (not mere co-incidence) that charter schools have on performance. The authors acknowledged this tremendous weakness although those already pre-disposed to oppose independent education on principle have ignored it.

The more catastrophic error, however, was in the measurement of a crucial poverty indicator. This is very important for giving charter schools a fair hearing since they are disproportionately set up in school district areas in the greatest need of reform – often in areas with the greatest level of poverty. Indeed, one of the greatest benefits of charter schools is that they have been seen to raise standards amongst the least well-off in society. This study, however, failed to show the extent to which charter schools take students from impoverished backgrounds and therefore not only failed to show the extent to which charter schools particularly cater for the least well-off, but also failed to account for poverty as a factor correctly, which has significantly skewed the results. The indicator the study fallaciously used was eligibility 'for free/reduced-price school lunch'. Yet, as the Centre for Education Reform¹⁷ points out, some charter schools do not have facilities to provide lunch at all, others do not provide lunch with the licensed services that the free lunch program requires while others have a high number of students that have packed lunches and would not even apply for the program. South Carolina does not even consider charter schools eligible for the free lunch programme at all because they are not mentioned under the state law governing it. Hence, the very nature of some charter schools has meant their students are disproportionately ineligible for free school

lunches *regardless of their background*. Neither the authors of the study, nor anti-charter school activists, have tried to refute this destructive response to the NCES.

In sum, the NCES study uses an obtuse methodology that could never hope to draw clear causal relations under the best circumstances and simultaneously requires negotiating a tightrope of variables where one error in accounting would be enough to seriously disfigure the results. Even in addition to these obvious setbacks created by the very conception of the research proposal, the study itself was conducted so poorly that it was unnoticed (or unacknowledged) that a major poverty indicator biased the whole study against charter schools!

This comes against the background of evidence that suggest charter schools have significant performance value over their public school counterparts. Caroline Hoxby has conducted many studies on charter schools. One recent one was based on a method that provided exactly what the NCES study failed to: a randomized sample with performance measured longitudinally. She utilized the long waiting lists of students hoping to enrol in several Chicago charter schools to develop a randomised selection in order to compare ‘apples to apples’. Students from a similar background who all had parents that were hoping to get their children into the new charter system, were split into those who won the lottery for places at the school and those that were ‘lotteried out’. Hence both samples were the same apart from the luck of the draw for limited places. The results were compelling:

‘After following both groups of students, we found that the lotteried-in students who attended charter schools had math and reading achievement that was about 6 percentile points higher than lotteried-out students who continued in the regular public schools. These gains were achieved after only a couple of years. If we extrapolate the gains to an entire primary and secondary education, a student could gain almost four grade equivalents by being in the charter schools as opposed to the regular public schools. Ultimately, we won't need to extrapolate because we'll continue to follow the students until they graduate from high school. Studies like ours, which use the randomized method and follow children over a long period of time, are undoubtedly the best way to do research on charter schools.’¹⁸

The Goldwater Institute carried out another study on a wide sample in Arizona. They tracked the performance over time of 60,000 students in 873 charter and public schools. The study found ‘charter school students, on average, began with lower test scores than their traditional public school counterparts, and showed overall annual achievement growth roughly three points higher than their non-charter peers. Charter school students who completed the twelfth grade surpassed traditional public school students on SAT-9 reading tests.’¹⁹ We can see from this Arizona study where the NCES report’s blind spot has proved fatal to interpreting its results. The NCES took average grades at the national level between public and charter schools, but in doing so, they set the baseline expectation for charter schools students too high, probably because of their failure to take full account of the various poverty indicators that should have suggested that charter schools face a tougher job of teaching. Studies that measure performance improvement rather than performance itself indicate not only that charter schools offer more value than traditional public schools, but that their teaching is of benefit to some of those worst-off students in the public school system.

No study, based along a similarly rigorous test of the value added to students' performance by a school over time, has contradicted these conclusions. This seems to leave 'snapshot' studies that employ hierarchical linear modeling sniping at the sidelines as charter schools continue, generally, to offer a better standard of education for some of the least well-off in American society.

Unfortunately, the Government's own report ended at the point of acknowledging that charter schools were controversial in the US rather than establishing that high quality studies show a specific trend of charter schools having a positive effect.

New Zealand

The government's overseas report relies heavily on the supposed 'cautionary tale' of New Zealand to argue that careful controls need to be placed by government on any system of school choice. This is meant to be a clear case of unrestricted choice creating more segregation by ethnicity and socio-economic background, although even the government's report acknowledges that 'New Zealand retains relatively low levels of social segregation compared to other countries in the OECD.'

New Zealand de-regulated a previously centralised and bureaucratic education system in 1989. The Ministry of Education was reduced in size and much of the management was localised to a board of trustees for each school. The reform has the same flavour as Britain's foundation schools, although with much greater autonomy given to head teachers and applied to the entire education sector. Zoning, the selection of pupils according to where they live, was abolished allowing students to apply for any school. In 1990, in a further policy shift brought on by a change of government, many of the regulations governing how schools should select students in the case of over-subscription were removed. During the years following these reforms, several academics (including Fiske and Ladd) argued that there was an increase in ethnic and economic segregation due to good schools having the ability and incentive to attract the best (or easiest to teach) pupils, leaving the less well-off with fewer (and worse) school choices.

The government's report attributes this result to the de-regulation of the student selection process. Yet this ignores one of the flaws in the New Zealand choice scheme: stagnation at the point of supply. The Frontier Centre for Public Policy notes: 'The key problem with the New Zealand program lies in the fact that the government retained ownership over school facilities, and has been reluctant both to spend money expanding popular schools and to close unpopular schools.'²⁰ This would explain how good schools filled up rapidly (and so could afford to pick good students) while poorly performing schools could continue in stasis in full knowledge that there was

- a) little risk of the school being made to close
- b) little risk of new schools being founded in an area that already had enough places for every child (even though some of those places were in failing schools)

Since the UK reforms do not introduce a significant change to how new schools are opened, we can see why school admissions have to be regulated more closely to cope with the unsatisfied demand. It is not parental choice itself that has a segregating impact and that needs to be fettered; rather regulation at the point of supply necessitates ever more regulation at the point of demand. By contrast, in New Zealand 'Private schools have been found to be less racially segregated than public schools simply because they

draw upon students from larger geographic areas. A major inhibitor of greater diversity in private schools is the difficulty of many parents to pay for both public school taxes and private school tuition.²¹

It should be noted that even within the public sector (with choice limited to schools that were already established with little in the way of expansion) ‘Maori and Pacific Island families made the greatest use of choice when zoning was removed. The proportion of Maori attending “non-local” schools rose from 21 percent in 1990 to 39 percent in 1995 and for Pacific Island students from 18 percent to 38 percent.’²² And of those left behind in failing local schools there remains little empirical evidence to suggest that they were worse off than before choice was introduced.²³ Of course, we should note that whether those left behind were better or worse off than before, they were still left out in one crucial respect: the least-off were less likely to be selected by the schools that were shopping around for the best pupils. This, however, was not due to the selection process in those schools but because of the inability of the system to allow new public schools to be created in areas where there was a perceptible demand.

Universal Vouchers in Sweden

Sweden’s universal voucher scheme introduced in the early 1990s reformed their school system simply by allowing independent schools, under a few well-defined conditions, to receive public funding. The reform was not eye-catching at first. As Michael Sandstrom explains:

‘In 1991 the incoming government introduced the new legislation rapidly, with a minimum of committee work and hearings. Also instead of attempting to introduce ‘optimal’ legislation, a few simple steps were taken that ensured a larger role for independent schools. Probably, few people realized quite how radical the reform was...by establishing the right of independent schools to receive public funding, it created new opportunities for independent schools, without creating an immediate “threat” to teachers and other interest groups.’²⁴

The reform left the public sector intact and today there remain public ‘compulsory’ schools still managed by local districts. However, there has been a surge in the number of publicly funded independent ‘free’ schools: ‘at the time of reform there were only 70 independent schools educating less than one percent of the students, today there are almost 800 independent schools, educating almost one tenth of all students.’²⁵

Independent schools tend to be somewhat smaller than normal public schools. Parents are free to choose any school, municipal or independent, regardless of where they live. Recent research has been able to delineate some changes that the new system is bringing about. Sweden’s National Agency for Education has noted ‘On average pupils in independent schools have higher merit ratings than pupils in municipal schools.’²⁶ This is a significant result in a school system that is already known as a relative success amongst European countries. The NAE has also noted that ‘the range is wider across independent schools overall.’²⁷ This can be partially explained by how some independent schools cater for students with various special needs.

So who is benefiting from these higher merit ratings from independent schools and who is taking up a school choice? Jenny Kallstenius,²⁸ while conducting research in two

Stockholm school districts for a thesis due to be completed in December 2008, has found several different groups taking advantage of school choice (this includes those taking up places in independent schools and those choosing public schools other than by location):

1. Students with 'highly educated and employed parents.'
2. A smaller number of students from a background of 'unemployed parents and those with a low education... who make an active choice.'
3. Students (and parents) 'with an ethnic minority background who chose to leave the 'immigrant dense' suburban schools to attend an inner city school with a large proportion of pupils with an ethnic Swedish background'.

The third category of students suggests that far from increasing ethnic segregation, school choice in some circumstances is actively encouraging inter-ethnic mixing and cultural assimilation within schools. The families of these students took up this choice because 'the change of school gives them the chance to be a part of an environment characterized of a higher percentage of ethnic Swedes, to a greater extent be "a part of the Swedish society", to develop a "better" language and to get a "better" education.' In addition, 'the pupils... claim that they "come closer" to the Swedish society, develop networks with ethnic Swedes, learn better Swedish and gain a higher status'. In inner-city schools in particular, this de-segregation of the school system applies to socio-economic groups as well as ethnic groups: 'inner-city pupils get a school characterized by socio-economic and ethnic diversity, a heterogeneous environment that better reflects today's Swedish society. Public inner-city schools, as a result of the reform, have become less segregated.' On the other hand, Kallstenius has found that this has created some challenges in the way different groups within schools interact. Furthermore, the move of some of the more driven pupils away from suburbs with a high concentration of ethnic minorities may be disadvantageous for some of the students left in the local schools.

Parents who chose independent schools, in particular, did so because, in their opinion, their children 'get a "better" education, with a higher standard compared with public schools'. They 'feel more trust in the chosen school's capacity to offer a good social and learning climate'. The schools 'share more closely the values of the family' and 'the free [independent] schools are often smaller which gives the environment a more personal touch'. Overall 'the schools are pervaded with a higher degree of ambition and engagement since all parents, and pupils, have made an active choice to be there.'

Kallstenius suggests that the next challenge to address is the new divide between informed and the uninformed families. The system now formally offers the same choices to everyone regardless of ethnic or socio-economic group thus delivering equality of *opportunity* if not quite equality of *outcome*, yet. The system favours the driven individual and prudent family, regardless of their economic situation, which will hopefully offer an incentive for more people to imitate those that have already made a school choice: 'On the level of the individual, there are many, irrespective of ethnic and socio-economic background, who benefit from the free school choice. By making an active choice they strive to increase their chances of a successful education and future working career.'

Conclusion

We have seen that the evidence seems to suggest that systematic school reforms (namely Sweden's universal voucher scheme) that integrate parental choice at a fundamental level of resource distribution can turn out to be the most successful initiative and actually play a part in solving problems of segregation as well as improving standards generally. The way the evidence has been presented in the Government's report, however, gives the impression that offering parents more choice comes with tremendous risks – witness the prudent statement made in the introduction of the Strategy Unit's report:

“The most important conclusion drawn from the international evidence on school reform, and particularly reforms to extend parental choice, is the importance of getting the detailed system design conditions right... Under the right conditions, extending parental choice can raise education.”²⁹

This is only correct in so far as a system designed to offer choice must imitate market conditions as closely as possible. Yet the implications and recommendations drawn from that conclusion have managed to justify the opposite. A policy initiative that was intended to increase school choice was blunted until the potential reform has turned into more of the same.

Notes

¹ http://findoutmore.dfes.gov.uk/2006/09/trust_schools.html

² See the ‘myth-busting’ summary that emphasises how there is barely any difference between trust schools, apparently designed to placate an unnamed sceptic of the idea of giving schools more independence: http://findoutmore.dfes.gov.uk/files/trust_schools_summary_bullets1.doc

³ Education and Inspections Bill (2006), section 20(2)

⁴ Education and Inspections Bill (2006), section 20(3)

⁵ Education and Inspections Bill (2006), section 32(23B)

⁶ Education and Inspections Bill (2006), section 37(1)

⁷ The Government's Response to the House of Commons Education and Skills Committee Report: The Schools White Paper: Higher Standards, Better Schools for All, *Department for Education and Skills*, p21 and enacted in the Education and Inspection Bill itself under Section 38(4)

⁸ Education and Inspections Bill (2006), Section 32(3)

⁹ Education and Inspections Bill (2006), Sections 60-62

¹⁰ School Reform: A survey of Recent International Experience (2006), *Prime Minister's Strategy Unit with the Department for Education and Skills*

¹¹ The Government's Response to the House of Commons Education and Skills Committee Report: The Schools White Paper: Higher Standards, Better Schools for All, *Department for Education and Skills*, p5

¹² Hoxby, C., Press release from Program on Education Policy and Governance, Harvard University, December 14th 2004

http://www.edreform.com/upload/HoxbyPR_12_14.pdf

¹³ Braun, H., Jenkins F., & Grigg W. (2006), A Closer Look at Charter Schools Using Hierarchical Linear Modeling, *Institute of Education Sciences* (Department of Education)

<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/studies/2006460.pdf>

¹⁴ Schemo, D. J., ‘Study of Test Scores Finds Charter Schools Lagging’, *New York Times*, 23/08/06 <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/23/education/23charter.html?ex=1313985600&en=da3cac0396a1eac7&ei=5088&partner=rssnyt&emc=rss>

¹⁵ A Closer Look at Charter Schools Using Hierarchical Linear Modeling, p v

¹⁶ *ibid*

¹⁷ <http://www.edreform.com/index.cfm?fuseAction=document&documentID=2459§ionID=34&NEWSYEAR=2006>

¹⁸ Hoxby C. (2005), ‘Do Charter Schools Help Their Students?’, *Manhattan Institute*, http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cb_38.htm

¹⁹ Solmon, L. C., 'Comparison of Traditional Public Schools and Charter Schools on Retention, School Switching, and Achievement Growth', *Goldwater Institute*, 15/03/2006, executive summary <http://goldwater.design44.com/aboutus/articleview.aspx?id=431>

²⁰ Lander M, 'School Choice, Kiwi-style', *Frontier Centre for Public Policy* 01/10/2001 http://www.fcpp.org/main/publication_detail.php?PubID=176

²¹ *ibid*

²² Kerr, R, 'School Choice Lifts Underachieving students', *Otago Daily Times*, 06/10/2006 <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/BU0610/S00102.htm>

²³ School Choice, Kiwi-style

²⁴ Sandstrom, M. (2006), 'School Choice Reforms from Sweden' in James Stanfield (ed) *The Right to Choose – Yes, Prime Minister*, *Adam Smith Institute*, London, p11

²⁵ *Ibid*, p10

²⁶ Thullberg P., Wahlstrom K. (2006), *Schools Like Any Other? – Independent Schools as part of the system 1991-2004*, *Swedish National Agency for Education*, www.solverket.se, p17

²⁷ *Ibid*

²⁸ The following extracts are taken from correspondence with Jenny Kallstenius, based on her own research that remains in progress

²⁹ *School Reform: A survey of Recent International Experience* (2006), p4