

# PUBLIC EDUCATION AT THE DAWN OF THE NEW MILLENNIUM: THE NEW ZEALAND EXPERIMENT

DENIS HACHÉ *Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto*

**ABSTRACT.** Globalization and the introduction of new information technologies are producing changes and upheavals felt by all segments of society. Public education is being shaken by these shock waves and confronted by public skepticism and media criticism as well as strong demands for systemic and curriculum reform. Proponents of a corporate model in education argue that parental choice and the concept of competition within the school system are the only viable solutions to the present ills of public education. New structural organizations are being proposed such as charter schools, school councils, total quality schools (TQM) and many other variations of the same type, in other words, the creation of "The Industry of Education" as often mentioned by corporate reformists. New Zealand represents a typical example of such an endeavor and illustrates very well the drastic changes provoked by restructuring in the personal and professional life of all stakeholders, where consumer and corporate interests are sometimes in conflict with citizen rights and public good.

**RÉSUMÉ.** La mondialisation et l'adoption de nouvelles technologies de l'information entraînent des changements et des bouleversements qui sont ressentis par tous les segments de la société. L'éducation publique subit les contrecoups de ces bouleversements et doit affronter le scepticisme du public et la critique des médias et répondre à ceux qui exigent une réforme du système et des programmes. Les tenants d'un modèle corporatif en éducation soutiennent que le choix des parents et la notion de compétition au sein du réseau scolaire sont les seules solutions viables aux maux actuels de l'éducation publique. De nouveaux types de structures sont proposés comme les écoles à charte, les conseils scolaires, les écoles de qualité totale (GOT) et bien d'autres variations sur le même type, en d'autres termes, la création de "l'industrie de l'éducation" comme l'appellent souvent les réformistes. La Nouvelle-Zélande est un exemple typique d'un tel effort qui illustre fort bien les changements draconiens provoqués par la restructuration de la vie personnelle et professionnelle de tous les intervenants où le consommateur et les intérêts commerciaux entrent parfois en conflit avec les droits des citoyens et l'intérêt public.

The globalization of markets and the introduction of new information technologies are, without any doubt, two of the most important phenomena of the twentieth century. The full impact of changes and upheavals has been felt throughout the world by all segments of society. Globalization of the economy, which is mainly fuelled by financial markets, may bring unprecedented social changes which will ultimately lead to the exploitation of humans, a situation similar to the one that prevailed at the beginning of the industrial revolution. Globalization may also bring about the disappearance of the middle class (Greider, 1997). The public education system, built over the last decades on the principle of social equity, is being shaken by the shock waves of globalization and is presently undergoing a profound metamorphosis. Up to recent times, professionals in education held a quasi-monopoly over the transmission of knowledge. The advent of computers and new communication technologies has challenged this monopoly and has fundamentally changed the traditional paradigm in education. Knowledge is now accessible to all, instantly, without the learner having to be at a specific place where knowledge is being transmitted (Haché, 1998). Consequently, the control formerly enjoyed by education professionals is in the process of falling into the hands of groups and organizations that have had nothing to do with education in the past. The perverse effects of such changes could put the very existence of public education at risk (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1993; Barlow & Robertson, 1994; Saul, 1995).

It is against this backdrop that I plan to analyze the various impacts of those changes on the systemic structures of public education and on the emerging new roles of education professionals. I will first examine the underlying philosophy of the corporate model and the different reform initiatives coming out of such a model. I will then analyze a typical implementation of such a model, namely the educational reform in New Zealand. I will examine the main components of the New Zealand experiment such as: the implementation process, devolution and site-based management, the Education Review Office, Boards of Trustees, financing formulas, the emerging teacher's role, the principal as a manager, choice and competition and Maori education.

My analysis is based on a review of literature and on information gathered through thirty-seven semi-structured taped interviews conducted in 1998 with people responsible for the implementation of the New Zealand reform. Most interviews were fifty minutes in length on average and the questions dealt with topics relating to the main components of the reform process as stated earlier. These interviews in-

cluded professional associations and union representatives, government officials, university and college professors, trustees, principals, teachers, and parents. A specific set of interviews was conducted with representatives of the Maori minority. These interviewees can be described as survivors and/or stakeholders of the educational reform of the past decade. Most appointments were made weeks in advance through the assistance of the Ministry of Education. Others were made *in situ* through the local educational network. The data were transcribed on computer for a summary analysis with NUD•IST, a qualitative data analysis software for text and interview material. The New Zealand reform is a typical example of the implementation of a quasi-corporate model in a public education system. Repercussions and changes triggered by this experience can serve as indicators and markers for what could become of public education in the next millennium.

*The corporate model: A reform solution in full swing*

For many decades, public education has been under attack by the media and the proponents of neo-liberalism who blame the system for not preparing our youth for the challenges of globalization and new technologies (Barnabé, 1997, 1995; Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, 1993; *The Financial Post*, 1992; *The Globe and Mail*, 1992; The Economic Council of Canada, 1992). The tenets of neo-liberalism demand that publicly funded schools be efficient and promote excellence and high quality, as well as being highly productive and more accountable. For some (Lieberman, 1993, 1986), public education as a social institution is on the road to an irreversible decline because previous attempts at reform have not addressed the major obstacles, namely: government structures, teachers' unions and isolation of the education system from the market place. According to this philosophy, the only viable solution for a true reform of education is to adopt the corporate model. This philosophy considers that privatization of public goods and services is the only way to stimulate economic growth, increase the efficiency of services and lighten governmental structures while at the same time increasing the level of individual freedom and opportunities for underprivileged minorities (Starr, 1987). This model is based on the idea of freedom of choice and competition within the school system: freedom to choose a particular school for our children without being submitted to government regulations and to school board geographical boundaries. In a context of entrepreneurship, market place forces and competition will motivate schools to improve their performance in order to preserve and increase their share of the market (Brown & Contreras,

1991). Freedom of choice is often accompanied by a devolution and decentralization of administrative powers from government to school boards, school councils and schools themselves. Reform initiatives derived from these concepts are part of a global phenomenon born from the tendencies towards economic, political, and cultural globalization (Whitty, Power & Halpin, 1998). Proponents of choice and school autonomy argue that (Whitty, 1997):

... competition will enhance the efficiency and responsiveness of schools and thus increase their effectiveness. Many hoped that market forces would overcome a leveling-down tendency that they ascribed to bureaucratic systems of mass education, while others saw them as a way of giving disadvantaged children the sorts of opportunities hitherto available only to those who could afford to buy them. (p. 33)

The corporate model has given rise to numerous reform initiatives that reflect the market economy. For example, education vouchers are given to parents with school age children who then can buy educational services of their choice in a private, public, or for-profit school. These vouchers are worth the equivalent of the per-capita cost of offering education in a public system (Lieberman, 1989, 1986; Piphó, 1994).

The implementation of a corporate model in education, in its purest form, started in the USA in 1991 when Whittle Communication Inc. announced its intention of establishing a national network of for-profit schools under the name of The Edison Project. The company intended to sell school franchises as well as pedagogical resources and educational technologies. Doing away with the public school heritage, Whittle Communication Inc. proposed to change not only the teaching methods and material but also the length of the school year, the role of the teachers and students, and year-round school operation (Rist, 1991). However, the project had to be modified due to financial difficulties and it evolved into a partnership with the public school system by establishing charter schools in Massachusetts (The Edison Project, 1996).

In this model, the charter school offers a different method for the delivery and administration of public education while preserving the idea of freedom of choice for the consumer and involving parents in the operation of their school. To attain this goal, administrative powers are transferred to the school, which is no longer subjected to the school district regulations. It operates under a special charter. In its ideal form, a charter school allows a group of teachers, parents, and a community organization to operate a public school like a business. Organizers sign

a contractual agreement with the school board or the Ministry of Education whereby the academic and administrative operations of the school are turned over to a school council made up of parents and the main stakeholders in the community. The contract is, in fact, the school's charter as it defines the terms of the agreement, including how much money will be transferred from public funds. It also defines program contents and the expected level of performance by students and teachers. Through its charter, the school becomes a legal entity with powers to hire and lay off, to launch legal actions, to buy goods and services and to control its own budgets. Because it needs to function well inside such a context, the school no longer has to follow guidelines and legislation that could stifle innovation. At the end of the contract period, the school must demonstrate that it has adhered to conditions outlined in the contract in terms of financial management and student performance. It must also show that it has remained an attraction pole for parents, students, and teachers. If these conditions are not met, the contract is not renewed. A charter school is still a public institution with no tuition fees, opened to everyone without distinction for race, colour, or religion (Bierlein & Mulholland, 1995, 1994; Freedman, 1995; Millot, 1995).

A number of states in the US, the province of Alberta in Canada, New Zealand, Great Britain, Denmark, Sweden and Holland have already adopted legislation allowing charter schools (Allen, 1995; Freedman, 1995; Gordon, 1995, 1992a, 1992b; Whitty, 1997; Whitty, Power & Halpin, 1998).

Solutions proposed by the private sector that preserve the concept of choice do not necessarily guarantee quality in the education system. Nevertheless, the search for quality has given rise to a new educational practice inspired by the Total Quality Management (TQM) philosophy (Deming, 1992, 1986, 1982). An impressive number of educational institutions are adopting this philosophy to implement significant changes within their system. This idea of TQM is well-suited for the educational system as it represents a means of ensuring excellence in education (Barlosky & Lawton, 1994; Barnabé, 1995; Bonstingl, 1992a, 1992b; Cornesky, 1993; Glasser, 1990). Based on continuous quality improvements of processes and services, this philosophy counterbalances other proposals from the private sector because the outcomes are not financial efficiency, maximum performance, and quantifiable productivity. One of the underlying principles is that the system, not the staff, is most often to blame when problems of quality and productivity

arise within an organization. This systemic approach encourages a fundamental change in attitude and runs contrary to the traditional hierarchical organization. The practice of Total Quality Control requires that priority be given to the client; it requires flexibility in the administrative structure, cooperation, solidarity within the team and horizontal communications (Barnabé, 1997, 1995; Holt, 1993a, 1993b; Moen, 1989). In fact, TQM represents one of the most humane faces of proposed reforms because it involves all stakeholders in the process: parents, teachers, students, and the community in general.

### *The New Zealand experiment*

The New Zealand educational reform is often cited as an example of near complete implementation of a corporate model. Implementation of major and fundamental changes was done in an expeditious manner within a short period of time (Holdaway, 1989). The impact on stakeholders was quite dramatic in some sectors. A representative of the New Zealand School Trustees Association puts it well in retrospect: "We've got to remember that our reform came quickly, that there was no gradual implementation. It just happened and it was at a huge pace for people to pick up on." This reform initiative, contrary to the American and British experience, was not based on public dissatisfaction or poor performance by the system (Whitty, 1997). On the contrary, results and rankings of New Zealand students in international tests were among the best in the world before the reform.

### *Implementation*

The move towards reform started with the defeat of the Labor government in 1987. While in office, this government had attempted a reform following the report of the Science and Education Select Committee which had conducted hearings throughout the country. The report stated that the quality of education was being compromised by systemic deficiencies in the educational administrative structure and by the highjacking of the system by professionals in the field. Noting that during the campaign the electorate had reacted strongly to problems faced by the education system, the new government embarked decisively on the road to reform (Macpherson, 1993). Soon after taking office, the government appointed Brian Picot, a corporate magnate, to head a commission to study the administrative structures of the primary and secondary levels. The Commission's mandate was to: 1) analyze the administrative functions to maximize delegation of powers; 2) evaluate a system of governance that would allow an accelerated decentraliza-

tion of powers; 3) reorient services to increase satisfaction among the clientele; 4) reorganize structures to attain a better effectiveness, efficiency, and equity within the system. The final report (Report of the Task Force to Review Educational Administration, 1988) recommended fundamental changes to the education system, namely:

1. To abolish the Department of Education and replace it with a smaller ministry responsible only for educational policies.
2. To abolish regional school boards across the country.
3. To transfer to individual schools all responsibilities for the operation of the school and to create a board of trustees for each school composed of parents of children in that school.
4. To transfer operating budgets to each school to cover operation costs and salaries.
5. To draft a charter for each school that would establish the link between the school's objectives and the national goals.
6. To eliminate the inspection services and create a Review and Audit Agency.

In short, the Picot Report recommended the dismantling of the traditional public system and the adoption of a corporate model similar to the one previously implemented in England by the Thatcher government. The government's reaction was swift. In a document entitled *Tomorrow's Schools*, published in 1988, the government accepted most of the Commission's recommendations and determined a timetable for the quick implementation of reforms. This initiative was part of an overall strategy to reform the public sector by introducing corporate principles, deregulation, and privatization of government services (State Services Commission, 1996). The corporate model became the reference for all government sectors, including education. Consequently, the major components of the New Zealand education reform can be summarized the following way:

1. The introduction of parental choice and competition within and between schools.
2. A redefinition of the Ministry of Education mandate and the redistribution of its traditional responsibilities among new public organizations such as the Education Review Office and the Special Education Office.

3. The elimination of all school boards across the country.
4. The creation of charter schools and establishment of a board of trustees for each school.

### *Devolution and site-based management*

This education model is based on theories of neo-liberalism and operates on two levels: decentralization and centralization with a definite split between policy and operations. As a first step, the Department of Education, whose mandate included a multiplicity of responsibilities, was simply replaced by a new administrative entity. The new Ministry of Education bears no resemblance to its predecessor because its staff is reduced and its responsibilities are minimal and shared with other players. Gordon (1992b) describes this new structural arrangement very well:

This ministry was to be made of policy analysts, who would not be, in the new right jargon, "captured" by educational interest groups. Policy would be entirely separated from "operations" which would as far as possible be devolved to individual educational institutions. The ministry would make its policy decisions in isolation from educational groups in society, thus ensuring those decisions were not polluted by the claim of teachers, unions or others interested in education. (p. 187)

The implementation of the decentralization and centralization concepts in this new structure is again illustrated by Gordon (1992b):

The new system of education would have a strong central state, but one relatively removed from the daily issues and contestation of the education system. The system itself would be kept in place through a powerful system of contracts; centrally, the school charter, the new system of educational review, and an employer/employee relationship between boards of trustees, the principal and the teachers. (p. 8)

The effect of such a dichotomy is well described by one board of trustees member: "The government is coming up with all these policies but it is the board that has to implement them and if they upset the community it's actually the board that is taking the flack. The boards feel that they are doing the dirty work for the government." The same individual corroborates Gordon's (1992b) arguments, but in a different perspective, pertaining to the role of government and the protection this type of situation provides from criticism and politically embarrassing situations:



The government is now able to say when something goes wrong at the local level, that it is a problem of that individual school and its board of trustees. However, the board of trustees is still somewhat constrained by national policies, the national curriculum framework, the national education guidelines, and the national administration goals. So I guess there is some merit to that but, to what extent were governments ever really accountable, in the past, for what was happening at an individual school level anyway?

### *The Education Review Office*

School inspection, which was the responsibility of the former Ministry of Education, is now the responsibility of a new quasi-independent public organization, the Education Review Office. This organization has the mandate to support and promote quality in education through an independent and on-going evaluation of the educational system (Education Review Office, 1997). To accomplish this, the Education Review Office conducts a systematic review of each school every three years, but it can also intervene when the performance of a particular school is judged to be below standards or when any particular problems exist. The team in charge of examining a problem or a situation submits its recommendations to the board of trustees which becomes responsible for the implementation of recommendations according to an established timetable. At the end of the implementation process, the Ministry can put a school under close supervision and appoint a commissioner to rectify any remaining problems if results appear to be below the parameters assigned by the Education Review Office.

The mandate was seriously criticized by unions who argue that the office is getting involved in teachers' performance appraisal. However, this approach to quality assurance has many advantages because it reduces the bureaucratic layers by flattening the organizational structure and facilitates communication throughout the whole system. One manager of the Office succinctly summarized the situation this way:

I think one of the benefits of the new system [is that] we haven't got all those layers of bureaucracy. Our chief executive is talking to the Minister almost every day and then there's only a couple of layers between the Minister, national manager and area manager. That information is used by the boards because it gives them a blue print of their school. It's also used by the Minister because our evaluation analyst in Wellington scanned the report, picked the trends and reported those trends straight to the Minister.

These reports provide up-to-date and continuous information to the government on performance appraisal, schools in lower socio-economic areas in need of special help, special education needs, and use of financial resources. The Education Review Office (1997) also publishes a document outlining the required qualifications for principalship. These requirements are used by boards for recruiting and evaluating principals.

Another quasi-independent organization within the Ministry of Education is the Special Education Office. Its mandate is to offer consultative and intervention services in special education and for students with special needs. This organization operates like a private enterprise and must compete with organizations from the private sector offering similar services to schools.

### *The boards of trustees*

The elimination of school boards and the creation of boards of trustees for each school have fundamentally changed the operation of schools as well as the role of the principal and the teaching staff. The board of trustees is, by law, responsible for the operation of the school it represents. The board is made up of parents and elected representatives from the community. It has the power to hire and lay off the teaching staff and is responsible for other financial and physical aspects of the school's operation. The board is therefore the employer as far as the principal and the teaching personnel are concerned. Consequently, the principal answers to the board of trustees and the board ultimately answers to the ministry and to the government. The board of trustees is also responsible for the drafting of the school's charter which must not only conform with government guidelines but also reflect the goals, objectives and aspirations of the school and of the community. Board members receive a small stipend for each meeting they attend. The time spent on board and committee business can be extensive, particularly for the chairperson. Elections are held every three years throughout the country to ensure renewal of board membership. However, the board of trustees can appoint additional members to create a better balance in community representation or when the electoral list does not allow the filling of every available seat (Education Review Office, 1996a, 1996b).

However, the implementation of boards of trustees was not without problems, especially pertaining to the role of the boards and its members, as described by one principal:

. . . boards of trustees had to find out what their role was but people had probably an unrealistic expectation about the degree of input and control that they would have in how their school operates. There is a difference between having a say in policies development for your school within a framework set by government, appointing Principals and staff and actually being involved in the day-to-day school operations. Some parents had unrealistic and inappropriate expectations about the kind of day-to-day influence that they would have.

Most parent trustees have children attending school during their tenure on the board and tend to quit once their children finish school. A mother who has served many terms on a board of trustees explains:

I was interested in my own kids' education and I wanted to make sure that they and all other kids get the best education we could give them. I was a bit wondering what it would take at the beginning. Nobody really knew what sort of skills would be most wanted. I've enjoyed most of the time spent on the board. It's been pretty stressful at times but you definitely get the feeling you are doing some good and that things have changed for a purpose. If it didn't have a purpose, I would have given up a long time ago.

Nation-wide elections are held every three years for boards of trustees (1989, 1992, 1995, and 1998). The number of parents and non-parents running for office varies by region and community. In certain communities there were not enough candidates for office and parents or non-parents had to be appointed or co-opted by the board. Sitting on a board of trustees is very time consuming, especially for the chair, whose position is considered the equivalent of a full-time job by those we interviewed. One board member added on a more humorous note that "I'm getting \$36 a month to run a multi-million dollar business and yet if something goes wrong we're accountable and we could be sued." In her 1996 survey, Wylie (1997) reports that 62 percent of the boards had a co-opted member in their ranks compared to 52 percent in 1993. As for trustee turnover, "thirty-two percent of the boards had lost 1 trustee, 22 percent 2 trustees, 7 percent 3 trustees, and 5 percent, 4 or more trustees" (p. 59). According to her "the role of trustee might be becoming less attractive" (p.61), but it seems too early to identify these indicators as a definite trend. Still, trustee turnover is somewhat of a problem, as one board member explains:

Probably the greatest problem is the fact that it's a three year cycle between elections and each time the momentum is lost to a certain extent. And on some boards, if you have a complete turnover and

five new trustees, you've lost three years of learning and sometimes six. The experience is not kept in the system.

### *Financing formulas*

Two formulas are presently used to fund education in New Zealand. The first is called Direct Resourcing (initially called Bulk Funding), by which schools choosing this type of funding receive a lump sum each year. This pro-rated funding covers the operating costs of teachers' salaries and central support services. The second formula, which is used by the majority of schools, consists of a budget that covers the operating and maintenance costs of the school while salaries are paid by the government. However, this formula provides for little discretion on expenditure for the board of trustees since collective contracts, controlled by government and unions, are seen as an obstacle to full empowerment (Boston, Martin, Pallot & Walsh, 1996) and in contradiction with the site-based management concept.

A relatively small number of schools have opted for the Bulk Funding formula mainly because of unions' opposition and suspicion about government intentions. However, government is still pushing this issue. Opponents of this funding formula, and more particularly unions, argue that such local autonomy could be detrimental to teachers' interests and also make it easier for government to reduce future funding. One interviewee describes the situation:

So essentially to get people to buy into the Bulk Funding, the government said that no school would be a loser. So, if I have a school that had all of their staff up towards the top of the salary scale, I would certainly convert it to get the amount and not the average. So people saw it as being a bit of a bribe, a bit of a bribe to get people into the system and then government would cut them down to the average.

A national organization called New Zealand School Trustees Association represents most local boards of trustees. As they got organized and acquired more experience, expertise and self-confidence, the boards started to be more assertive at the community level and, as mentioned by a principal, "The boards of trustees will gather cohesion, force and steam and will probably be in a stronger position to voice either opposition to or support for government's policies." The creation of the New Zealand Trustees Association is the result of such an evolution. The mandate of the Association is to represent the interests of board members at the government level, but the Association is also seen, by

many, as a counterweight to the influence of teachers' unions. Rifts have occurred between these two organizations, as explained by one union member I interviewed:

There's been some tensions around that relationship, particularly in the area of what is called bulk funding of schools. It's been a real battleground. Very strongly opposed by the teacher unions who would still like to have the comfort of nationally negotiated conditions of service, the strong traditions here of every teacher being paid the same. If a board of trustees gets a hold of all the dollars then they really will start exerting some influence in the bulk funded schools . . . there are examples where boards of trustees have certainly been somewhat more creative in what they've done with resources available to them than schools that aren't bulk funded.

### *The emerging teacher's role*

It has also been noted that the corporate model has fundamentally changed the role of the teaching staff by confining teachers to their classrooms. Gordon (1992a) talks about the proletarianization of the teacher who is now limited to the delivery of class material and systematically excluded from education policies:

The reform of educational administration had quite clearly worked to exclude teachers from involvement in central policy processes. Today's schools, by framing teachers as employees, involved only in their specific operational activities, and largely excluded (except in terms of their single representative on the Board of Trustees) from school policy decisions (which were to be the exclusive domain of the Board) were now positioned as mere minions: as the operators on the production line who would carry out orders from above. (p. 10)

In such a context, the teacher is more accountable to his or her employer, to the parents of children in the classroom and to the community. Teachers now have to establish a cooperative relationship with parents, the community, and the students and have to accept discussing the future of their profession and their own working conditions in public (Stevens, 1994). This change in the teacher's role has added about 2.5 hours of work each week for the teacher. This workload increase has had a negative impact on the morale, the degree of satisfaction at work and the quality of life outside the work place (Wylie, 1997). Most interviewees agreed that, in retrospect, these problems were characteristic of the early years of reform whereas today the situation has settled and they would not want to go back to the old system. The advantages offered outweigh all the aggravations and dis-

comfort of early implementation. One interviewee, while explaining the impact on teachers' lives, said:

The competency procedures have been tightened, there is no question about that. I think that is a by-product of individual boards getting the power to hire and fire. And I think it also had something to do with the influence of the Education Review Office as well. We all accepted failing colleagues in the past. There is a much lesser acceptance of failing colleagues now and a much greater readiness on the part of everybody within the school, community, teachers included to confront the issue of a teacher who is not competent. The unions have made some movement on competency procedures.

There is still some teacher skepticism about the board of trustees running the school, as one parent points out: "In many instances, and even now, there are a lot of teachers who are still pretty skeptical about the fact that a housewife or a farmer is now the employer. What do they know about education?"

Teachers were definitely bombarded with changes and innovations, especially with matters dealing with curriculum reform. As one university professor points out: "They are under tremendous pressure to learn new systems. The big thing that has happened with the reform is the rewriting of the curriculum into segmented, compartmentalized and itemized components." The objective is to link all levels from preschool to secondary, but, as a result, teachers now have a tendency to teach for the exams and outcomes.

### *The principal as a manager*

Because decision making is now decentralized down to the school level, the principal has acquired new functions. He or she must be in close contact with the board of trustees and must establish and maintain communications with parents and the community. The principal must not only be an academic leader but also a business administrator and a public relations agent for the school and the board of trustees. The principal must also work in areas for which he or she is not initially trained, such as accounting, budget control, personnel administration, public relations, etc. Adaptation to the new role is therefore necessary to survive and to find one's place inside the new system. The principal's new role is often misinterpreted since he or she is simultaneously a member and an employee of the board. Being part of the governing body and having to implement decisions made creates tensions and confrontational situations for both principal and board. For many, this situation is a source of persistent anxiety and stress, even after a tran-

sition period stretching over several years. Macpherson (1993) describes the psychological impact in this manner:

. . . displaced persons had to let go a part of their professional selves and be bereaved, as it were, before constructing a revalued self in an emergent organizational culture. . . . in each case, in the midst of internal trauma, the person had to reconstruct the metavalues of self as they negotiated a place in a developing organization. (pp. 75-76)

As a major consequence, the workload of teachers and principals has increased significantly but also a sense of ownership has developed in the community vis-à-vis the local school. These situations have been confirmed by research done since the inception of the reform process. One of the principals interviewed summarizes the situation very clearly when he says:

. . . workloads have increased as a result of the reform and certainly for a principal there's no doubt that their workload has increased very considerably indeed because they are now needing to interface with their own individual board of governors as well and all the politics that comes with it. And reporting to the ministry and particularly the interaction with the Education Review Office is pretty demanding in terms of the accountability regime. Teachers would say their workload has increased but I think that's been as much to do with curriculum reform as it has with administrative reform. The curriculum reform would have happened anyway, so I don't think that the issue for workload for individual classroom teachers is as much a product of administrative reform as curriculum reform.

### *Choice and competition*

Given that this reform is based on a corporate model, individual choice and market principles are the operating elements of the educational system. As a consequence, competition between and within schools, between teachers and between learners is promoted and valued. Emphasis is given to a nation-wide evaluation system that allows comparison between the academic performance of schools. Seven years after the initial implementation, a study (Wylie, 1997) has shown that only 21 percent of surveyed schools see themselves in competition with other schools, and half of the schools consider that their relations with other schools are rather cordial and cooperative. Schools in the competitive category are mainly from urban areas, spread over the whole socio-economic continuum. According to this study, nothing proves that competition has had a positive effect on schools or that it has improved the quality of education by increasing opportunities for the underprivileged class. Observations and analysis done by the author show a

striking disparity between wealthy urban schools and schools operating in lower socio-economic environments, in terms of the quality of promotional material, services, programmes, and physical facilities. According to Whitty (1997):

. . . research studies suggest that any of the differences between schools result from factors largely beyond the control of parents and schools, except the power of advantaged parents and advantaged schools to further enhance their advantage and thus increase educational inequalities and social polarization. (p. 17)

### *Maori education*

With the arrival of the first white settlers and the inclusion of New Zealand in the British Empire, relations between Maori people and the new inhabitants were somewhat strained. The colonial policies were mainly based on assimilation, integration, multiculturalism, and biculturalism. The consequences of such policies were disastrous for the Maori people in "language maintenance with consequent impact on cultural retention and identity" (Bishop, 1998, p. 2). However, cultural relationships improved with the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi of 1840 with the British Crown. The Treaty of Waitangi was a first step towards a long, arduous and often tumultuous struggle for recognition of the Maori people as equal partners; a struggle that lasted for almost a hundred and fifty years. Bishop (1998) summarizes this social evolution quite well:

Maori people have long seen the treaty as a charter for power sharing in the decision making processes of this country, for Maori determination of their own destiny as the indigenous people of New Zealand and as the guide to future development of New Zealand. Post Treaty Government Policy in New Zealand has moved from one initially totally opposed to these aspirations to one only recently attempting to come to terms with Maori and non-Maori aspirations for equity and social justice through self-determination. (p. 1)

After such a long struggle for recognition, the present reform opens the door for Maori emancipation and involvement and especially the control of their own educational and cultural affairs.

The Maori representatives interviewed feel that competition and choice are not a threat to the survival and progression of their culture and language. On the contrary, they see the reform as an opportunity to close the gap with Pakeha (white) society and to enhance access to self-determination. For most Maori leaders, the reform process represents the ideal context for implementing the terms of the Treaty of Waitangi



which, according to their historical perspective, has never been respected by Pakeha society. As said earlier, the treaty recognized Maori people as an equal partner, much as a founding nation. However, as pointed out by Bishop (1998), the implementation is not one of partnership of two peoples developing a nation but a history of political, social and economic domination by the Pakeha majority, and the marginalization of the Maori people. For most people, the advent of Maori medium schools (Kupa Kupapa Maori) is simply the result of that struggle and part of the process of self-determination. As pointed out by one of the interviewees:

I think that when we look at Maori aspirations in the area of education, they go alongside their aspirations for economic development. They need to be seen alongside. The claims that they gave for land, for restoration of resources lost in the past and the process that the government is going through to redress those, you've got to look at an increasing number of tribes taking a lot more control of their own affairs, of their own business, starting to negotiate, win contracts with government to provide social services, health services and so on. In a sense, education is possibly the last activity they got into, especially the school system.

Before the reform, Maori had a choice between mainstream schools and bilingual schools. With Tomorrow's Schools and subsequent legislation (Education Act, 1990), the Government supported the creation of Kupa Kupapa Maori and reaffirmed the terms of the Treaty as a base for all interactions between the two ethnic groups. The advent of Kupa Kupapa Maori is considered a step toward the revival of Maori culture, language, and customs and a conciliatory gesture coming from Pakeha society. Reactions to such a change are positive: "We don't want to look back at the past. We're finished with that. We don't want to blame anybody, we're finished with blaming. . . . the days of conflict and tension with the State are over." One of the Maori leaders we interviewed puts it well in perspective:

But I think that the most important part is that Maoris have actually got a foot in the door for control of education as they never had before. It's quite different. So I think that's where the significant change in reforms has come about, where actual group of Maori parents can apply for their own schools to the Minister. They've done it fifty-nine times already . . . that certainly signals quite clearly to the general public and to the country, that the government doesn't mind sitting down with Maori to negotiate a school for them.

However, such a rapid expansion is not without growing pains. A new curriculum had to be written and a new breed of teachers had

to be recruited in a cultural environment fairly different from mainstream Pakeha society. The situation is well described by a Maori leader interviewed:

Basically, what happened was they tended to take teachers out of the mainstream system who would speak the language and transfer them into Kupa Kupapa Maori. However, the advocates of Kupa Kupapa Maori were not happy with that approach because what they wanted to do was to develop a whole Maori philosophy on how schools should operate. So they came up with a philosophy called Kupapa Maori. It's a sort of holistic philosophy which looks at the whole child and includes the family. So the family has an instrumental role in how the school is run . . . People have a problem with boards of trustees because boards of trustees are limited in numbers of representatives. In other words, they only have nine people maximum whereas according to Maori customs (tikanka Maori) it is the whole family that should be involved and if it happens to be twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, sixty people, then they should all have a turn.

For most Maori interviewed, the reform has had some very positive results for Maori education and offered new opportunities for cultural, linguistic, and economic development. The fact it was implemented very rapidly is also seen as an advantage:

From my perspective, I think that, from a macro policy point of view, it's provided some significant opportunities that probably would not have come had the reforms been implemented quite slowly. People might have had time to actually knock them back and say we're not ready to do that.

### *Conclusion*

The research literature shows that New Zealand's teachers and principals reported high level of stress, a desire to leave the profession, and a decline in job satisfaction and morale which amounts to a fairly high cost in human terms (Wylie, 1997; Gordon, 1992a, 1992b). New duties, longer work hours and a modified role within the school and community seem to be the most prevalent causes for this situation. On the other hand, a good number have adapted to their new role and they operate their school as a business. Some principals are going as far as taking the title of CEO. During the last several years, a number of urban schools have started hiring principals coming from the industrial sector. These newcomers have had no pedagogical training and are business administrators by training and experience (Wylie, 1997). However, most interviewees said they would not like to return to the old system and are adamant in recognizing the benefits of reform.

I posit that government has implemented the reform process with a lot of political acumen but has fallen short of its original intents due to public reactions. By recognizing the Maori minority as an equal partner and providing them with their own school system, the government presented itself as a defender of equity and social justice and by the same token deflected major criticisms which might have impeded implementation. In this particular context, the support expressed towards the reform process by Maori interviewees is quite understandable and self-explanatory. However, after a decade of changes, any informed observer can easily conclude that there are widening gaps between schools, based on geographical and socio-economic factors, and that students' performance has not changed significantly as a whole. Corrective measures have been initiated by government in recent years to bring those schools to the national average, state interventions that are not ideal conditions for a market education system.

The implementation process in New Zealand is not yet over. Pressure to implement an integral corporate model is still very strong. For example, the New Zealand Business Roundtable, a lobby group representing the interests of the finance and corporate sectors, is calling for the implementation of the corporate model in its integrity. This particular lobby argues that governmental reforms have not gone far enough and have not created the required conditions for a market education system. The organization strongly encourages its members to get elected for office on their local boards of trustees in order to foster its agenda. This means that poorly performing schools would lose their market share and be forced to close while those that do a better job will prosper and expand. The New Zealand government has not gone that far yet because people are not willing to accept such a narrow focused education that would cater to corporate needs only at the expense of society as a whole. Basically, reforms based on the integral corporate model represent a special case where consumer and corporate interests are in conflict with citizen rights and public good.

The New Zealand experiment forces us to reflect on our own Canadian experience with educational reforms. Most Canadian Provinces have borrowed pieces and components of the corporate model in their recent attempts to reform the system. However, the question remains how far our provincial governments are willing to go to satisfy corporate demands and, at the same time, protect citizen rights and public good. Major corporations and the media are mighty adversaries in the political arena and one has to wonder if our governments are willing to do,

and capable of doing, what they were elected for. Not many Canadians will argue against the need for major changes in our educational system except a few teachers' unions which have hijacked public education for their own benefits. However, joining the posse created by media and the corporate lobby against public education would be suicidal for the future of our democracy and would open the door for consumerist brainwashing in an educational system mostly controlled by corporate values, where education is not viewed as a public good but as a market commodity. These are the *enjeux* of the next millennium.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author would like to acknowledge the participation of government officials, professional associations and union representatives, university and college professors/administrators, trustees, principals, teachers, parents and representatives of the Maori people who so graciously and openly participated in the interview process.

#### REFERENCES

- Allen, J. (1995). *Charter schools*. Washington, DC: The Center for Education Reform.
- Aronowitz, S., & Giroux, H. A. (1993). *Education still under siege*. Toronto, ON: OISE Press.
- Barlosky, M., & Lawton, S. (1994). *Developing quality schools: A handbook*. Toronto, ON: Kodak & Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.
- Barlow, M., & Robertson, H.-J. (1994). *Class warfare: The assault on Canada's schools*. Toronto, ON: Key Porter Books.
- Barnabé, C. (1997). *La gestion totale de la qualité en éducation*. Montréal, QC: Les Éditions LOGIQUES.
- Barnabé, C. (1995). *Introduction à la qualité totale en éducation*. Cap-Rouge, QC: Les Presses Inter Universitaires.
- Bierlein, L., & Mulholland, L. (1995). *Charter school update & observations regarding initial trends and impacts* (Policy Brief). Tempe, AZ: Morrison Institute for Public Policy.
- Bierlein, L., & Mulholland, L. (1994). *Charter school update: Expansion of a viable reform initiative*. Tempe, AZ: Morrison Institute for Public Policy.
- Bishop, R. (1998). *The development of Kupapa Maori education initiatives in Aotearoa/New Zealand*. Paper presented at the Joint OECD/New Zealand Ministry of Education Conference, Christchurch, NZ.
- Bonstingl, J. J. (1992a). The total quality classroom. *Educational Leadership*, 49(6), 66-70.
- Bonstingl, J. J. (1992b). *Schools of quality: An introduction to Total Quality Management in education*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Boston, J., Martin, J., Pallot, J., & Walsh, P. (1996). *Public Management: The New Zealand Model*. Auckland, NZ: Oxford University Press.
- Brown, F., & Contreras, A. R. (1991). Deregulation and privatization of education. *Education and Urban Societies*, 23(2), 144-158.
- Conseil supérieur de l'éducation. (1993). *La gestion de l'éducation: nécessité d'un autre modèle*. Québec: Gouvernement du Québec.

## ***Public Education at the Dawn of the New Millennium***

- Cornesky, R. A. (1993). *The quality professor: Implementing TQM in the classroom*. Madison, WI: Magna Publishing.
- Deming, W. E. (1992). *The new economics for industry, education and government*. Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Center for Advanced Engineering Study.
- Deming, W. E. (1986). *Out of the crisis*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Deming, W. E. (1982). *Quality, productivity, and competitive position*. Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Center for Advanced Engineering Study.
- Editorial. (1992, June 12). Competition in education. *The Financial Post*, p. 8.
- Editorial. (1992, December 31). Education on trial. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A5.
- Editorial. (1992, December 28). Education on trial. *The Globe and Mail*, pp. A6-A7.
- Education Review Office. (1997). *Report of the Education Review Office for the year ended 30 June 1997*. Wellington, NZ: Ministry of Education.
- Education Review Office. (1996a). *Addressing barriers to learning* (number 6). Wellington, NZ: Ministry of Education.
- Education Review Office. (1996b). *A report on the compulsory schools sector in New Zealand*. Wellington, NZ: Ministry of Education.
- Freedman, J. (1995). *The charter school idea*. Red Deer, AB: The Society for Advancing Educational Research.
- Glasser, W. (1990). *The quality school*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Gordon, L. (1995). Controlling education: Agency theory and the reformation of New Zealand schools. *Educational Policy*, 9(1), 54-74.
- Gordon, L. (1992a). *Educational reform in New Zealand: Contesting the role of the teacher*. Paper presented at the International Sociology of Education Conference (England, United Kingdom, January, 1992), (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 353 174)
- Gordon, L. (1992b). The state, devolution and educational reform in New Zealand. *Journal of Education Policy*, 7(2), 187-203.
- Government of New Zealand. (1988). *Tomorrow's schools: The reform of educational administration in New Zealand*. Wellington, NZ: Government Printer.
- Greider, W. (1997). *One world, ready or not: The manic logic of global capitalism*. New York, NY: Touchstone.
- Haché, D. (1998). Strategic planning of distance education in the age of teleinformatics. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration*, 1(2), State University of West Georgia, Distance Education Center. Available: <http://www.westga.edu/~distance/Hache12.html>[1998, June 15].
- Holdaway, T. (1989). An outsider's view of Tomorrow's Schools. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Administration*, (4), 35-40.
- Holt, M. (1993a). The educational consequences of W. Edwards Deming. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 74(5), 382-388.
- Holt, M. (1993b). Deming on education: A view from the seminar. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 75(4), 329-330.
- Lieberman, M. (1993). *Public education: An autopsy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Lieberman, M. (1989). *Privatization and educational choice*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.
- Lieberman, M. (1986). *Beyond public education*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

- Macpherson, R. J. S. (1993). The reconstruction of New Zealand education: A case of 'High-Politics' reform. In H. Beare & W. Lowe Boyd (Eds.), *Restructuring schools: An international perspective on the movement to transform the control and performance of schools*. Washington, DC: The Falmer Press. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED393 217)
- Millot, M. D. (1995, April). *What are charter schools? An introduction to the concept and the statutes*. Seattle, WA: RAND Corporation/University of Washington.
- Moen, R. (1989). *The Deming philosophy for improving the educational process*. Cincinnati, OH: Associates in Process Improvement.
- Pipho, C. (1994). Choice - Vouchers and privatization. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 74(1), 6-7.
- Report of the Task Force to Review Educational Administration. (1988). *Administering for excellence (The Picot Report)*. Wellington, NZ: Government Printer.
- Rist, M. C. (1991, September). Education, Inc. *The American School Board Journal*, 178(9), 24-29.
- Saul, J. R. (1995). *The unconscious civilization*. Concord, ON: House of Anansi Press Limited.
- State Services Commission. (1996). *New Zealand's state sector reform: A decade of change*. Wellington, NZ: Government Printer.
- Stevens, K. (1994). *A framework for the analysis of shared decision making in rural New Zealand schools*. Paper presented at the International Conference held by the Rural Education Research and Development Centre, Australia.
- Starr, P. (1987). The limits of privatization. In S. Hanke (Ed.), *Prospects for Privatization*, 36(3), 124-137.
- The Economic Council of Canada. (1992). *A lot to learn: Education and training in Canada*. Ottawa, ON: Ministry of Supply and Services.
- The Edison Project. (1996). *Partnership school design*. New York, NY: The Edison Project.
- Whitty, G. (1997). Creating a quasi-market in education: A review of recent research on parental choice and school autonomy in three continents. In M. W. Apple (Ed.), *Review of research in education*. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.
- Whitty, G., Power, S., & Halpin, D. (1998). *Devolution and choice in education: The school, the state and the market*. Bristol, PA: Open University Press.
- Wylie, C. (1997). *Self-managing schools seven years on: What have we learnt?* Wellington, NZ: New Zealand Council for Education Research.

DENIS HACHÉ is Associate Professor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto and Head of the "Centre de recherches en éducation du Nouvel-Ontario (CRÉNO)" located in Sudbury, Ontario. He is particularly interested in the inclusion of distance education and teleinformatics at secondary and postsecondary levels, educational reforms, strategic planning and French minority education outside Québec.

DENIS HACHÉ est professeur agrégé à l'Institut d'études pédagogiques de l'Ontario de l'Université de Toronto et directeur du "Centre de recherches en éducation du Nouvel-Ontario (CRÉNO)" situé à Sudbury (Ontario). Il s'intéresse tout particulièrement à l'intégration de l'enseignement à distance et de la téléinformatique aux niveaux secondaire et postsecondaire, à la réforme de l'éducation, à la planification stratégique et à l'enseignement des minorités francophones en hors-Québec.