

Privatizing schools: **democratic choice or market demand?**

by Erika Shaker

Introduction

"The school choice movement is best understood as a political force rather than a strategy for education reform." (Canadian Teachers' Federation 2, "Behind the Charter School Myths")

*"The emphasis on education for itself or on education for good members of a community, without a large emphasis on preparation for future work, are [sic] no longer appropriate. In other words, **the idea that work is only an instrumental part of one's life is no longer appropriate.** Such a dichotomic view on education and work cannot be justified in a world where economic development is emphasized." (APEC 1997 Policy Paper on Education, quoted by Heather-jane Robertson 8-9, "Teaching Students to Think Scorned as Non-Productive")*

It is a mistake to assume that only one sector of society is contributing to the growing education industry—although it is clear that the private sector stands to benefit the most financially. Right-wing ideologues, free-market promoters, religious-based groups, grassroots community organizations, concerned parents, and the local business community have all been cited as proponents of education "restructuring."

To reflect the wide variety of seemingly unconnected groups—all, in isolation, calling for the dismantling of public education—school reform has been renamed, among other things, school "choice," or "separation of school and state." Of course, these are not simply isolated complaints about public education, or calls for reforming the school system; all are components of a well-planned assault on our social programs in general, and public education in particular.

It is significant that these attacks on our public institutions come at a time of economic crisis—when in fact we need our public institutions more than ever to cope with growing unemployment and poverty. This is borne out of the difference between the "hallucination" and the reality of free-market capitalism, and the state's need to disguise its relationship with capital "through a position of benign neutrality."

When capitalism fails—or, in times of economic crisis, as we are now experiencing—the state is in the position of having to defend the free market as natural and fair by reproducing industry-based arguments calling for the dismantling of public programs as the true source of "inefficiency."

"It is possible to argue that the current move towards school decentralization arises from the state's inability convincingly to present public education as a means of promoting a more equitable society and redistributing real opportunities." (Whitty et al 45)

This perceived inability coincides with the free market's campaign of self-promotion to establish itself as the true provider of equity and opportunity in the "objective" realm of capital, and to provide so-called objective "proof" of public sector failure.

This system does not address the inherent inconsistencies of capitalism—the fact that, carried to its logical extreme, capitalism will always *require* a "reserve army" of unemployed willing to work for less, without any guaranteed rights. Rather, the *means* of addressing these inconsistencies (public institutions) becomes the target of free market proponents, who require reinforcement of free market ideology, not exposure of its contradictions.

"Through explaining economic decline and enduring poverty in terms of failure within the state's infrastructure, attention is deflected away from the essential injustices and contradictions of laissez-faire capitalism. The management of the public sector is called into question and the demands for reform prevail. The generation of policy alone becomes part of the solution.

"As Apple argues, governments 'must be seen to be doing something...Reforming education is not only widely acceptable and relatively unthreatening, but just as crucially,

Public schools are portrayed as inferior to private ones

its success or failure will not be obvious in the short term.' But, whereas in the past the attempts to restore legitimacy may have involved increasing bureaucratization and greater 'expert' intervention, these processes are now seen as the process rather than the solution. Bureaucratic control of education, it is suggested, stifles responsivity to the needs of business and industry." (Whitty et al 44-45)

The "crisis" in education is one with which we are increasingly familiar—so familiar, in fact, that proof of such a crisis is no longer necessary because it has become naturalized. We have all heard the catch-phrases: Public is inferior, private is superior. Public education, a *de facto* monopoly, limits choice and is rife with corruption. Private companies, on the other hand, have none of these problems simply by virtue of the fact that competition *by its very nature* eliminates inefficiency, dissatisfaction, and poor treatment of workers.

The litany is familiar—so familiar, that it is repeated as fact, ignoring reams of evidence to the contrary. Consider the following quote by a senior fellow of a right-wing think tank which lays sweeping charges against the entire system of public education while offering no evidence for such totalistic claims:

*"In the market economy at large, the private sector sets the pace in innovation, uses of technology, productivity increases, and customer satisfaction. Monopolies—government monopolies in particular—lag far behind. Slow to innovate and indifferent to issues of productivity and efficiency, monopolies frequently treat their workers and customers with contempt. Sound familiar? These problems plague far too many public schools, both K-12 and post-secondary." (Dennis Doyle, Hudson Institute, quoted in **EIR** 2, Aug. 1998)*

The article goes on to encourage private schools not to follow in the "inferior" steps of their public school counterparts: the secret is to use the tools for which the private sector can apparently take credit—strategic use of data through technology and standards. This, of course, translates into yet another argument for business-developed standards in education.

The reasons for and manifestations of this attack on our system of public education will be examined in greater detail throughout this report, but are clearly summarized in the following quote:

*"As more folks in the public understand why we need schools to improve, it potentially helps the marketplace in which [education] companies are involved." (Susan Traiman, Director of Education Initiative, BRT, "CEOs on Education Policy." **EIR** 3, Aug. 1998)*

In other words, all that is needed to justify the need to decentralize and privatize public education is plenty of sustained criticism of the current system. And what sector is best equipped to explain why schools need to be reformed than the sector that has written and now holds the reformation handbook, as well as the privatization antidote?

The Alliance for the Separation of School and State (a growing movement in the United States which began to make inroads into Ontario last year) is a group which has definite religious overtones, and maintains that a strong public sector is nothing short of unnecessary and unjust government control over individualism. And in exercising this control, the government is really contributing to an increasingly decrepit and immoral society which wages daily battle against the nuclear family, the rights of parents, and the overtaxed employed.

The following quote from **The Education Liberator**, the regular publication from the Alliance for the Separation of School and State, illustrates how the Alliance maintains that public education, like all public institutions (which are only the means by which governments exercise their unjust control over populations), is in fact single-handedly destroying all positive aspects of American society.¹

*"School reformers want schools to improve, but because they base their ideas on false assumptions, they often make matters worse with wrongheaded reforms. For example, they further weaken already sickly American families by: 1) making it easier to outsource parenting even earlier (day care); 2) making it easier not to care for their children after school (longer school day); 3) making it easier to avoid their children in the summer (longer school year); 4) making it easier to avoid feeding their children (school breakfast and lunch); 5) making it easier to accept other welfare programs (school-based clinics and on-campus one-stop welfare services)... The state subsidizes irresponsible parenting and now we are reaping the whirlwind of this irresponsibility and dependence." (Separation of School and State Alliance, **Education Liberator** 3, Feb./Mar. 1997)*

Public schools have broadened their responsibilities to accommodate changing society and family needs, such as double-income families, single-parent households, irregular work schedules, etc., as well as rising rates of poverty which have *nothing* to do with parental "irresponsibility." It is inconceivable that in doing this, public schools should be accused of contributing to and reinforcing poverty and workplace insecurity prevalent in today's society; it is incredibly insensitive to maintain that, in providing food for hungry children, schools are in

Right-wing rhetoric transformed into government policy

fact ensuring their *continual* hunger by removing from “irresponsible” parents the responsibility of finding a job—which may or may not exist or guarantee adequate wages—and putting food on the table.

Education reformers have made great use of the “standards” rhetoric to introduce full-scale reform, but have not stopped there. There is a much more all-encompassing strategy at work, with far-reaching implications—deeply embedded in the language and demands of the marketplace and “world of work.” According to this philosophy, education must be reformed along marketplace ideology, using market-based techniques, to meet the needs of the workplace.

“Setting standards is important, but it is only a first step. Equally important are other related education and worker preparation program reforms, such as implementing performance-based assessments and certifications, incentive systems and professional development. When aligned to support the attainment of standards, many hope that together these efforts will create an effective infrastructure to guide the improvement of all students’ transitions through school and the world of work.” (WestEd Policy Brief #22 “Skills for Tomorrow’s Workforce” Dec. 1995)

The business community has claimed the definitive role in shaping education reform, insisting that the purpose of public education is to serve the needs of the wider community, which is somehow synonymous with the demands of an unfettered economy. This argument has been reinforced by free market “think tanks” like the American Hudson and Cato Institutes, and the Reason and Friedman Foundations, and the Canadian Fraser Institute and the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies. This rhetoric has worked its way, seemingly effortlessly, into government policy, posing as “common sense.” But why would the tactics—or philosophy—of the marketplace be appropriate or even conducive to a system of public education?

The demands of the marketplace are hardly local, or even national. The Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation’s education policy (Canada heads the APEC working group on education) bluntly calls not just for greater interaction between education and business, but demands that education be reformed to reinforce the supremacy of the marketplace. Education must in fact be “disciplined” by a series of standards benchmarks, the teaching of “work ethics,” and development of achievement records which would be provided to employers.

One particularly telling APEC “indicator” is “the tracking

of students pursuing a ‘non-productive’ education.” And, to overcome the chasm between education and the world of work, APEC recommends “maximum business intervention” in the curriculum, dismissing the notion of “learning for the sake of learning,” without sufficient attention to “outcomes,” but, most importantly, implementing as many business-education partnerships as possible. (Robertson 9, *CCPA Monitor*, June 1998)

The goals of the corporate world are nothing less than grandiose, and the implications for public education are nothing short of devastating. Schools must reflect and reinforce the needs of the marketplace, and prepare students for their future roles within it. Anything less runs counter to economic prosperity and political stability—this means purging the curriculum of non-productive courses like the humanities and social sciences, which “have been known to make citizens less apathetic, and workers less compliant.” (Robertson 9, *CCPA Monitor*)

The Cato Institute has promoted an “adoptive” notion of education reform,

complete with a disturbing image of abusive discipline, perhaps in an attempt to naturalize the relationship between business (and business-based reforms) and education. This version of forceful education reform illustrates the inherent power hierarchy in a “collaboration” between education and the market, complete with references to corporeal punishment.

“Through research, advocacy, and political organization, companies can bring about the kind of reform they know is needed in American public education—but only if they remember that adopting schools isn’t enough... The discipline of the marketplace must be applied to education, for the same reason that parents, natural or adoptive, must enforce discipline at home: If you spare the rod, you spoil the child.” (John Hood 12)

There are, of course, denials that the private sector is reforming schools so that they provide training for future workers, thinly disguised as education to pacify those who still believe in the democratic benefits of public schooling. Logically, at least according to those who claim to represent the moderate position, schools need to respond to all sectors of society, including the free market, to provide students with a full education.

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Market-based “choice” hardly a politically-neutral term

tively, certainly, in order to contribute to a well-oiled market society, but they also need employees who can think, read, write, and be good citizens as well as good workers. All that these reforms are *really* doing, at least according to the rhetoric of the corporate leaders, is bringing a balance to schools, and ensuring that the marketplace is represented, and its benefits utilized to make the process of reform as efficient as possible.

“Business has asserted greater influence over public schooling in recent years, citing as motivation its contribution to the tax base and its need to maintain economic competitiveness through well-prepared workers. Some are concerned that an industry-dominated agenda, driven by market considerations, would sacrifice, over time, a well-rounded education. But most, including business leaders, acknowledge that schools must also prepare students to be literate citizens, able to contribute to their communities and make informed decisions as voters.”
(WestEd)

This binary argument mistakenly assumes that these two potential goals of education (as training for future employment, or as teaching the broader duties of responsible citizenship) are somehow at odds, but is it not possible to reconstitute good citizenry, decision-making and community contributions within a market context? When the market alone is allowed to shape the goals, content and direction of education, other consequences attributed to a well-rounded education must all fit within that market context. And in this redefined context, a good citizen must contribute to the workings of the free market by voting responsibly (to reinforce the demands of the marketplace), and contribute to the development and economic well-being of his or her community by continuous and obedient consumption.

Education reforms have largely focused on market demands, and this has been the defining quality of such restructuring, whether it has taken place inside or outside the classroom.

Education, Limited (Vol. 1, No. 1) offered data showing the vast financial scope of the education industry in North America, and specifically in Canada—US\$700 billion and US\$60 billion, respectively. This report will explore the variety of education reforms, and how they directly contribute to restructuring education along free market ideology, both in the type of schools created and in the contracting-out of various educational and educational support services.

Choice

“Private companies are capitalizing on the education reform movement, which has encouraged some communities to experiment with private management of public schools or try altogether new approaches such as charter schools.” (Cape Cod Times, Feb. 5 1997)

A less politically-loaded term for education reform is “school choice,” which is a much more benevolent-sounding description of the full-scale dismantling of the public school system. Freedom of choice, specifically freedom of education or school choice, has become an excuse for right-wing groups such as the Fraser Institute to promote the dismantling of public education entirely.²

However, “choice” is hardly a politically-neutral term, although it has been mistakenly defined as responding to individual citizen or local community needs, in the face of a monolithic, faceless entity, which is how public education is increasingly described. But it is important to recognize that this type of “choice” is firmly situated within an individualistic, competitive, free market context; choice means competition between choices which (theoretically) means that the “best” choice (or at least the most popular) will win.

Several education reforms are based on the alleged supremacy of market-based choice as “proof” of democracy at work in local schools. A defining quality of these reforms is the elevation of “local accountability,” where the school guarantees certain outcomes which, if not met, necessitates some sort of payment to “investors” for breaking the “contract.” One post-secondary extension of this concept is a proposal that private degree-granting institutions offer money-back guarantees if, after a certain period of time after graduation, students do not find employment. (Canadian Education Industry Summit, October 1997, Toronto, ON)

It is this sort of ideology, based on free market competition and response to consumer demand, that is behind what can be loosely termed “contract schools.” (Charter schools are one type of this institution.) Couched in the language of community interest, democracy, local involvement and freedom, contract schools claim that opening up education to market forces will ensure improved choice and quality of schools, which will encourage family involvement, thus contributing to stronger communities.

“The contract school idea seeks to restore the partnership between schools and families that has become badly

Public education not a competitive model, so it's rejected

strained during a period of regulatory excess. It recognizes the public interest in schooling, in ensuring that students learn basic skills, prepare for responsible lives as earners and citizens, and understand basic democratic values. It recognizes the family interest in schooling by allowing families to choose among schools that take different approaches to education. Finally, it gives real meaning to the state's commitment to high standards of teaching and learning by giving schools both the freedom and incentive to improve." (Paul Hill, Lawrence Pierce, James Guthrie, "Public School Contracting." **IRPP Special, Policy Options** 57, July/Aug. 1998)

The notion that the government's commitment to education is proven by abdicating responsibility is of course ludicrous. It implies that true justice is only achieved through market forces, and denies both power imbalances in society and the role of the government to ensure equality of access for all Canadians regardless of income.³ However, the education reform lobby has been quite persistent in conflating democratic freedom with rampant capitalism in order to justify economic-based applications of education; it has also managed to establish a hierarchy of choice whereby variety within a public education system is simply not on par with market-based competitive choice between schools (products).

One clear example of choice within the public system is seen in alternative schools. These schools have the same objectives, accountability and standards and receive the same funding as public schools; they do, however, have a different philosophy, teaching methods and learning environment, allowing them to respond to a variety of student needs. Parental involvement is also a required part of the school philosophy and structure. And these alternative schools have received both support and endorsement from a variety of organizations (government and community), as well as high academic results comparable to those of regular public schools.⁴ It is ironic that these very choices are ignored by critics of public education—though education philosophy and parental involvement, for example, are used as arguments *in favour of* charter schools and their version of "educational choice."

However, as funding is reduced, and as school boards are forced to close schools (again creating a competitive environment where communities are pitted against one another in the fight for the survival of their local schools), any of these choices in public education will come increasingly under attack—and alternative schools become an easy target for elimination.

This sort of "equity"—that, "if we are all homogenized, our

uniformity will bring about justice for everyone," is the means by which choice in public education is abolished, thus fuelling the education reform arguments that public schools offer a one-size-fits-all approach to learning. And it is these choices *within* public education that provide us with a just, equitable system, accommodating the rich variety and different needs of entire communities. "Choice will enable everyone's needs to be met equitably. Uniformity will only cram us into a stultifying and intolerable sameness. Choice will ensure that we can secure mutual respect—the pillar of community and equity, and an imperative for any working relationship that we would establish with the board and...fellow schools."⁵

So, although public education already provides a range of choices, attempting to accommodate all students within a broader, universal system, its right-wing critics still argue that, because it is not based on a competitive model, it is an inferior, state-run monopoly where the choices represented within it are invalid.

"Socialism (government ownership and administration of the means of production of goods and services) is immune to consumer desires, so it produces low quality, sparse quantity, high costs, and often unwanted goods and services. Government schools are socialism. Socialism cannot be improved. It must be replaced. Separation [of school and state] is the peaceful and necessary solution to the ills of socialism in government schools." (**Education Liberator** 2, Feb./Mar. 1997)

Of course, the entire social system rests on a communal decision to provide for the community—this is the most powerful and fundamental choice and responsibility of citizenship.

Much of the anti-public school rhetoric, as reflected in the previous quote, is rampantly in opposition to anything that resembles socialism or communitarianism. Even the role that public institutions play in enforcing equity in society is depicted as evidence of the powerful state insulting the individual human spirit.

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World Bank keeps urging the decentralization of education

*“Perhaps some parents could be trusted without the state, but what about those who are not so concerned? And what about those who are too poor? But to respond to the needs of a disadvantaged minority does not require wholesale state intervention for everyone. Just because there are some parents who are too poor to feed and clothe their children adequately does not mean that the state has to intervene to feed and clothe all children! Nor do all children have to attend state kitchens just because a small minority neglects their children.” (James Tooley “Is for-profit education an oxymoron? The case of education action zones in the UK.” *IRPP Social Policy Options* 41, July-Aug. 1998)*

“World Bank research has shown that, in addition to further polarizing the quality of education along economic lines, decentralization directly affects the ability of poor students to attend school at all.”

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Such insensitivity—that a parent’s inability to feed or clothe a child is proof of neglect—only serves to further the misconception that equality of access to economic security—and all that entails—is a given, or that poverty is a result of laziness.

It also implies that public education serves only those who cannot afford to pay for private schooling, ignoring the fact that *all* sectors of society are extremely well-served by a full, well-funded, and varied system of public education—both directly and indirectly.

The important role that a national system of education (one that transcends individual or family choice) plays in the shaping of a country’s identity is well-recognized, even by the World Bank⁶, which simultaneously promotes not only decentralization but the privatization of education systems. The irony, of course, is that privatized school chains promoted by the World Bank offer philosophies of education and teaching methods that are particular to that (possibly multinational) corporation, not necessarily to the country where the school is located, potentially compromising the entire notion of a national system of education.

Restructuring of education is by no means confined to Canada, as evidenced by the World Bank’s recently-published series of reports entitled “Decentralization of Education,” which examine various aspects of the free market doctrine applied to education systems. It is somewhat disturbing that, in spite of its wholehearted enthusiasm for decentralization of education, and the increased private sector role in education

delivery—particularly in the Third World—the World Bank recognizes an important caveat, although it is still deemed insufficient to call decentralization into question. Decentralization has been directly linked to the increase of both financial and educational inequity.

“One negative consequence of decentralization has to do with widening performance gaps between students in wealthy and poor areas. Bringing about more equity—both in the form of inputs like money and outputs like higher test scores—is not always recognized as an overt goal of decentralization. Indeed, it should come as no surprise that in many cases decentralization exacerbates existing rich-poor gaps. Local areas with abundant financial and human resources are in a better position than those with fewer resources to make maximum use of decentralized power, and even when there are universal education gains, it is the wealthy schools that are most likely to make the greatest gains.” (World Bank 27, “Politics”)

World Bank research has shown that, in addition to further polarizing the quality of education along economic lines, decentralization (and the ensuing additional costs borne by the individual) directly affects the ability of poor students to attend school at all. It is interesting that “efficiency,” at least within the education system, has appeared to be in direct conflict with equity, contrary to free market rhetoric which aligns competition with efficiency, quality, fairness, and equity of a sort only found in the unfettered marketplace.

*“A considerable body of evidence suggests that **decentralization—especially when it is successful in increasing the efficiency of the educational system—can have the negative side-effect of widening the gap between the quality of education in rich and poor districts...** Decentralization theory holds that decentralization will lead to greater demand for education, especially on the part of those who were previously underserved. In Burkina Faso, however, the shifting of financial responsibility for education to local control increased not only the direct but also the opportunity costs of education and caused many poor students to drop out of school entirely.” (World Bank 28, “Politics”)*

However, in spite of both the amount and importance of this evidence, the World Bank holds fast to its insistence that decentralization is necessary for economic (national and global) progress, and as such remains a policy that must be continued. It appears that the negative effects of decentralization on equity do not hold much importance for the Bank—or per-

Borrow for tuition, go into debt, or let kids go unschooled

haps it remains only a necessary casualty of the demanding global market.⁷

In its commitment to mass decentralization, the World Bank illustrates some of the broader implications for education, and, given the centrality of education in society, explains that other aspects of society may be affected.

“Education reforms may not only require modification or enactment of legislation specific to basic education, but also may affect other laws...[O]ne has to be aware of conflicts that may arise at different levels of the legislation. Common sources of conflict are: 1) general principles of individual rights and freedoms, as well as specific requirements concerning basic education, set out in constitutional acts or human rights charters; and 2) Inconsistencies between the objectives of the decentralization law and other laws, such as labour or tax laws. Various statutes, laws, and decree-laws dealing with the establishment of autonomous bodies, teacher status, taxation, labour relations, and social security that affect different aspects of the primary education sector may also need to be modified as part of the decentralization project.” (World Bank 15-16, “Legal”)

Clearly, these market-based reforms will fundamentally alter much of the legislation which has been implemented to protect individual rights and freedoms—and of which the World Bank is, at least in theory, a strong proponent. However, it appears that these guarantees are secondary to market demands and therefore must accommodate the needs of the economy—not the reverse.

According to the North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA), the World Bank has long pursued a policy of decentralization of public services like education, and actively promoted the proliferation of the free market doctrine. Within this agenda, though research illustrates it is clearly not so, decentralization (verbally disguised as “choice”) promises not only to improve education quality through competition, but to promote equity as parents will be able to individually “choose” the school to which they wish to send their child. Whether they can afford this option is another issue entirely.

Proponents of the free market of education maintain that, because for-profit education deliverers are directly targeting the Third World, their endeavours cannot be financially motivated, in view of the low per-capita income of these countries. And, claim the free marketers, even poor parents will somehow scrape together the tuition fees for their children to attend these new private schools, which are offering education supe-

rior to the chronically underfunded public system. (*EIR* 4, Aug. 1998)

“The [World] Bank favours running education on the model of the free market under the premise that competition will stimulate better-quality schooling. According to neo-liberal pedagogical theory, parents and students can ‘freely’ choose among the different options offered in the educational marketplace: they can foot their children’s tuition if they have the money, they can go into debt, or they can give up altogether on educating their children.” (NACLA 3, Report on the Americas)

It appears, however, that methods are already in place to address—or capitalize on—this potential “problem.” Apparently, lending companies are setting up shop in the Third World to loan parents the tuition money to send their children to private schools, as the public education infrastructure is continually eroded.⁸ (We might want to consider how both the World Bank and free trade agreements like NAFTA, GATT and the proposed MAI contribute to the dismantling of social programs.)

The International Finance Corporation, which was established 42 years ago by the member states of the World Bank to strengthen the private sector in the Third World and thus improve economic growth, has invested in many of these for-profit educational initiatives, predominantly through the use of loans and equity.

There is, of course, a potential problem in that the average GNP of many of these developing countries is \$750 per annum; however, “confronted with the grim choice between a grossly deficient, time-wasting, high-opportunity-cost public school and no schooling at all, even poor parents are willing to pay fees to disciplined private schools.” (*EIR* 4, Aug. 1998).

Because of this “predicament,” private providers have an abundance of opportunities to serve this demand (borne of the underfunding of public infrastructure) to become more economically stable and efficient, according to the World Bank’s definition. To answer the question of tuition affordability, “human capital investment contracts” allow students to “repay” their corporate benefactors with a system resembling an income-contingent payment plan. (*EIR* 4, Aug. 1998)

Standards

“Sharply raising standards while not equalizing resources at dramatically higher levels sets many young people up to fail. Establishing ‘high stakes’ tests for high school graduation legitimizes their failure. Increased reliance on standardized tests, even ‘open-ended’ tests, narrows the

Education, too, must answer to international marketplace

curriculum and encourages rote learning. Increased focus on class 'rank' attacks solidarity among students and reduces education to a game of winners and losers." (Stratman, "Why are public schools under attack?")

*"Standards and technology...are two keys to a new education paradigm. Standards shift the focus from inputs to outputs, and technology makes sophisticated, real-time documentation and reporting possible." (Dennis Doyle, Hudson Institute, quoted in **EIR** 2, Aug. 1998)*

"Standards" is a term which has become virtually synonymous with not only education reform, but choice and improvement; if the education system is decentralized to promote choice—customers are free to select schools on the basis of their

"The insistence that testing, particularly a 'common test,' is not a political tool in itself is naive at best, but more likely a deliberate reinforcement of reform rhetoric."

academic merits and results—we need a system to rank schools in order of quality. And, according to the reform rhetoric, the only way to determine school quality, on an objective, universal scale, is with a standardized system of both tests and curriculum. How else will employers know what kind of workers they're getting upon graduation—especially if education is comprised of techniques,

components and content that are not easy to quantify?

The answer is simple. Education must be reformed, made quantifiable, with easily measured inputs and outputs. And it must be standardized so that every country, every province or state, every district, every school, and every student can be placed in ranking order. The end result of this standardization? We will have greater accountability—to parents, to taxpayers, and, most importantly, to the global workplace. Failing schools, teachers who are not providing their students with an adequate ranking—these can all be identified and either readjusted or replaced. School enrolment, government grants and teacher salaries can reflect this standardized system, this emphasis on school quality, this new, measurable kind of education.

The reasoning behind this reform is clear: all sectors of society must answer to the international marketplace. Education has a particular role to play in this equation. According to the Manufacturing Institute (National Association of Manufacturers),

"ultimately, we need to recognize that the K-12 classroom is the front line in global economic competition. World-class excellence is not possible without standards, and standards are not actionable without tests. Our first priority in K-12 education is to administer a common test that will allow every parent access to information regarding the performance of every other child in the country and in the world... We need to build a fire wall with the tests safely on one side and politics on the other. The tests will be vulnerable to cultural wars and fashion." (Anthony Carnevale, The Manufacturing Institute, "Education and Training for America's Future" 12-13, 1998).

It's clearly no coincidence that, in addition to being the author of this document, Carnevale is VP for public leadership at the Educational Testing Service.

It is an unbelievable assertion that tests can somehow be separated from politics—in fact, the insistence that testing, particularly a "common test," is not a political tool in itself is naive at best, but more likely a deliberate reinforcement of reform rhetoric. In this framework, testing is detached from ideology—it is only the education community, in its battle over pedagogy, that will cloud the purity of measurable education results. But obviously the decision to test is based on a set of expectations—or demands—of education which cannot be divorced from those who determine those expectations and therefore shape not only education, but how education is to be measured.⁹

The political nature of seemingly "apolitical" testing is made abundantly clear in the forward to the same Manufacturing Institute document.

*"There should be a national system of skill standards. Students, educators and employers need a framework for determining what employees need to know and be able to do in order to function effectively in the modern workplace. These **voluntary** standards should be **industry-designed and driven and should provide a common language to enable all parties to better communicate their needs to one another**" (Jasinowski, "Education and Training" forward, emphasis added).*

However, as these standards will be initiated and designed by the business sector, it is clear that the so-called "common language" will really be the language of the workplace; the classroom is reconfigured as the "factory floor," students are either "future workers," "clients" or "products" and, depending on which corporate manual is referred to, either parents or the economy are the "consumers" of the educational system.¹⁰

Teachers have borne the brunt of right-wing “restructuring”

This technique is extremely effective in shaping the way the public thinks of itself, and of less quantifiable concepts like education. For example, “citizen” does not have either the same meaning or the same connotation as “consumer”—one term is situated very much within the marketplace and marketplace rhetoric, while “citizen” evokes a much broader set of relationships, role(s), responsibilities and images which are entirely absent from “consumer.”

The two terms are not interchangeable. To substitute one for the other also substitutes meanings and associations which alter the perception of the term in question. The language of the factory is very different from the language of the classroom, and to develop a “common language” to make for “easier comprehension” brings with it enormous ramifications.

According to the NACLA, since the adoption of neoliberal policies, many countries have seen their national exam results decline. This is not surprising, since these policies have almost invariably required a reduction of funds for public education, as well as for other social institutions which also affect schooling. Academic achievement is strongly linked to economic stability.

To remedy this “crisis” in education, the World Bank has encouraged a standardization of mandatory curricula in all schools—public and private—and programs to evaluate the performance of teachers and students. The NACLA maintains that, “with these instruments, the neoliberal model is complete: the state pulls out of education entirely and the market takes its place; after relaxing economic controls, ideological controls are strengthened. Market liberalism meets ideological conservatism.” (NACLA 5, “Report on the Americas”)

Teachers are regularly—and deliberately—vilified and victimized in the course of decentralizing and restructuring education—for several reasons. Education restructuring is increasingly undertaken according to market dictates, which include the wholesale dismantling of social systems, particularly unions. In the rush to profit from education, unions—and the wages, benefits and job security they negotiate—run directly counter to the private agenda. It is for this reason that—

“the type of decentralization that has been carried out under the tutelage of the World Bank has dispersed teachers’ demands, eliminated collective bargaining agreements, and de-linked union activism and politics. Teachers’ unions have always worked in defense of democratic educational principles and national public education systems. Today, they have moved to the forefront of opposition to the education reforms tailored by the World Bank because they believe the very survival of the teaching pro-

fession and the public education system are at stake.”
(NACLA 6, Report)

We would do well to note the similarities between this situation in the Third World and recent events in Canada, where teachers have borne the brunt of restructuring, the private sector’s dismissal and disapproval of public education, and the implementation of rigorous, corporate-initiated standards to determine—and police—the quality of teachers, students, and the entire system of education. As summarized by David Stratman, (Editor, *New Democracy*):

“In the past two decades, corporations have adopted new management techniques designed to undermine worker solidarity and integrate

workers more thoroughly into the company machine. Known variously as ‘continuous improvement’ or ‘management by stress’...the technique consists essentially of dividing the workforce into competing ‘teams’ and ‘stressing’ the production

system by imposing higher and higher production quotas. “As workers work faster and faster to meet the quotas, the company achieves several key goals: production is increased; jobs are eliminated; ‘weak links’ in the system break down and are replaced...Corporate-led education reforms use similar strategies...The purpose is the same as ‘continuous improvement’ in a factory: raise the anxiety level and keep students and teachers running so fast to meet the goals set by the system that they have no time to think about their own goals for education or for their lives.” (David Stratman, “You’ll never be good enough: schooling and social control”)

Grade 3 province-wide testing in Ontario illustrated this rising anxiety level.¹¹

Rampant testing as “proof” of academic achievement and school quality has begun to change the nature of public education from a co-operative to a competitive basis. Students will compete with one another for educational ranking, as sharing and collaboration becomes a liability. Teachers will compete with other teachers for class averages, as this will become the mark of quality instruction. Schools will compete with schools for students, communities with communities, and provinces with provinces for test scores.

“The language of the factory is very different from the language of the classroom, and to develop a ‘common language’ to make for ‘easier comprehension’ brings with it enormous ramifications.”

Charter schools manipulate terms like “choice” and “equity”

I recently spoke with one outraged parent who was informed by her school that her hearing-impaired son was not allowed to take a provincial test because of concerns that he would pull down the class average.¹² This is the sort of behaviour that such competitive ideology will encourage—students with “special needs” (or perhaps just *different* needs) will be considered liabilities in the quest for academic “excellence.” And we can expect such actions only to increase if school scores are tied to funding, programs, or teacher pay (a suggestion made by the World Bank).¹³

Charter Schools

“Charter schools may not be the silver bullet that slays the school-monopoly beast. But before market-oriented education can win in the political arena, it has to appear sufficiently non-threatening to PTA members, the Rotary Club, and the president of the Chamber of Commerce. The victory must be won culturally. Changing the culture takes time.” (Henderson 9)

Of all methods of education restructuring and privatization, possibly the most insidious are those which maintain the veneer of a public institution while adopting private sector techniques, philosophies, or providers. Charter schools are particularly problematic institutions because they remain “publicly funded” although they are deeply entrenched in an education market ideology, incorporating educational and financial Darwinism with grassroots local (decentralized) appeal. Popular in over half of the States, England and New Zealand, among other countries, the charter movement has notably been embraced in Canada by the province of Alberta.

Charter schools in Alberta receive per-capita student funding from the Ministry of Education, but are not provided with a school building, transportation, or start-up fees. Tuition may not be charged, although user fees are permitted as a method of fund-raising. The charter is applied for by a group of citizens and, once it is accepted by the Ministry, the school must be accessible to all students—although, if the school exceeds capacity, it may “select students in accordance with the selection outlined in its charter.” (Dobbin 27, “Charting”)

The school must be non-profit, or run by non-profit groups. Curriculum, as well as the governing structure of the school, must be provincially accepted. And, while teachers must hold a valid provincial teaching certificate, they are not active members of the Alberta Teachers’ Association.

Although to date Alberta is the only province with charter schools in operation, the charter school movement is active

across the country. In B.C., charter school supporters are linked to right-wing corporate-funded think tanks and foundations. The charter school lobby includes such prominent anti-union groups as the Teachers for Excellence (TFE)¹⁴, the Donner Foundation, the National Citizens’ Coalition, the Fraser Institute, and the Society for Advancing Educational Research (SAER).¹⁵ There are also strong ties to groups like the Quality Education Network and the Coalition for Education Reform (both Ontario-based).

The charter school movement has been strategically developed to focus on “choice” and community-based needs in education. Because charters are developed by a small group of like-minded individuals, the schools should, logically, provide those “consumers” with their own specific educational needs. According to charter supporters, public education provides a single model of learning which is imposed on all children, and charters provide community-or-learning-philosophy-responsive-choice. But,

*“ironically, given the importance of ‘choice’ in charter philosophy, it is precisely the same choices available in schools today—in terms of a broad, humanistic curriculum, child-centred teaching methods, and integration into the community through outreach programs—that are the indirect target of charter advocates.” (Dobbin 21, **Canadian Forum**)*

And often the attacks are not indirect at all. The back-to-basics philosophy is strong among charter school advocates, who resent the emphasis on “useless” courses in today’s schools, attempts to respond to socioeconomic or cultural variety in communities, or classes which might teach something that is difficult to measure on accountability tests (Coalition for Education Reform 76-77, **Could do Better**).

According to the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies (AIMS), the fact that charter schools are not “bound” by educational methods and philosophies, but can teach the curriculum in a manner agreeable to those who write the charter (whatever that may be), is further proof of the inherently democratic superiority of charter schools.¹⁶

Charter advocates bemoan the apparent inability or refusal of the public system to “prove” its educational efficiency and effectiveness in terms of numbers or universal standards, and claim that, since a school will lose its charter if it does not uphold its end of the educational bargain, this is the only *truly* democratic type of school.

“Public control is maintained through the power to cancel the charter. So charter schools are more accountable than others. They far more truly satisfy the principle of equity, which is not served by merely providing uniform-

Charter school savings at expense of teachers' pay, morale

ity to all students regardless of needs or preferences.” (AIMS)

The manipulation of concepts like “choice” and accountability—although it seems the only type of choices that are acceptable are those within the competitive, free market model—has capitalized on the standards debate, paving the way for education testing companies. And this is significant as the charter school debate, and other so-called education choice indicators,¹⁷ gathers momentum.

“As the market ethos has taken hold, parents and politicians have increasingly demanded school accountability, and by that they mean better test results. Schools are devoting more time teaching to the test, creating curriculum that prepares kids for the tests. And this will intensify as charters spread. Now charters are making hay off parent concerns about test results in big cities.” (Winerip 86)

Clearly, the relationship between the charter lobby, private providers and standardized testing is a close-knit one.

In light of the complaint about the non-uniformity (at least in the use of standards) of public education, it is ironic that the Alberta charter school handbook acknowledges the impossibility of outside forces assessing *charter school* student achievement.

“Since charter schools will vary across the province, it is unrealistic to expect the local school board or the Minister to structure an appropriate student assessment model to fit all charter schools. Therefore, the charter organizers are responsible for designing a student assessment model that will assess accurately how well students are achieving learning expectations.” (Alberta Education 12, “Charter School Handbook,” Feb. 1996)

Apparently, it is perfectly acceptable for charter schools to claim for their own the very aspects they condemn in the public system—the right not to be constrained by a narrowly defined model of student achievement defined by an outside body.

Because charter schools are only eligible for per-capita grants (although some schools have received additional provincial funding), there is a need for parents to raise money—or services in kind—to make up the financial shortfall. And the community-based, decentralized nature of charter schools, combined with the need for money, creates an optimal situation for the growing number of companies capitalizing on the “choice” movement in education.

According to the *Education Industry Report*, “Charters enable private providers to establish a record of success in contracting” (*EIR* 3, Sept. 1997), which is the primary reason why the business community is so supportive of the charter movement.

A detailed and thorough analysis of charter schools in the United States has shown that the results have been less than optimal. According to a study by the state of Minnesota, the promise of great savings was only achieved—if at all—at great cost to teacher morale, stress, and educational standards. In fact,

*“in order to reduce class size and afford other reforms, the schools relied on experienced teachers to accept low salaries and take on administrative responsibilities. Other schools resorted to hiring ‘parent-instructors’ with no teaching credentials whatsoever. In a study of 110 charter schools, just 58 stated that all their staff were certified.” (Dobbin 20, *Canadian Forum*)*

Of course, some states have more “progressive” charter laws than others. The Reason Foundation, an ultra-right-wing think tank (“Free Minds and Free Markets!”), has produced several publications promoting the privatization of all public institutions, and condemning government involvement as corrupt and insulting to the individual, and is a vocal proponent of for-profit education.

The Foundation salutes Arizona as a particularly “progressive” state where charter schools are concerned. We would do well to understand the lengths to which the school choice movement has the potential to go, and the implications for both public education and teacher security.

“Charter schools started operating in the Grand Canyon State last academic year (1995-96). There is no limit on how many schools can locate in a school district. Any government body, private organization, or individual can apply for a charter; the schools have a blanket waiver from most state regulations; charter school teachers don’t have to be certified; and the application for a charter takes up only one page...Arizona easily has the

“A detailed and thorough analysis of charter schools in the United States has shown that the results have been less than optimal...the promise of great savings was only achieved—if at all—at great cost to teacher morale, stress, and educational standards.”

Privatization can lead to hiring non-certified “teachers”

most dynamic charter school system.” (Henderson 8)

Evidently, “dynamic” education philosophies require as little deliberation as possible; “dynamic” teachers are uncertified (not coincidentally, this usually means lower pay, thus increasing corporate profits, and non-unionized, which means no consolidated teacher action); and “dynamic” schools can be started by anyone, for any reason and with any justification. The more schools—staffed with non-certified teachers selected by virtually any individual or group with an interest in promoting a certain view of the world free from government regulations maintaining any sort of human rights, democratic or equality standards—the more “dynamic” the district.

Contracting Out

“...[W]hen school boards contract out the management of their schools to private companies, they are in fact undermining the community’s sense of responsibility for its public school. Education is not an isolated exercise and the community as a whole is responsible for the healthy development of its children. Contracting out school management is contracting out education responsibility.” (OSSTF 30, “Contracting Education”)

While much of contracting-out efforts have been focused arguably “outside” of the classroom, such as in the areas of maintenance, we are beginning to see private companies moving into the development of curriculum. This move was heralded by the Ontario Ministry’s decision to open up the bidding process on curriculum creation to the private sector (MEXX). However, with increasing emphasis on technology in education, and with the proliferation of the Internet as a teaching tool—both as an instructor and as curriculum provider—the privatization of curricula and educational content must be closely examined.

The private sector has already been active in the creation of teaching units used to supplement the education process, and we have seen how corporate perspectives have been thinly disguised as classroom lessons. (See *Education, Limited* Vol. 1, No. 2.)

Teachers in private practice is a growing trend in the United States, and at the forefront of the education industry lobby. The Association of Educators in Private Practice (AEPP) is a professional organization of teachers who have declared themselves to be entrepreneurs, contracting themselves out to schools who need their services.

These teachers, of course, are not eligible for the benefits received by unionized teachers, and can therefore low-bid for

contracts. In this manner, the AEPP may be likened to the “Right to Work” movement which is also a direct free-market blow to organized labour; union benefits are enjoyed by non-unionized “professionals” until union stability is eroded through lack of membership and business-friendly legislation. The Ministry’s decision to allow non-certified “experts” to assist teachers in Ontario classrooms, as well as the ability of charter schools to employ non-unionized, non-certified instructors, is directly connected to initiatives like the AEPP.

The World Bank has examined how decentralization will necessitate changing national legislation to accommodate the demands of the free market, underscoring the notion that the laws of the land are inferior to those of the marketplace. (See previous section in this report.) In addition, the Bank suggests that labour laws, particularly those associated with teachers and the teaching profession, will have to be altered to pave the way for decentralization.

“Decentralization legislation may also need to include changes in statutes or laws regulating the status of teachers as civil servants and their labour rights. Changes in teachers’ status may also modify their degree of academic freedom...Another key issue is that of the labour rights of teachers. For example, if a civil service statute grants teachers the right to organize a union, to be recognized as the exclusive representatives of employees, to negotiate labour agreements, and to strike, those rights may be jeopardized by decentralization efforts that may change the status of teachers as civil servants. In Chicago, the state legislature simply withdrew the right of teachers to strike for three years after the passage of the 1995 reform statute.” (World Bank 17, “Legal”)

Decentralization of education clearly has overwhelming repercussions for many aspects of public education in which we as Canadians take great pride, as well as the employment security and civil rights of teachers. However, even this is not enough to stall the inevitable progress of the market—or the World Bank’s endorsement and support of it.

KPMG has long been active in the education reform movement, actively calling for increased use of standards and testing to improve accountability, and for more ties to the world of work. In 1996, KPMG wrote the section on the private financing of schools for the Ontario government’s document entitled “Analysis of Capital Funding for School Facilities.”

These facts cannot be ignored when considering the fact that KPMG intends to play a much more active role in the crea-

Claim of private sector provider superiority proved false

tion of curriculum. And what might be the emphasis of KPMG's curricula, particularly since bids were submitted for all areas of study?

Technology plays a significant role in the privatization of education, specifically in the area of curriculum production. The quality of an education system is increasingly determined by the ratio of computers to children, and the skill or relevance of a teacher by their degree of "computer literacy." Although education has always been receptive and responsive to social development, the role of technology—and computers in particular—is significant because of the degree to which the entire process of education is being altered: not just to accommodate but to promote and enforce the use of computers in the classroom.

This must be considered in conjunction with the fact that technology is increasingly a curriculum provider, and in some cases a surrogate instructor. And, considering the dominance of information technology corporations and their role in curriculum production, as well as the international nature of information on the internet, the impact of technology (and the money behind it) on education is multifaceted.

"As Schrage (1990) wrote of the current 'Nintendo' mentality in education, which has much to do with technology educators' courtships with corporate MATEs: The question isn't what technologies do we need to best educate our children in the schools? It is what is the real mission of the schools?" (Petrina, "Editorial: Under the corporate thumb: troubles with our MATE [modular approach to technology education] Stephen Petrina, Journal of Technology Education, vol. 5 no. 1 Fall 1993)

According to the well-heeled IT lobby, the mission is to promote the rapid development of technologies, not students.¹⁸ And this means that public education is responsible not to the public, or to the community, but to technology—and the money behind it.

It is a sobering experience to read earlier work which passionately cautions against the use of pre-packaged, bought-and-sold curricula. The following quotation explains how increasing emphasis on regulations, (the de-professionalization of teachers) led to the use of pre-packaged curricula, which cannot be considered in isolation of the groups which have created these lessons.

"Blind following of dictates, regardless of their sources, caused many teachers to buy ready-made units of work. The result was a mail-order business with the buyer having no idea as to the purpose and function of his [sic] pur-

chases in relation to his particular group. It was just as easy to order a unit...as it is to order a can of peas or a can of pineapple by a number which indicates content. The 'canned unit' robbed the teacher and the pupils of the fun and intellectual stimulation which comes from real discovery and shared enterprises...

Not only has the sale of canned 'units' been lucrative, but some groups have controlled their content as well. Topics which might lead children to question certain political and economic practices prevalent

in the adult world of today have been omitted: 'unfairness to workers,' 'amassing fortunes at others' expense,' 'selling goods known to be inferior by taking advantage of others' ignorance,' 'extensive advertising of goods calling attention to certain supposed good qualities to obscure the harmful ones,' 'refusal to admit historical data that might lead children to question certain patriotic traditions,' 'consideration of minority groups with rights and privileges based not upon numbers or forces but upon the

right of every individual to order his own life within the social structure.' The reasons for omissions are too obvious to need elaboration." (Streitz, Ruth, "An evaluation of 'units of work.'" Childhood Education, 15 (6), 1939, 258-9, quoted in Petrina)

Clearly, the hand that shapes the curriculum will bring with it a set of perspectives and philosophies that cannot be ignored when determining what is being taught—and what is being omitted. The profit motive is a powerful force, and carries with it an ideology that is hardly apolitical; to learn the materials created by this force has clear implications, as Streitz noted nearly 60 years ago.

By differentiating between classroom and non-classroom services and funding, the provincial governments have set the stage for contracting out of educational services, while maintaining the false illusion that children will not be adversely affected because classroom spending has not been cut.

With the passing of legislation like Bill 160 in Ontario, restructuring in Alberta, and similar changes in other provinces

"According to the well-heeled IT lobby, [the goal of education] is to promote the rapid development of technologies, not students. And this means that public education is responsible not to the public, or to the community, but to technology—and the money behind it."

Lease-back schools' profits come from staff, cleaning cuts

(such as school-based budgeting in B.C.), we can be sure of increased contracting-out of non-classroom services as provincial funds to those areas are slashed.

Contracting-out of support services carries with it additional implications for public education. The process of education goes beyond classroom time—it includes extracurricular activities, guidance, and the entire experience surrounding education, both inside and outside the classroom. The relationship between public education and the community is itself a part of the process of education, and by selling off various aspects to the private sector, education is separated from the community it both represents and helps hold together.

Partitioning off and dividing up aspects of the education experience, privatizing some according to educational "importance"—at least, until the public is accustomed to the privatization of the entire system—is a

further method of decentralization, of separating teaching and learning from other educational activities, and of weakening unions by hiring contract workers.

ServiceMaster Limited Partnership, an American company, has 2,000 privatization contracts in education and health care internationally. ServiceMaster of Canada Ltd., the Canadian affiliate, acknowledges that "it purchases services, processes, programs, training

and support services from its American parent. And it has yet to tell the Canadian public how much taxes it pays" (CUPE, "Corporate Cash-In Fact Sheet: ServiceMaster Ltd. Partnership" 9/97).

In addition, when ServiceMaster replaced school cleaning supplies with corporate products, custodians at the Elgin County Board of Education complained of health problems, and after the pesticide 'Lindane' was used by ServiceMaster employees in a Louisiana school, students came home ill, resulting in the school district suing ServiceMaster for approximately \$1 million. ServiceMaster has also been known to pay its employees low wages, and offer minimal benefits and no health insurance or pensions.

Problems with ServiceMaster extended beyond health and pay concerns. In Washington, D.C., a \$14 million janitorial contract with the corporation was cancelled after the school dis-

trict was made aware that the schools' own staff would do a better job for less money. In addition, ServiceMaster was found to have overbilled the District by over \$6.5 million. Halifax school officials are also rethinking negotiations with ServiceMaster after being unimpressed with the corporation's performance.¹⁹

Much of the rationale for privatizing and contracting out services rests on the claim that the services rendered by the private sector are superior to those of the public sector because of market-based competition and accountability to the customer. In this framework, choice of private providers somehow produces "superior" results, for a lower price, than paying workers an adequate wage with benefits and job security, ensuring that they build a relationship with the schools because they are more likely to stay in a job that treats them with dignity.

However, this claim of private service provider superiority was proved to be inaccurate in a review conducted first by the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), and then reinforced in a more extensive study by the Calgary Board of Education. (Calgary Board of Education Report to the Superintendents' Team, Re: Assessment of Contract Cleaning Services.)²⁰

Lease-Back Schools

"Corporate partners are only involved in lease-back schools to make a profit. They will always look for ways to cut costs, in order to ensure the highest possible return on their investment." (CUPE 26, "Why Communities")

Another method of public/private collaboration in the area of education reform is called "lease-back schools," which is increasingly popular in the Maritimes and has also been considered by the Toronto Metropolitan School Board.¹ A private corporation owns the school property—in some cases the private company is responsible for the actual construction of the school—and provides the maintenance of the facilities. The school board (or, where there are no boards, the corresponding body) leases the building from the private company, and are *de facto* tenants. At the completion of the long-term lease, the school has the option of being purchased by the board, which then assumes the responsibilities of maintaining and managing the now well-used building.

In July 1998, the Auditor General of Nova Scotia released a report which concluded that the lease arrangement between O'Connell Drive Elementary School and the corporate partners was a capital lease, not an operating lease, because the major-

"The relationship between public education and the community is itself a part of the process of education, and by selling off various aspects to the private sector, education is separated from the community it both represents and helps hold together."

Charter schools reduce costs by reducing work, pay standards

ity of risk resided with the province. While “the risks related to capital improvements, operating costs, and technology refreshments all remain with the province...[while] the private sector will have recovered more than 88% of its investment in the property at the end of the lease, [so] the residual value risk is limited.”

In addition, “the financing for the school is at approximately the same rate as the province would have incurred if it had borrowed.” (Press release: O’Connell Drive Elementary School Lease, Auditor General Roy Salmon.) So the argument that P3s (public-private partnerships) save the public money is, in this instance, moot.

There are, of course, other concerns about these types of public-private relationships, especially in how they may be at cross-purposes with public education, as well as the position of the school within the community.

The profit issue in lease-back schools becomes apparent in the private company’s effort to “save” money by cutting costs incurred by the property’s owners. This would include maintenance fees, but could extend to charging fees to rent the building after school hours (when it once again becomes the property of the owner, not the tenant) to other interested parties (no longer provided free to the public for community events, etc.) at the prerogative of the building owner or landlord. Other possible methods of cutting costs would include reducing staff salaries and benefits, as well as routine cleaning frequency or duties.

A variety of other issues need to be considered when analyzing lease-back schools. Can the corporate landlord make structural changes to the building as it sees fit? If an area of the school grounds is not profitable—a teacher’s lounge, for example—or if comparable services can be found in the community (a library or an auditorium), will the private contractor refuse to include one in the blueprints of the school, in order to reduce costs? Will cafeterias become corporate food courts, allowing private landlords to charge rent for McDonald’s or Pizza Pizza to open up shop on school grounds?

These questions all need to be considered when discussing what it means to “profit” from education. It is clear that the public sector’s idea of a school is quite different from that of the private sector, and it is logical that these differences would be reflected in the design of the school itself.

The Canadian Union of Public Employees has done an extremely thorough analysis of lease-back schools, in which the notion of “risk-sharing” is examined. The rhetoric surrounding public/private “partnerships” maintains that both partners

share equally in the rewards *and* risks of these relationships. Proponents of lease-back schools contend that the schools no longer have to extend their responsibilities to school maintenance, but can focus on classroom learning and let the corporation handle the traditional duties of a landlord. The private partner benefits financially from charging rent, but also by “saving money” through free market competition so applauded in the private sector, and frequently cited as proof of the private sector’s superiority over the public sector.

If the relationship fails, both parties must lose—either in property, or in rental fees. But do both parties lose equally—or is this public/private relationship, like so many others in education, no partnership at all because of the inherently unequal balance of power?

“Supporters of public-private partnerships always talk about the benefit of the private sector sharing the

risks involved with the project with its public partner. In the case of a school, however, it will always be the Board of Education and/or provincial government that carries the risk in the end. If the private partner goes bankrupt, or breaks its contract, or gets sold out by its parent company, the public will not allow the Board or province to sit by while the school closes its doors.” (CUPE 33)

Clearly, the public sector carries a greater risk in that, regardless of the state of the business relationship between landlord and tenant, the government is still responsible for the education, care and safety of the students. While the private company is bound by the profit motive and can alter or end its business arrangement on those terms, public institutions are answerable to something *beyond* making a profit—social well-being.

CUPE addresses this issue of risk-sharing in lease-back schools, explaining that:

“The only way the private sector could carry a significant share of the risk involved in running a school is if it was completely responsible for the education delivered there, for example, in the case of a private school, or perhaps a charter school.” (CUPE 33, “Why communities)

“It is clear that the public sector’s idea of a school is quite different from that of the private sector, and it is logical that these differences would be reflected in the design of the school itself.”

Technology used as a “hook” to promote for-profit education

But is privatized education delivery really the kind of school system that lease-back schools not only predict, but *demand*? Lease-back schools, in fact, are only a temporary stop on the route to privatized education. In the interests of making a profit, which at first means cutting the costs of school management, then moving into delivery of (cheaper) educational services, the for-profit education sector will pursue this \$700 billion market to the utmost extent.

The relationship between decentralization, private delivery of services, charter schools, and public/private “partnerships” is fundamental to an analysis of education restructuring in Canada. Charter schools, under the panacea of educational “choice,” *require* the decentralization of education. Since parents, often inexperienced at school administration, are now responsible for organizing and supplying educational services instead of the government, the private sector becomes the greatest beneficiary of this new and growing demand for educational services.

The need for charter school organizers to cut costs also benefits private providers, who are not necessarily “constrained” by the financial burden of worker benefits, pensions, working conditions or unionized salaries. This not only directly targets unionized labour, but also potentially undermines standards for working conditions, requiring fewer workers to take on a greater workload in the interests of cost-cutting.

Of course, other aspects of service delivery can be altered or even eliminated in the interests of reducing costs, as has been illustrated in the section on “contracting-out.” Relationships between the private and public sector should not, in public institutions like education, be reduced to the financial bottom line—but they often are, because they are born out of the private sector’s desire to profit from the education system, and the climate of budget cuts—at whatever the price—imposed on the education sector.

EMOs

“EMOs are engaged in the management of in-facility educational instruction to the kindergarten-to-adult markets, providing a full curriculum leading to K-12 advancement, or post-secondary degrees or certification. EMOs can own or lease facilities, or manage facilities owned by other institutions through a service contract. Post-secondary EMOs such as Apollo Group, DeVry and ITT have developed very successful business models that have yielded attractive investment returns. The larger developing op-

*portunity is in the K-12 EMO market, led by private elementary school providers such as Nobel Education Dynamics and private operators of public schools such as the Edison Project that are **well-positioned to exploit potential political reforms such as school vouchers and charter schools.**” (Montgomery 14)*

The logical conclusion of a fully “decentralized” education system (under the whitewashed term of “choice”) is a series of privatized charter school chains, or EMOs—education management organizations. “Not for profit” charters, which are the first to be promoted as truly locally-initiated, responsive and responsible education initiatives, provide the initiative for total education decentralization, and serve as the precursor to the “real” competition.

It is naive to think that smaller charter initiatives will be able to compete against the multi-million-dollar—and sometimes multinational—EMOs. But what they can do is accustomize communities to a decentralized system of education which is likely already to be contracting out services to the private sector, then eagerly handing over the vast responsibilities of educating scores of students to the private education companies strategically waiting for the right time to offer their services.

Private firms purchase “contracts” from the district to manage schools and provide educational content. The profit factor comes into play when schools try to spend less than they receive for the operation of schools, which can mean using community facilities instead of providing them on campus, using volunteers instead of certified teachers (who require union wages and benefits), increasing class size, and limiting course variety.

It is vital that we understand the global nature of the education industry, and the implications of this on not only the content and philosophy but the quality of education *internationally*. The Edison Project, for example, is reported to be considering purchasing schools in Britain to expand its brand of education overseas.² And this trend will only increase, according to the education industry gurus.

“Like health care was, education today is a local industry that, over time, will become a global business... This is going to be a big enough industry for a whole bunch of companies to participate in its development.” (EIR 1, Jan. 1997)

This points to a system of education provided by an increasingly-centralized group of conglomerates, offering homog-

Testing/standards campaign aims to subvert public schools

enized teaching philosophies and curriculum standardized to an “international” set of outcomes—all based on providing schooling at the lowest price possible, regardless of what that might necessitate excluding from the educational experience.

EMOs are well-served by the increasing emphasis on accountability and improved academic performance in a global marketplace, and have been able to exploit the technology push in schools as a “hook” to convince the public of the “benefits” of their particular brand of for-profit education. But it is important to note the active role these corporations are playing, not only in the attacks on public education and calls for reform, but also in self-promotion. In this case, denigration of public education and calls for deregulation are synonymous with pushing for-profit “alternatives.” According to Montgomery Securities, “Businesses complain that they cannot employ the ‘product’ coming out of our schools because too often graduates cannot read and write. Recognizing the consequences of this situation in the context of a global, knowledge-based economy, businesses are demanding (and sometimes providing) immediate reform.” (Montgomery 10)

These private providers are hardly objective, yet their criticisms of public education have been extremely effective in shaping the direction of educational reform, specifically with regard to charter and voucher legislation in the United States.

The potential EMO market is from kindergarten to post-secondary institutions, and has two growth strategies: it can displace public “competition,” or it can co-exist with established public institutions. In Canada, while post-secondary private options (private, diploma-granting institutions such as DeVry and the Toronto School of Business) are on the increase, having greatly benefited from legislation restricting Adult-Education within the public system, pre-K-12 and K-12 private sector providers have adopted more of a supplemental role than a competitive one. However, both types of “relationships” with public education require discrediting the public system as not adequately preparing students for the world of work.

“The primary growth drivers for EMOs will be academic performance and the need for a more knowledgeable and better-trained workforce that is prepared to compete in a global market. The perception...is that school children are achieving academic performance levels that are substantially below their potential as a result of a lack of accountability and misallocation of financial resources. It will be critical to the success of EMOs to demonstrate long-term improvement in performance.” (Montgomery 15)

Sylvan, for example, claims that it works “with” public edu-

cation in a supportive role—which is why the public system is more accepting of it. (*Education, Limited* 1 [1] 26). Allegedly, this is not about *competing* for students, but rather about *supplementing* existing education with extra help. Sylvan is changing its approach, though, as school funds are cut and as class sizes grow along with rising child poverty.

In Washington D.C., several schools give Sylvan their Chapter 1 fund dollars (amounting to \$7 billion each year for student remedial education in inner cities), and the private company sets up shop inside the school as “a one-stop, basic-skills fix-it shop. Schools will hire the company to plug learning gaps just as they hire plumbers to plug pipes.” (Hancock)³

An added bonus is the prizes Sylvan provides, such as poker chips to be traded in for Walkmans, teddy bears, sweat-shirts and CDs. Significantly, the author completes the article by musing: “In 10 years, will we have Berlitz teaching German, Sylvan teaching math, McDonald’s catering the lunch-room? If the kids are learning, will that be so bad?”

This mentality—that as long as schools are operating, and kids are producing standardized adequate test results (as “proof” of scholastic competency), it doesn’t matter where the money comes from, or how the public interest is being altered to suit corporate investors—is naive at best and irresponsible at worst. At a time when public education is so relentlessly under attack, we cannot afford to sit idly by and allow those who wish to harness the enormous power of the education market—as it is increasingly referred to—shape our schools to suit their financial demands.

The need for any incarnation of Sylvan at all rests on the continued ability of the private sector to increase and reinforce distrust or disapproval of the existing educational system. But, while business leaders have long been critical of the public system (because of its alleged refusal or inability to prepare students for their role in the global economy), convincing the public of the validity of this criticism has been somewhat more difficult. Polls continue to show that a majority of Canadians still feel their schools are doing a good job of educating students (CTF “Economic Service Notes” 11-15, June 1998), though this approval may decrease as schools are forced to do more with fewer resources.

“Denigration of public education and calls for deregulation are synonymous with pushing for-profit ‘alternatives.’”

Mass-produced curriculum delivered by computer, not teacher

As teacher-student contact is limited, and extracurricular activities are eliminated by a reduction in the number of teachers, companies like Sylvan will become more popular among parents who can afford to pay for those services once provided by a well-funded public education system. Other wealthier parents can look to private schools (with annual tuition fees at a minimum of \$8,000) which still promise lower student/teacher ratios, extracurricular activities, and a well-rounded curriculum—although, according to the business community and back-to-basics education reformers, these “luxuries” are apparently not necessary for public schools.

This climate of defunding and restructuring certainly benefits the private sector, because “public reform movements, if successful, will continue to open new opportunities for EMOs to expand in an increasingly competitive environment.” (Montgomery 15) The “testing and standards campaign” has also been useful in calling the quality of schools into question, although this technique, too, is suspect. (see David Ireland’s research on standardized testing for OECTA, and his article in the *CCPA Education Monitor* 13-16, Spring 1997)

The education industry, however, claims that

*“The interest in for-profit education is driven by parents and business leaders who are raising questions about whether traditional schools are providing students with the **skills they need to compete effectively in the global marketplace.**” (Boston Business Journal).*

In this manner, for-profit education providers are presented as simply responding to consumer demand, as opposed to participating in an orchestrated agenda to decentralize, defund, denigrate, and privatize the public education system in the name of corporate profit.

Education Management Organization (EMO) is a term directly derived from Health Maintenance Organization (HMO), the self-selected appellation of the Health Care Industry. And this close relationship is no accident. The education industry is directly modelled after health care privatization in the United States, and both terms (EMO and HMO) are the products of Bay Street and Wall Street gurus.

Education industry representatives refer to health care privatization as “proof” of the inevitability of privatization, and that any opposition will fade away as it did with health care. However, promoting the benefits of a privatized system has required some interesting interpretations of reality.

“The education industry is evolving very similarly to how health care did over the past 20 years. As society continues to examine the appropriate role of the private sector

*in education, it will increasingly look to the success of the American private health care industry that has made the U.S. system the envy of the world.” (Doug Becker, Co-CEO Sylvan Learning, quoted in **Montgomery** 12)*

This claim of quality is quite suspect. It completely ignores, for example, an increasingly two-tiered system, the fact that the United States is the world leader in terms of billing fraud, the 40 million Americans who have no health coverage at all, and the 30 million who remain chronically underinsured. (Nader, “Consumer Advocate Sounds Warning”)⁴

But the EMO movement, where the school’s educational and management services are operated by the EMO, is growing rapidly in the United States. While post-secondary EMOs have had the most success in North America, the K-12 market is also beginning to open, particularly in the United States, aided by companies such as Education Alternatives Inc., a private elementary school provider.⁵ However, EAI’s record has been quite suspect. In 1992, EAI was hired by the Baltimore school system to run a group of public schools in that city. A study was done by the American Teachers’ Federation to determine the effects of this business transaction. The results were significant:

- Student scores on city standardized tests and attendance levels declined in EAI schools and gained modestly in non-EAI schools.
- EAI initially received up to \$500 per pupil more than other schools.
- EAI cannot account for \$400,000 in Chapter 1 remedial education funds during its first year of operation.
- EAI redefined special education students’ needs, enabling it to cut services to those students and eliminate half of the special-ed teachers in EAI schools.
- EAI cut teaching and other staff, increased class size, and replaced trained professionals with inadequately trained, low-wage interns.
- EAI diverted funds from classrooms to facilities, administrative overhead, lawyers and accountants, corporate travel and profits.

It is also significant that, whenever EAI released data purporting to show substantial improvement in educational results, and the data was subsequently proved incorrect, these “inconsistencies” were blamed on “clerical errors.” (ATF, “The Private Management of Public Schools: An Analysis of the EAI Experience in Baltimore.”)

Similarly, the Edison Project was plagued with similar com-

Profit-driven education caters to shareholders, not students

plaints. Teachers complained about low pay, the longer school day, extra hours without pay, overcrowded classrooms, delays in receiving curriculum and instructional materials, and basic disorganization in the school. (CUPE, "Corporate Cash-In Fact Sheet: The Edison Project")

While EAI appeared on the Canadian scene in 1994, it was unable—as EAI—to gain ground in the K-12 market. However, for-profit post-secondary institutions have already made substantial headway in Canada. DeVry, ITI Education Corporation (with tuition fees at \$23,000 for nine months), and International Business Schools, for example, have been enormously successful. This has been in part due to educational restructuring, which has either restricted or eliminated adult education in public schools (and therefore limited access to adult education facilities to working parents, women, immigrants, or ESL adult students).

These "diploma mills,"⁶ as they have been termed, tend to stress high-tech or IT training, and also promote distance education. Of course, distance learning has other significant implications for public education: mass-produced curriculum delivered by a computer, not a professor, which also eliminates the need for instructor salaries and the remainder of the "human factor."

The Pre-EMO market also must be considered, particularly in light of budget restrictions and education restructuring that directly threaten programs like day-care and kindergarten. As the need for universal, quality day-care and junior kindergarten is questioned and as funds are cut accordingly—and as municipalities have their right to tax restricted or eliminated—we can expect private day-care and kindergarten centres to open, for the use of parents who can afford them. Or, as in the case of Sylvan in Washington D.C., funds allocated for these facilities will be increasingly turned over to private providers who will oversee the care of our children and attempt to increase profits from this service.

In the drive to maximize profits, we can surely expect the same techniques practised by K-12 EMOs in the United States⁷—reducing the number of supervisors, hiring inexperienced child care workers for less, and cutting back on maintenance and cleaning (particularly dangerous where small children and infants are concerned). Once again, restructuring, defunding and decentralizing education while redefining essential education services has created a need that for-profit providers are eager to exploit. And once again, the quality of services people receive will be determined by the price they are able to pay.

Conclusion

"In McWorld, everything is ordered to suit the market and the unbridled pursuit of profit. With new arrogance, transnational corporations and their host economies are negotiating deals...that will finish off what is left of our national autonomy, and have us once and for all arrange our affairs to the advantage of corporations and investors. In McWorld, education becomes just one more commodity, one that according to the rules of the market must be highly prized but not available in the same quality to everyone, and never available without the customer paying the price. The rulers of McWorld believe that the strategic value of the commodity of education must no longer be neglected." (Heather-jane Robertson, "McSchool Meets McWorld: The role of high-stakes testing.")

Though the privatization of education is not as advanced—or at least not as blatant—as it is in the United States, that is no reason to take it for granted or assume it is any less dangerous. True, Educational Alternatives Inc. is not currently running schools in Canada, but Johnson Controls, one of the companies that make up EAI, is instrumental in privatizing school maintenance and management. The other corporate partner involved in EAI, KPMG, is busy conducting research for the government of Ontario about private financing of public schools, bidding for the opportunity to write K-12 curriculum, and remains at the forefront of the education "reform" discussion.

The Canadian Centre for Public-Private Partnerships routinely holds conferences (charging substantial registration fees which would easily eliminate concerned public interest groups from the discussion), and conducts research promoting greater private involvement in public institutions like education and health care, where companies like Johnson Controls and KPMG are regular participants.

The second annual Canadian Education Industry Summit (sponsored in part by KPMG) took place in Toronto in October, 1998. Exporting Canadian education to the Third World—contributing to the homogenization of public education—is considered a potentially huge industry, according to the federal Minister of International Trade's speech at last year's summit. Certainly, this office's web site provides evidence of the government's enthusiasm for these international prospects, mirroring APEC's education goals. This year's summit organizers saw Mr. Marchi's participation as evidence of "the clear support and involvement of the federal government"

Favouring shareholder profit over accessibility is irresponsible

for both the summit and for the education sector “as a major future export opportunity.” (*EIR* 2, Sept. 1998)

Charles Ivey, summit organizer, explains that, in spite of Canadians being “a little late out of the gate,” the education industry will only grow in Canada, because now there is clear financial support:

“To further support Canadian corporate growth in education, Atlantis Asset Management Inc. recently announced

the formation of a pool of funds named the Atlantis Education Industry Fund. Atlantis President Mark Appleby stated that ‘the fund will focus on investing in companies that bring to market

“To adopt a system of management that ignores principles such as equality of access in favour of shareholder profit is irresponsible and self-destructive.”

proprietary intellectual property from Canada’s academic community, in addition to investing in existing for-profit Canadian education companies that are growth oriented.” (*EIR* 2, Sept. 1998)

Clearly, the privatization of Canadian education cannot be ignored. Political and structural adjustments have contributed to a corporate sector-friendly climate where our public institutions are concerned, and what we are facing will fundamentally transform all aspects of public education—from what is taught, to who does the teaching, to the very conditions in which our children learn.

Education reform is not happening in isolation—by school, district, province/state, or even nation. These market-based reforms are occurring on an international level, and, while there are some variations on the common themes of capital, individual

school competition and “customer choice,” there are significant and disturbing commonalities.

“There is a growing body of empirical evidence that, rather than benefiting the disadvantaged, the emphasis on parental choice and school autonomy is further disadvantaging those least able to compete in the market.” (Gerwitz et al. 1995; Lauder et al. 1995; Smith and Noble 1995 quoted in Whitty et al. 43)

At the same time, this restructuring is increasing the differences between popular and less-popular schools on a linear scale—reinforcing a vertical hierarchy of schooling types rather than producing the promised horizontal diversity.

“For most members of disadvantaged groups, as opposed to the few individuals who escape from schools at the bottom of the status hierarchy, the new arrangements seem to be just a more sophisticated way of reproducing the traditional distinctions between different types of school and between the people who attend them.” (Whitty et al. 43)

The decision to have a national public education system, and to ensure equality of access to it, was rooted fundamentally in the concept of social justice—a concept foreign and even counter to rampant free market ideology and its proponents. To adopt a system of management that ignores principles such as equality of access in favour of shareholder profit is irresponsible and self-destructive. It will serve to further reinforce socioeconomic differences and opportunities by eliminating variety and accessible choice within a broad system, provided by all Canadians for all Canadians.

Public institutions by their very nature are responsive to the public. Private companies are accountable only to their shareholders. Where public education is concerned, there must be no compromise.

Endnotes

1 In the same issue, the front page article (also distributed at a meeting near Kitchener, Ontario) was entitled "'21 Ways 'Public Schools' Harm Your Children," by R.C. Hoiles. By way of illustration, #4 maintains that "The government schools dare not teach the meaning of the Golden Rule. If they were successful in getting their pupils to understand that they should not force other people to pay for something they did not want, then they would see it was a violation of the Golden Rule to force others to pay for their schooling" (February/March 1997, vol. 3 no. 2 pg. 1).

2 For greater detail, please see *Education, Limited* (vol. 1 no 1) "Individual Analyses: The Fraser Institute's Five Year Plan "Towards the New Millennium."

3 "Devolution can be seen as a complete abdication of responsibility by the state, 'a deliberate process of subterfuge, distortion, concealment and willful neglect as the state seeks to retreat in a rather undignified fashion from its historical responsibility for providing quality public education' (Smythe 1993b: 2), or as a selective withdrawal from areas in which difficulty succeeding, such as equality of opportunity (Nash 1989). Either way, making educational decision-making the responsibility of individual institutions and families is an effective strategy for 'shifting the blame.' The failure of individual schools to flourish as 'stand alone' institutions can be attributed to poor leadership or teaching quality. Similarly, unequal education achievement among students can be explained through poor parenting..." (Whitty et al 45). This process of abdication—shifting the blame—is particularly significant during a climate of budget cuts which threaten the quality of public education itself, place the employment of parents in jeopardy, and increase the number of those in poverty. It also ignores the correlation between academic achievement and economic security.

4 From material prepared by Lynne Oreck-Wener, Chair and J. Philip Nicholson, School Representative for Alternative Schools Advisory Committee, Ottawa-Carleton, September 24, 1998, and "Voices of Lady Evelyn," prepared for the trustees of the OCDSB, September 1998.

5 Michelle Weinroth, "Address to the Education Committee of the OCDSB On Preserving Alternative Schools," Sept. 24, 1998, Ottawa, ON

6 "Advocates of choice assume that the societal purpose of education is satisfied when families choose education on the basis of their own tastes and judgments. However, schooling is

essential for democratic societies; it preserves and supports political, social and economic institutions and enables democratic changes. Students must therefore have a common educational experience, not one particular to individual or family choice." (World Bank 9, "Demand")

7 "To say that decentralization can increase inequity, however, is not to say that it must do so. The fact that decentralization has often exacerbated inequities is not a reason to abandon decentralization." (World Bank 27, "Politics")

8 see *EIR* 4, Aug. 1998

9 "What we try and measure is how well the training provided by each school fits the needs of production and the labor market" (researcher from Fundacion Mediterranea, qtd. in "NACLA Report on the Americas," May-June 1996 v29 n6 p26(6) 1).

10 "...[T]he real long term solutions must come from the private sector, which, after all, is the 'consumer' of the 'products' of America's education and training system and is, therefore, in the best position to solve education and training problems" (Jerry Jasinowski, "Education and Training" forward, vii).

11 According to Heather-jane Robertson in *No More Teachers, No More Books*, "Many teachers (and parents) reported that their children became increasingly frustrated....One teacher told me she thought the test was a good idea, but that the ordeal got to be a bit of a strain, especially since one of her more anxious students threw up on his test booklets almost every day" (69).

12 Conversation with Eileen Chris (from Waterloo, ON.), September 23, 1998.

13 "Teacher salaries could be established to reflect labour market conditions for people with the needed subject knowledge, and linked to performance as measured by student achievement....Given the importance of subject knowledge, teacher salaries should also reflect labour market rates for people with particular knowledge to attract quality teachers in sufficient numbers" (World Bank. *Priorities and Strategies for Education—Draft*. June 1, 1994).

14 Helen Raham is the founder of TFE.

15 Joe Freedman is the founder of SAER.

16 "[C]harter schools are paid for with public funds and

operate under a performance contract (a charter) negotiated with elected officials. What distinguishes them is that they can deliver curriculum in a fashion supported by both parents and teachers without having to follow central dictums (for example whole language, foundation years, semestering, destreaming etc.). Charter schools can respond quickly, and in ways appropriate to local needs." (AIMS Independent "excellence is a matter of choice." May 1998)

17 As vouchers are not yet an issue in Canada, (despite the Fraser Institute's enthusiasm for this funding method), this report has not focused on them. However, like charters, Milton Friedman, who maintains a relationship with the Fraser Institute, is a strong supporter of vouchers as a method of "marketizing" education. In a concise illustration of his apparent association of education with shopping, Friedman "predicts that the first commercial education efforts will result in high tuition, for-profit 'Rolls-Royce schools,' primarily targeted at wealthy parents, where innovations in curricula, teaching and technology will be tested....the most innovative features of [these] schools could eventually be replicated in more modestly priced 'McDonald's schools,' profitably providing quality education at a price people with lower incomes could afford." (Henderson 2-3)

18 Information Technology Association of Canada (ITAC) press release, Aug. 5, 1994.

19 The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) has produced a series of fact sheets on companies attempting to privatize public education.

20 CBE chair Judy Tilston was shocked to "see the cost analysis of the 34 sites contradicting the conventional wisdom that contracting-out is cheaper." Upon her decision that the administration must make decisions regarding contracting-out, Randy Burke, president of Contract Cleaners Association of Alberta, declared the board's move "run's counter to the growth of contracting-out in educational facilities across Canada." Further, he maintained that the CBE's decision was in response to pressure from CUPE local 40. Apparently, the inferior results were not enough. (Andy Marshall, *Calgary Herald*, "Outside Cleaners Cost Schools More" July 3, 1998)

21 The company who initiated this deal (subsequently rejected by the Board) was Johnson Controls Inc. In 1996, Johnson Controls offered to buy 38 schools from the Board, and build 4 new ones, all of which would be leased back to the Board, with Johnson Controls making a tidy profit. A leading provider of integrated facilities management for a wide range of facilities (from hospitals to military bases), Johnson Controls ex-

panded its business to the education industry in 1991 when it joined with KPMG Peat Marwick to create Education Alternatives Inc., the American EMO.

22 Channel 1, the in-school infomercial "educational" program in the United States, whose profit provided the initial financing for the Edison Project, is also going international. Brazil and China are reported to be the commercial conglomerate's next frontiers.

23 Sylvan has franchised 700 Learning Centres, of which 60 are in Canada, 300 testing centres and 1500 information technology testing centres. Next stop? China and Singapore (Canadian Education Industry Summit, Toronto, ON, 1997).

24 "More than 2,300 physicians in Massachusetts last year signed a despairing manifesto in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*: "The time we are allowed to spend with the sick shrinks under the pressure to increase output, as though we were dealing with industrial commodities rather than afflicted human beings....Physicians and nurses are being prodded by threats and bribes to abdicate allegiance to patients and to shun the sickest, who may be unprofitable. Some of us risk being fired or delisted for giving, or even discussing, expensive services, and many are offered bonuses for minimizing care....The system [of managed care] wasn't meant to care for sick people; it was meant to make money....A physician is not by nature a commodities broker, a clinic is not a meat-packing plant, and unless the American health-care industry quits caring for money instead of people, its chronic pathology almost certainly will be referred to the consulting rooms of government" (Dr. Ronald J. Glasser in Harper's Magazine, qtd. in the CCPA Monitor 2, May 1998).

25 EAI is comprised of an alliance of KPMG Peat Marwick, Johnson Controls World Services, and Computer Curriculum Corporation (Malcolm Buchanan, "Educators Beware! Privatization and Contracting Out in Public Education" OSSTF, March 1996), all of which have been active in the United States and Canada in promoting education reform, private sector funding, and the education industry.

26 See David Noble's "Digital Diploma Mills Pts. 1 and 2" for an excellent analysis of these and other implications of the impact of the education industry on post secondary education.

27 American players in the Pre-EMO market include: KinderCare Learning Centers Inc., Children's World Learning Centers, Sunrise Preschools Inc., and Children's Comprehensive Services Inc

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