

Preface

Since its establishment, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives has provided research on social policy and economic issues from a progressive perspective. Recently, the CCPA began the Education Project to examine public education, its role in Canadian society, and the ways in which it is being criticized, dismantled and increasingly privatized.

The CCPA Education Monitor is a quarterly publication which reports on these and other education-related issues. In addition, the CCPA has begun to produce a series of reports—Education, Limited— which will provide more detailed analysis of the increasing corporate intrusion in Canadian public education.

“The North American Education Industry and Education Restructuring in Canada,” is the first in the Education, Limited series. The CCPA Education Project will produce four reports annually, each examining a different aspect of the privatization of public education, from charter schools, to contracting-out of services, to corporate-sponsored curriculum, including individual analyses detailing significant instances of commercialization and privatization. Education, Limited will also provide an overview of the restructuring of public education, province by province, in order to illustrate the provincial, national and international forces to which our classrooms, teachers and students are being subjected.

Education, Limited will also be compiling a thorough reference list of individuals and organizations working to protect and strengthen public education, as well as those corporations and organizations seeking to privatize it through various methods of “reform,” making the CCPA Education Project an invaluable resource for anyone concerned with the restructuring of education in Canada. ☺

Introduction

“Education must be understood as producing not only knowledge but also political subjects. Rather than rejecting the language of politics, critical pedagogy must link public education to the imperatives of a critical democracy.”

(Henry Giroux, Margins in the Classroom 38)

The call for education restructuring has taken on the air of inevitability in recent discussion. Fiscal restraint, we are told, demands that we rethink our expectations of educational institutions, as well as the role schools must play in the new global economy.¹ Consequently, when examining education restructuring, we must always bear this global and economic context in mind. Changes to Canadian public education are not occurring in a vacuum; rather, they are only a part—albeit an extremely significant one—of a wider discussion which demands that our public institutions be submitted to market forces, or “capitalism’s new frontier.” Only in this way, according to the rhetoric, can we be guaranteed equal, competitive, and therefore quality social services.

The importance of school—educational institutions—is almost universally unquestioned in our society. What has not remained con-

stant, however, is the notion of what the *responsibility* of the school is...or, rather, if the responsibility of the school is to educate its students and prepare them for life and citizenry, does our notion of the term “educate” change? Does preparation for life and citizenry mean, simply, employment? Or something broader, far less tangible, far more difficult to measure? How do our changing notions of what it is to be “educated” determine the extent to which we feel our schools have succeeded or failed? Finally, who is it that defines the goals of an education, and explains to us what our expectations of the school system should be?

Public education occupies a fundamental position in democratic society.² To insist that every individual regardless of race, gender, age or socioeconomic position is entitled to a quality public education, provided by and for the public, says a great deal—in fact, says everything—

about our values as individuals and, more importantly, as a society. At the same time, mandatory school attendance virtually guarantees the school an enormous influence on each student, as well as on the wider community.

To a certain extent the school is always caught between these two conflicting discourses: one of empowering students³, and one of training (indoctrinating?) students (as future workers and consumers)⁴. Of course, the potential for both remains inherent within a mandatory and universal system of public education. What we must ask ourselves is: which discourse appears to be gaining in importance as a result of recent government restructuring, and why? In what way does this restructuring contribute to an education system which reproduces social hierarchy, defines and prepares students (as future workers and consumers) for their lot in life, and normalizes the language and requirements of the economy and workforce, effectively conflating “training” and “skills” with “education” and “knowledge”?

But this analysis is not enough. What we are witnessing is a massive overhaul of the education system, most recently justified by the so-called “crisis” in education; the crisis is, simply, schools are not, according to the government and the corporate sector, turning out properly “educated” students. And, according to the National Alliance of Business, the fundamental respon-

sibility of the school is to “teach basic skills.” This, then, is the corporate sector’s definition of education. And, in their neglect of this corporate-determined responsibility, schools have failed: this is the so-called “crisis” in public education.

But even this is not enough to prove that public schools have failed Canadians. What is necessary is the complete denigration of the public system: “public” is now associated with free (no charge, and therefore no value) and non-competitive, meaning without quality. On the other hand, “private” is associated with competition, responding to consumer (market) demands, and therefore synonymous with quality, according to this rhetoric. “if we really want to improve education,” the discourse goes, “we need to rediscover the power of unregulated markets” (Rinehart and Lee Jr. 2).

In spite of these two massive campaigns (one pseudo-factual, one ideological) aligned against public education, it would be politically impossible to call for the abolition of universal public education. Think of the horrifying implication that the government was giving an unfair advantage to the children of the privileged! What does, however, appear to be perfectly acceptable is for the government to “encourage” (and I use the term loosely) public education to be more responsive to competition and market demands, in order to foster school improvement.

This responsiveness takes the form of increased private sector

involvement—from corporate donations, to outsourcing of programs and school services, to, finally, the complete privatization of public education. John McLaughlin, editor of the Education Industry Report, chillingly illustrates the role education has played in society, and the ways in which it must change if the corporate sector is to tolerate it in the new market economy. “Public education is a critical component of America’s infrastructure. It has not outlived its usefulness to this country, but unless it embraces the emerging education marketplace, its power and significance will rapidly diminish as people choose superior free market options...It’s time for education to roll up its sleeves and play hardball on capitalism’s new frontier” (EIR 2, March 1997).

To fully comprehend the enormous resources and effort behind the movement to privatize public education, we must look at what

has come to be known as the Education Industry, representing over \$600 billion in the United States and \$60 billion in Canada (both figures in US dollars). Certainly it has been of enough significance to prompt the Fraser Institute to have a “continuing thrust” into the area of privatization of education, also called “education choice.”

The Fraser also demonstrates the *international* reach of the Education Industry. National boundaries are, once again, reduced in importance as the Fraser Institute plans to establish international links, particularly with the Friedman Foundation, to pursue this field of interest from a global perspective. Estimated costs of this project are a quarter of a million dollars a year for the next five years. Clearly, the privatization of education has already attracted the attention, and the financial support, of an influential and wealthy segment of Canadian society.

The North American Education Market Context

“We are now entering a form of corporate capitalism in which capital has expanded into areas previously unsullied by the language and logic of commodity exchange.”

(Peter McLaren 37)

The Education Industry, a term coined in 1994 by EduVentures Inc., investment bankers and consultants to public and private education companies (“private ventures for the public good”), has recently been estimated to be from \$630 billion (EduVentures) to \$680 billion (Lehman Brothers) in the United States. Market Data Retrieval has estimated the Canadian education market for 1995-96 at \$57.5 billion in U.S. dollars. It is interesting to note the glowing terminology used to describe public education—at least, from a marketing perspective. According to the Cape Cod Times, the education industry is growing at 25% annually, and the stock value of 30 publicly-traded education companies increased more than twice as fast as the Dow Jones average. In the past three years, literally hundreds of education businesses have been established across North America. EduVentures’ self-described role is to develop strategic

plans for these companies through proprietary research, corporate partnering, and providing access to capital.

There are a variety of reasons for this explosion in the education market. Perhaps the most significant are the most obvious; very simply, the market is enormous, and the importance of education and training is virtually unquestioned by society. Unquestioned is the key term because this sets up the potential to justify virtually any restructuring in the name of education/training improvement, and it provides a limitless market precisely because of how education and training are perceived by the public—as fundamental, and the ultimate investment in our future.

According to EduVentures, however, industry growth is predominantly driven by four other factors: the increasing importance of education to career success; dramatic developments in education technology; the pressure of rising

costs and poor results of public education: and changing demographics which increase demand for pre-school, language instruction, and special services. In other words, society's changing needs, the association of education with employment, increased emphasis on technology, and the well-publicized crisis in education have contributed to the need for alternatives "to serve the diverse and changing needs of the education consumer, as well as the private and non-profit education establishment." This, in turn, has resulted in the incredible, and apparently limitless success of the education industry; according to EduVentures, "as these companies succeed, they pave the way for new ventures to follow." Everyone can expect or demand a piece of this pie.

It seems that the education crisis—or at least the claim that there is one—is a fundamental reason for the success of the education industry. In fact, according to Montgomery Securities, "from an investment perspective, this [education] crisis has created an enormous opportunity and powerful momentum for those companies with solutions to our educational problems—whether through better management of traditional resources or the innovative application of technology." This is an intriguing set-up: a crisis is *necessary* to justify the claims that the school system is failing, thereby requiring an overhaul and permitting the lucrative investment which is currently ensuing at an explosive rate. One

has to wonder which factor is truly the catalyst. We will be examining the so-called "crisis" in education in more detail in the following section of this analysis.

It is also interesting that those aspects of an education system which have resulted from society's changing needs (e.g., child care, kindergarten, adult education, night school, extra tutoring) have been, for the most part threatened and even eliminated by government restructuring, in the name of fiscal restraint and "belt tightening." These very aspects are enjoying increasing popularity in the private sector as private day care, private tutoring centres, and private educational institutions for adult students (DeVry and the Toronto School of Business) are reaping the enormous financial benefits of the cutting of these programs from our public educational institutions.

THE YOUTH MARKET

- Understand how to predict trends in order to spot the next success story and get the jump on your competition
- Utilize the latest information technology and multi-media in order to add impact to your marketing campaign
- Hear the results of the latest international studies on child and youth attitudes, values and brand choices
- Learn how to build long term relationships with schools and teachers in order to position your product with students
- Hear from our panel on the best strategies for targeting the teen market
- Develop a comprehensive sponsorship program in order to maximize your one to one marketing possibilities

(The Fourth Annual Canadian Consumer Kids Conference brochure)

As a group, kids are, to put it simply, rich. According to StatsCan, kids spend \$1.5 billion each year, and influence how an additional \$15 billion is spent. Children marketing expert Carol Green Levinstein of Children's Creative Marketing (Markham, ON) explains that "the financial clout of the children's market is growing, therefore marketers are paying more attention to it." More attention, Green Levinstein continues, means that marketers must get into children's heads, to find out their "hot buttons"; Disney, for one, has done remarkably well in this area.

One of the results of realizing the wealth of this consumer group is intensified target marketing; to get into kids' heads, marketers must go where kids are. And, for 6-7 hours a day, five days a week, 9 months of the year, this means school. It's no accident that school-business relationships have been cited as one of the top 10 "Hot Marketing Areas" of the '90s (Canadian Consumer Kids). And that fact alone is reason to take a closer look at corporate educational endeavours which are often labeled "philanthropic."

One of the first workshops at the Canadian Consumer Kids Conference was a session on the global teen culture entitled "Welcome to Teen Planet." This talk explained how teens were what linked the world together because teens shared predominantly the same culture—consumer culture. They were unified by Nike, the NBA, Levis, MTV,

their phone, and Coca Cola. In fact, teens could be all reached simultaneously by the media and their shared entertainment tastes by what was called the "big brother station," with "all eyes glued in the same place at the same time": a good thing for marketers. But, with all teens becoming more like each other, linked by "America's #1 export—values" we can expect radical improvements in the world. More tolerance. No wars. Openness. And greater instances of entrepreneurship. It seems unclear whether these things all *naturally* follow from an international army wearing the same jeans and shoes and T-shirts, all swilling the same beverage while watching MTV and chatting on the phone to each other about Shaquille O'Neill's latest antics on the basketball court. But as one presenter put it when explaining how to ensure teen interest in your product, "don't worry too much—if you build it, they will come."

Even more interesting than Teen Planet was the scheduled workshop on developing relationships with schools. Those attending the conference were promised they would learn how to build and maintain "long term educational relationships with schools and teachers to position your product with integrity" by:

- Creating ethical win-win situations through the development of long term relationships with teachers and schools

- Understanding the educational culture and responding to the specific sensitivities
- Using your relationship with schools to reach students and their prescriptors
- Recognizing the role of teachers, parents and prescriptors as parents and influencers
- Developing innovative marketing programs which appeal to both students and educators.

There is clearly something unique about the school environment that has the corporate sector clamouring to be involved in developing school curriculum. According to Cunningham Gregory and Company, “a well-designed educational initiative is a vital cornerstone of a corporation’s communication and marketing strategy. It increases the corporation’s profile in the community and it allows the corporation to directly influence today’s consumer and the future work force.”

Obviously, corporations stand to benefit a great deal from their involvement in education, both by improving their social image, but also by direct access to students, or,

as Elliot Ettenberg calls them, “evolving consumers.” Why the classroom, though? Because it’s an environment “that kids love and adults trust.” Because these educational programs “ensure that vital messages can be delivered where they may most effectively change behaviour or attitudes.” It’s significant that Cunningham Gregory’s description of what constitutes an educational program does not once mention accurate, unbiased, or even well-researched information.

The classroom is clearly a unique and powerful environment in which to target students; for one thing, according to What! A Magazine promotional material, it’s uncluttered, so your advertised message is more likely to stand out. It’s an environment of trust and familiarity, where what the teacher as authority figure says is likely to be thought of as true by the listening students. What better way to target “future consumers” (as called by Procter and Gamble) than in this environment where the teacher becomes the most effective corporate spokesperson, and where parents (or “gatekeepers”) are not there to monitor corporate content?

KNOWLEDGE AS A COMMODITY

“The future challenge of education is not to make better classrooms but **to be able to deliver, receive, filter, process and utilize information rapidly whenever and wherever it is desired or needed.**”

(Montgomery Securities 8)

“What’s clear is [that] this is **not so much an info highway, but an entertainment highway.**”

(Bell Atlantic Executive, qtd. in Doug Noble 18)

One of the most interesting aspects of the education industry is the redefining of knowledge and information as commodities which can be bought and sold as any other. According to Montgomery Securities, “economic success in the emerging knowledge-based economy—of a country, corporation or individual—demands that enormous brainpower be acquired and continually replenished as a lifelong necessity. Those who are effectively educated and trained through the active acquisition, delivery and processing of this exponentially changing information will be able to survive and thrive economically. Those who do not will be rendered economically obsolete” (2).

We are living in what is called the “new knowledge-based economy,” where the most important resources are brainpower and information acquisition, delivery, and processing. In a strange Platonic allusion, Montgomery Securities claims that “survival in this new world assumes the ability to conquer

the physical as a given commodity” (2). This esoteric philosophy seems to directly contradict the very (physically-based) reason companies like Montgomery Securities and EduVentures Inc. and their clients are involved in the education industry: to mine the resources of this unplumbed market and acquire capital. And, based on the financial reports from the education industry’s giants, these profits are almost unprecedented. Certainly, it has been significant enough to prompt the private sector to develop a new acronym—CKO: Chief Knowledge Officer.⁵

This of course begs the question: if traditional resources like coal, lumber and oil are now effectively controlled by the private sector, who will control the new intellectually-based resources of the ’90s? And what are the implications of this control? Within this context, we should examine the names of companies like “Global Knowledge Network,” “Knowledge Pool” and “Mindscape” more closely. We are aware that

knowledge is power, but the corporate clamour for knowledge-as-an-economic-resource underscores the extent to which capital is inextricably implicated in this economic power equation.

Full and unlimited access to the “information highway” does not come without a sizeable price tag. According to Dr. Herbert Schiller (author of *Culture Inc.*), “information has always been, in part, a commodity. Books and newspapers were always sold. But a really massive change has been under way due to the technologies that can transfer and reorganize bits of data and information, and now an area that never had the attention of private enterprise is being recognized as a source of massive profit...Information...is no longer freely available to the public, but to whoever can pay for it at the prices that are commercially established. Putting basic items or basic kinds of goods into a commercial format, you almost automatically create divisions in your society, because not everybody has the same ability to pay. And this is what’s going on. The entire education system is experiencing this trend, from the public schools to the universities” (*Information Superhighway: 500 Ways to Pave over the Public*).

Technology plays an enormous role in knowledge-as-a-commodity, so much so that it is becoming virtually impossible to think of education without also thinking of the technology used in the classroom. “A computer on every desk” was the battle cry of Ontario Minister of Education and Training John Snobelen. Elementary and High Schools across Canada are clamouring to be on-line: according to one CEO, the goal of Canada’s SchoolNet was to have every school on-line by June of 1997 (we seem to have fallen a bit short of that goal). SchoolNet, a project of Industry Canada, is a multi-million dollar public-private initiative linking teachers and students to the “global reservoir of information” available on-line. The internet is proposed to be the salvation of Distance and Rural Education, and, we are told, will revolutionize the way we think of school, information, knowledge and learning.

Initial attempts in the United States to bring technology into schools required not only enormous sums of money, but a concerted effort to bring all of the “scattered, uncoordinated programs in computer-based instruction” (Noble 16) together under one program. What

TECHNOLOGY IS POWER

“In the 1990s, we need to revisit the idea that technology is usually developed by and for the group in power, to maintain and extend that power.”

(Moll, “Who Will Thrive in the Information Age?” 23)

resulted was the development of a strategically vague term which was broad enough to contain all technological “innovations,” while remaining quite impossible to pin down in a single definition. According to Andrew Molnar, director of the Office of Computing Activities at the National Science Foundation (NSF), “we started computer literacy in ’72. We coined that phrase. It’s sort of ironic. Nobody knows what computer literacy is. Nobody can define it. And the reason we selected computer literacy was because nobody could define it, and nobody knew what it was, and that it was a broad enough term that you could get all of these programs together under one roof” (Noble 16).

According to Montgomery Securities, the time for involvement in the education market is ripe for a variety of reasons—in fact, the timing has never been better, from a “crisis” perspective. And technology has a crucial role to play here. But it is significant that in this equation technology is *not once* referred to as a tool, but rather as a master which *requires* these changes to our school system: “The timing for entry into the education and training market has never been better...as the problems with American education have elevated education reform to a high political priority and technology is demanding and enabling a transformation in the delivery of education....If health care is a good indicator, private companies will benefit strongly from a climate that

stresses change and technology that enables it to occur” (10).

Clearly, the question is whether technology enables these changes, or requires them. Notably, a resource database called “Curriculum Orchestrator” recommended by Technological Horizons in Education (THE) Journal “indicates which resources would be appropriate for an upcoming lesson” (“MacAdemic” 5/97), effectively displacing the teacher or anyone in immediate contact with students from the selection process of what material should be taught, and in which context.

To what extent is the technological revolution facilitating...or demanding...or *requiring* these changes to the education system and our expectations of it? THE Journal maintains that “Technology gives teachers and students unlimited grassroots power that will ultimately challenge fundamental notions of how we divide educational content, define and partition school days, and group classes. Telecommunications will revolutionize our educational future...”(Dyrli 2). But the so-called “democratizing nature” of the internet is extremely suspect, because it implies that all students, regardless of culture, socio-economic background, gender, location, or age have the same access to this technology, which is a complete misrepresentation of the facts.

The most avid promoters of computers in the classroom see minimal benefits in the “use” of human teachers, who are referred to in some

circles as the “vertical [i.e. standing] workforce.” According to Technos, Quarterly for Education and Technology, “In many ways, computers are the ideal teacher. Unlike their human colleagues, computers are never too harried to answer a question, never too distracted to notice a student is puzzled. They always proceed at each child’s own pace, presenting information in a variety of ways until students show that they understand the material. The best computerized tutors can capture and hold a child’s attention for hours” (Cetron 19). It is interesting that the very arguments for the superiority of human contact in the classroom are used to demonstrate the superiority of student-computer interaction: personal attention, flexibility, dedication and patience.

What is clearest, however, is the way in which the use of technology inherently requires enormous practical, structural and theoretical changes to education, though these changes are disguised as resulting from the “democratization” of education for teachers and students. A recent Information Technology As-

sociation of Canada (ITAC) press release states that “it is mandatory that we develop an educational process that supports the rapid evolution of technologies” (Moll, “Canadian Classrooms on the Information Highway: Connected to What?” 24)—nothing is said about developing an educational process that supports the evolution or growth of students. Significantly, ITAC is closely connected to Industry Canada’s SchoolNet initiative. There is also, not coincidentally, a corresponding SchoolNet-type movement in the United States, heavily supported by the telecommunications industry, as well as the Presidency.

We must always be prepared to ask who is profiting from the increasingly popular technological-classroom. It is clear that the insistence on increased use of classroom technology has resulted in a marketing boom for investors in the education industry. At the Fourth Annual Canadian Consumer Kids Conference (1996) in Toronto, Ontario, along with business/education relationships (“partner”ships), technology was cited as another of the top 10 hot marketing areas of the ’90s.

The Language of Crisis

“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](#))

The so-called “crisis” in education is an issue which has been well-analyzed and challenged by books such as Maude Barlow’s and Heather-jane Robertson’s *Class Warfare: the Assault on Canada’s Schools*. Barlow and Robertson counter the widely publicized myths about our “failing” public education system by providing the political, social and economic context—and the agenda—behind these claims of public school inferiority. This report will not attempt to summarize the work of these authors; however, I will present some of the terminology which is used to structure the education discussion within the discourse of “crisis” or “failure,” to the extent that it has become difficult to think of schools of doing anything but failing our kids...or, at the very least, not providing them with the skills they need for their future place in Canadian—and global—society.

“Falling through the cracks”

is an expression increasingly heard when looking at our school system, and is applied to more and more students. Last fall the *Globe and Mail*’s “Guide to Education” took “Falling Through the Cracks” as its front page title, with an image of students tumbling and plunging through space. Two highlighted “success stories” were of one student who dropped out of school to enter the workforce, and another who left university to go into business information at Community College because her high school had misled her, resulting in a disastrous stint at university. Subsequent articles detail how public schools must be “helped” (by post-secondary institutions and parents) in order to ensure that kids can “really learn” (Lewington C3).

“Helping the Young Find Employers” is another article which reiterates how a high school diploma—even a post-secondary one—does not guarantee a job. The remedy is

Experience Canada, a 10-month program sponsored by the Council for Canadian Unity, which “matches employer needs with the young person’s skills.” One business participant explained his dissatisfaction with Experience Canada: “Companies should be involved in the initial orientation [where basic training and skill identification were conducted], so the participants better understand the demands of employers. ‘The workplace is a real business,’ he says. ‘[The participants] weren’t prepared for that’” (Lewington C5). Experience Canada also “underscores the need for job mobility and flexibility in a knowledge-driven economy” as the values of the program, though the suggestion that these values are somehow taught in an objective manner without attempting to direct the minds of the participants is truly an incredible feat, given the business sector’s insistence on greater involvement in preparing students for workplace “realities.”

Additional articles examine school drop-outs and what can be done to ensure a smoother transition from high school to post-secondary institutions. The Globe’s supplement ends with an article entitled “Looking Back on School” which describes the author’s experience: “I couldn’t wait to get away from the suffocating regimen of high school, and join the world of free-thinking adults” (Young C8). All in all, the Globe and Mail’s “Guide to Education” remains firmly situated within

the overwhelming crisis discourse, and these misconceptions, again, go unchallenged.

Perhaps the clearest evidence of the necessity of a crisis in education, in order to justify overhauling the system, was illustrated by the Ontario Minister of Education and Training.⁶ John Snobelen, caught on videotape explaining to the managerial level of the Ministry his plan to justify the restructuring (some would say dismantling) of public education in Ontario, provided a potent reminder of the beneficiaries behind this deliberate plan of attack, and the subsequent duping of public opinion to enable it.

One of the ways in which the public school system is vilified is by carefully shaping the discussion about what the purpose of an education *is*, exactly, and then projecting the results of the so-called failure of schools. This “failure” can also be read as “all-of-society’s-ills.” The National Alliance of Business is very clear on what it sees as the goals of an education: it is even clearer on what it sees as the results of schools failing to live up to these selected goals. This list is provided in its entirety, because it clearly illustrates how responsibility for virtually every social problem has been laid at the schoolhouse door.

OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM IS EXPECTING TOO LITTLE OF ITS GRADUATES, TEACHING COURSEWORK UNRELATED TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF EMPLOYERS, AND FAILING TO CULTIVATE THE PER-

SONAL QUALITIES AND HABITS OF MIND DEMANDED IN TODAY'S WORKPLACE....

THE MISMATCH BETWEEN SKILLS REQUIRED AND SKILLS AVAILABLE GENERATES HUGE COSTS FOR INDUSTRY. SOME, LIKE THE **COST OF REMEDIAL TRAINING IN BASIC SKILLS**, ARE CLEARLY RELATED TO SCHOOL-SYSTEM UNDER-PERFORMANCE. OTHERS ARE LESS OBVIOUS, BUT ALSO RESULT FROM LAX EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS: THE **COST OF EXTENSIVE TESTING AND SCREENING NEEDED TO IDENTIFY QUALIFIED JOB APPLICANTS BECAUSE A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA NO LONGER GUARANTEES ADEQUATE SKILLS; FEES PAID TO TEMPORARY AGENCIES; AND OVERTIME COSTS GENERATED BY HIGH TURNOVER.**

CORPORATE TAXES ALSO SUPPORT A RANGE OF PUBLIC SECTOR COSTS. THESE COSTS ARE NOT ONLY FOR **K-12 EDUCATION, BUT FOR COLLEGE-LEVEL REMEDIATION, WELFARE, INCARCERATION, AND OTHER CONSEQUENCES OF SCHOOL FAILURE....**

THE GROWING FRICTION BETWEEN EMPLOYER NEEDS AND EMPLOYEE PREPARATION GENERATES HUGE COSTS FOR AMERICAN INDUSTRY. YET THE PRICE TAG MAY BE **LABELED 'TAXES,' 'RELOCATION,' OR 'TRAINING,' OBSCURING THE ROLE PLAYED BY LAX EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS.** COSTS CAN BE SAVED, AND PRODUCTIVITY BOOSTED, BY **HELPING SCHOOLS TO SET AND ATTAIN CLEAR, MEASURABLE STANDARDS FOR STUDENT LEARNING, REALISTICALLY CALIBRATED TO WORKPLACE NEEDS...** (NAB, "STANDARDS MEAN BUSINESS," EMPHASIS MINE).

Obviously the NAB feels it is academically irresponsible for schools to teach any material unrelated to the needs of the workplace. But what might such material include?

According to the Reason Foundation's "Public-Private Partnerships: the Private Sector and Innovation in Education," employer dissatisfaction with the workforce, as well as the "desire to garner promising high school graduates" (8) has led to the establishment of corporate "academies" focusing on specific aspects of business education. The Reason Foundation explains that institutions like American Express schools and the Burger King Academy "provide and opportunity for integrated education and employment, and also offer scholarships for further education. The emphasis is placed on accountability and performance, with rewards in the form of scholarships for successful performance" (8). These examples provide clear evidence of how educational excellence is reconfigured to match the goals of the corporate partner, where 'doing well in business' is rewarded with scholarships or the promise of future employment. The lines between education and training are thus further blurred.

The NAB also effectively removes corporate responsibility for downsizing (or, as it's frequently called, "right-sizing"), layoffs, relocation, automation and outsourcing and lays the blame at schools for their refusal to train future employ-

ees so that corporations won't have to waste their valuable resources "educating" students. The corporate sector is then commended for bearing the financial brunt of the "failure" of public education: the results of this failure range from retraining to unemployment to incarceration (!) to...one can only shudder, anticipating the potential disaster.

The NAB is also clear about how to end this "inefficiency" (or the difference between "education" and "training"), alleviate the tension between schools and the corporate sector, encourage students to work to their potential, and ensure business can afford to continue providing society with the jobs it currently does (this is a very thinly veiled threat). After all, "educational standards are a bottom-line issue" (NAB).

Standards *calibrated to the needs of business*, that is. After all, it is business that has experienced the "quality revolution" from which schools have remained sheltered; it is business that pays for the failures of public education (apparently the workers who are laid off or the communities devastated by closures do not figure in this equation or in the allocation of blame). So, as it is "business that best understands the skills, knowledge, habits and attitudes needed in the modern workplace—and business that will bear the burden if future workers arrive unprepared," (NAB) it is business that must push for these standards...geared to the needs of the business sector. How neat. How

symmetrical. And how very, very convenient.

It is interesting to note how countless education reform groups across North America have used "standards" as a rallying cry. After all, who in their right mind could argue with high standards in education? But why are "standards" such a key component in the demands from the corporate sector for "education reform"? The NAB clearly explains that "recent corporate history shows the power of setting ambitious goals and transforming systems around them." (This bears a striking resemblance to what was once called Outcome Based Education.⁷)

But suffice it to say at this point that we are not talking about moderate changes to the public education system: we are witnessing the complete overhaul of a system and reconstructing it based on a corporate model, and corporate rules and regulations, or "standards." According to David Kearns, former Xerox CEO, "The task before us is the **restructuring of our entire public school system**. I don't mean tinkering. I don't mean piecemeal changes or even well-intentioned reforms. **I mean the total restructuring of our schools**" (Reason 3). It is in the light of total system overhaul that we must examine the education reform movement, and its corporate roots.

Lest we think that only our hyper-capitalistic neighbours to the south are pushing education reform

and the cultivation of workplace habits of mind and body, Toronto Area Partnerships (TAP) illustrates their position on these issues. The purpose of the school is to teach our students to “function” in their many roles: worker, consumer, citizen, life-long learner. (In that order.) “Like it or not,” TAP continues, to build and sustain a strong economy, our students must be skilled in the ways of the workplace—they must be productive first, then they can participate more fully in other life pursuits” (TAP). We (parents and teachers) must put aside our idealistic and childish beliefs that the school imparts knowledge for the sake of knowledge. School must have a definite goal and purpose in order to guarantee students existence in the new global workforce. Productivity must be the major academic focus as that which then permits students to participate in other activities and life pursuits: it is ability and performance in the workplace that is fundamental. Everything else—critical thought, political activism, citizenry—is gravy or, at the very least, “unrelated to the requirements of employers.”

One of the most effective ways of “proving” the existence of a crisis in education is seen in the push for standardized tests; this also mirrors the call for standards discussed in the section above. To ensure that requirements are met, insist on regular testing for all students at a variety of grade levels. After all, tests can’t lie. There’s no ambiguity, no subjectivity. Or is there?

One test which has received an enormous amount of media exposure recently in the Third International Math and Science Study, or the TIMSS. A major reason for the attention the TIMSS received was because it seemed to “prove” that the fears of the Ministries and the business leaders, and everything that the public had heard about their schools was true. We are deficient in Math and Science because our schools are not teaching these subjects properly. Our skilled labour force is diminishing. Canadian business is forced to hire the skilled workers they need from outside of Canada. Our graduates are unemployed. The cycle continues, but we can now, thanks to the TIMSS, pinpoint the root of the problem. Our schools. Not only do we have too little of an emphasis on

TESTING

“Accountability is rooted in the idea of measurements. Business employees are constantly measured, trained and retrained, and it **makes no sense to exempt education from this worthy principle.** We are reaching for higher standards—a **world-class education force**—and accountability should threaten no conscientious instructor.”

(John F. Akers, chairman of IBM and the Business Roundtable Education Task Force)

Math and Science in graduation requirements, we aren't teaching these fundamental subjects properly...perhaps because our teachers are themselves deficient in them as a result of these "changing times" and changing economic realities and emphases.

In the midst of the ensuing heated discussion, very little attention was paid to the ways in which the study was conducted, or what the reporting actually concealed. Two of the most critical considerations, conspicuously absent from the discussion, were "Test-Curriculum Match" (the extent to which the test questions corresponded to a country's curriculum) and whether or not students were in fact tested on material they had even learned yet in their classrooms. Not everybody had the same opportunity to the questions on the test, apparently, and when countries were able to influence test questions based on national curriculum, their students scored higher.

It was also apparent that Canadians were tested on curriculum they hadn't yet been taught; while this fact was concealed, "disappointing" test results were widely reported. However, "despite the fact that linear equations are not taught in Canada at grade 8, 27% of Canadian students solved the item correctly, while 46% of those internationally who had been taught linear equations were able to come up with the solution" (Ireland, "International Testing Defects" 16). The structure

of the TIMSS, and certainly the way in which it was reported, provided a simplistic means of dividing a highly subjective testing method into seemingly objective categories of winners and losers.

There are other, theoretical considerations which must also be examined. What are the implications of all students, regardless of cultural specificity, personal experience, interest or background, being accountable for not only the same information, but the same interpretation of that information? Who makes the decision on what information is or should be considered basic, standard, and universal, and what information is fringe, a luxury (or "unrelated to the requirements of..." oops, wrong section). But the discussions of standards and standardized testing are inextricably linked. And if school standards are to be "calibrated to the needs of business," it is not difficult to guess who will be instrumental in setting the tests which determine student proficiency in these standards.

Private testing firms have begun to capitalize on the education industry, as well as the increased emphasis on measurable "standards" in education. However, there are serious implications for tests developed and provided by the private sector. Education Testing Services (ETS) had a massive outbreak of cheating in the United States covered up in the interests of saving money, and protecting its international reputation. And with the increased use of comput-

ers, the risk of cheating will be expanded because correct test answers can be sent further, faster and to more people. There are also issues of homogenization which must be addressed—what are the implications of a private firm setting international tests to determine educational “prowess” and “accountability?” To whom will individual schools be accountable—their communities or to the test itself, with its centrally-determined questions and philosophies?

In the spring of 1997 the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training administered massive literature and mathematics testing of all Ontario grade three students. The cost of this 10-day procedure was \$50 per student (the average teacher’s per student budget was estimated at \$40-60 for the entire year) for a total of \$7 million. While the 10-day testing period was criticized as being too long for grade three students, even more problematic was the date of the tests; while they were intended to cover curriculum for the entire school year, they were admin-

istered two weeks before the end of the school year, testing students on curriculum they had not yet been taught. Finally, teachers were required to remain silent, and not answer student’s questions, clarify, or explain; this was completely foreign to the students, who were unaccustomed to their teachers remaining silent and unparticipatory.

In a study commissioned by the Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Association (OECTA), Dr. David Ireland concluded that a quarter of the items in the math component weren’t representative of the grade 3 curriculum, and while the two writing tests matched the grade level, the reading did not. Further, “The language of the Standards is so general it encompasses the performance of a grade 3 student and a university professor.” According to Marilies Rettig, then-president of OECTA, “The problem with the Grade 3 Assessment is that its connection to the provincial outcomes and standards is tenuous, and that it makes unfounded assumptions about resources in the classroom.”

EDUCATIONAL DARWINISM

“In general, monopoly firms restrict output, raise prices above the marginal cost of production, underutilize plant capacity, waste resources, and often produce inferior quality products or services. **Since public schools are a monopoly, one would expect public schools to function less efficiently than private schools.** Replacing public schools with private schools would impose competitive restraints, forcing them to pay attention to client demands and the cost of satisfying those demands. **Most public schools lack the incentives necessary to cause them to pay closer attention to their clients’ wishes.**”

(Rinehart and Lee Jr. 2-3)

Of course, there are those who do not bother at all with “proving” the existence of an education crisis. In fact, a crisis is simply unnecessary, because the public system, *by its very nature*, is inferior to the private. According to Myron Lieberman: “I do not base the argument for private services on the failure of public schools...The argument is one of efficiency....We need a system that generates improvement, and the public system does not do that....The private sector generates constant improvement...The question of public education being a failure is irrelevant as far as I am concerned” (*EIR* 3, Feb. 1997). Evidently, not only the “experts” feel this way—the title of a workshop at a recent Fulcrum Information Services Inc. conference on the Education Industry was called “If it’s not broke, don’t fix it, just think ‘for-profit’ instead.”

According to this logic, the public is inherently inferior to the private simply because the nature of private encourages competition, while this is precisely what is absent from the public system. Consequently, while private structures foster competition and an environment which requires each individual to perform to his or her potential, public institutions become anti-capitalistic monoliths...monopolies which must be broken in the name of economic, personal freedom. But not to fear, say leaders in the education industry: “This system will evolve from a failing, government-run mo-

nopoly with little accountability and, by definition, no competition, into a market-driven system that competes on price and quality” (Montgomery 7).

The public system limits school choice, so the rhetoric goes, which, in a bizarre twist of logic, is construed as being prejudicial against those who are forced to attend public school (i.e. those who can afford no other system). Ontario’s Coalition for Education Reform attempts to use this as an argument against universal public education: “Defenders of the public monopoly who claim that choice will work to the disadvantage of the poor and less educated assume that poor people—who are free to choose their own food, clothing and shelter without state direction—are incapable of recognizing and responding to quality. Of course not everyone chooses wisely, in matters of food, clothing, shelter or education, but as a generalization, this insulting view is not true” (Coalition for Education Reform 90).

The suggestion that we all have the same choices, or the same number of them, is idealistic at best...but more likely, at least in this case, chillingly insensitive. It borrows the logic that we all have the same choice: to live in mansions or in boxes. Some people just choose more wisely—and comfortably—than others.

However, this argument resonates strongly with those in the corporate sector who champion the

idea of education reform. Of course public schools fail—the need to prove it is irrelevant—they lack competition. And, according to Robert Lutz, President and COO of Chrysler, competition is “the very force that improves performance and sparks innovation in nearly every other human enterprise” (qtd. in Montgomery 81). Nowhere in this equation is there any consideration of the benefits of characteristics which are arguably absent from the private sector...such as cooperation. But, at least according to this rather crude Darwinian analysis, cooperation stifles innovation and creativity and competition and drive, too. Doesn't it?

Of course, this argument takes on powerful political implications, especially in the United States where the Red Scare seems to be only sleeping. According to Albert Shanker of the American Federation of Teachers, “it's time to admit that public education operates like a planned economy, a bureaucratic system in which everyone's role is spelled out in advance and there are few incentives for innovation and productivity. It's no surprise that our school system doesn't improve: it more resembles the communist economy than our own market economy” (qtd. in Montgomery 41). Not only is public education anti-survival-of-the-fittest, apparently anti-capitalistic, as well as possibly anti-democratic, it may even be anti-American as well!

Shanker's allusion to incentives as necessary to foster improve-

ment is also interesting in light of proposed incentives for teachers—like a sliding wage scale based on student performance, or on the “market demand” for specific subject areas. For example, Math and Science teachers would be paid more than English or History teachers in order to make it “worth their while,” as they would likely have more employment opportunities outside of teaching (World Bank). We might want to consider what effect this practice might have regarding choice of subject areas, as well as the implications of tying student performance to teacher promotion or salary.

It is important to consider, though, whether or not schools and students can be applied to the same economic system as potatoes or the overused widget example. Michael Sandler, CEO of EduVentures assures parents that “if existing schools can't take care of students, the marketplace will.” Well, it's already been made clear that schools absolutely cannot take care of students, predominantly because these are public (and therefore irresponsible and undemocratic) institutions we are talking about. But why would a marketplace be the appropriate environment to care for our youngest and most impressionable members of society? And if nurturing is still a vital component of an education, the rhetoric of the education industry certainly seems to imply that this too is anti-competitive.

Lisa Keegan, Superintendent of Public Instruction in Arizona, il-

illustrates one component of this market-as-caregiver: "A market always works even when we don't want it to....Ultimately there will be no choice but to go to that type of system [where the money follows the child]....[We must seek to] honor every child so that when she walks through the door she is worth \$4,000" (EIR 3, Jan. 1997). In this model, "fairness" does not mean attempting to ensure that all students are given the same opportunities, but rather that all students are already on equal footing and that fairness only enters the equation when assuring that no one is treated differently than anyone else. If we do not follow the market system, we are fooling ourselves, delaying the inevitable, and ultimately "dishonouring" our children. The final question is simple: does allowing the market to take care of each child mean assigning a dollar value to each "client" as well? This is some-

thing we may want to consider in determining whether or not a market is capable of looking after children, using the same methods, and in the same manner as it "looks after" stocks and bonds.

And evidently "competition" is not synonymous with "superior quality"—a 10-month survey of 17 Edmonton schools was conducted to determine whether or not private contractors were superior to unionized custodians. Results demonstrated that the private sector charged more and paid its employees less with fewer benefits (in order to remain "competitive"). The average cleaning performance of in-house contractors was determined to exceed that of contract custodians by 18%. In short, privatized service providers were "concerned only with cleaning schools and not with maintaining a safe, secure, healthy and stable environment for students and teachers" (Flower, *ATA News* 2, Sept. 2, 1997).

Structural Adjustment

“Business-education partnerships are mutually beneficial relationships between employers and educators that are designed to enhance learning for students and other learners.”

(Conference Board of Canada 2)

The discussion of business involvement in education, or restructuring education, or making schools more accountable to the “real world” (i.e. business) is rapidly moving away from an issue of debate and towards a reality or pseudo-truism. Schools must ensure that students have a future, and if the future is increasingly aligned with employment, then schools are essentially job-training facilities. Aren’t they?

The Conference Board of Canada published Ethical Guidelines for Business-Education Partnerships in 1995, which received enormous media attention, and created the National Business and Education Centre. The Centre’s mission is “to help business and education work collaboratively to promote the development of a learning society that will prepare Canada’s young people for a changing world” (Conference Board preface). This report is part of the goal “to champion research that would stimulate interest, trust and mutual respect among current and potential partners in education and promote the growth of business-

education partnerships” (1). Clearly, the Conference Board is not examining whether or not these so-called partnerships are a good thing; rather, the inherently ethical nature of these relationships is accepted, and the Conference Board has as its mandate the promotion of the “collaboration” between business and education.

The very use of the term “partnership” has far-reaching implications, rhetorically and theoretically. According to the Conference Board, “Partnership’ is a higher type of relationship” (Conference Board 5). It is, by its very nature, then, rooted in the very essence of our philosophical discussions of ethics and morality and the good. The Conference Board then goes on to elaborate: “Business-education partnerships have an explicit ethical dimension that needs to be discussed briefly. There are four important philosophical doctrines that provide the ethical basis for partnerships.... Ethical Egoism.... Utility Ethics or Utilitarianism.... Deontological Ethics....[and] Virtue Ethics” (Conference Board of Canada 7-8 quoting

LEGISLATIVE AND FISCAL CLIMATE

“We are well aware of the challenges to the education systems posed by our rapidly changing world: globalization of the economy, openness with regard to their cultures, pressing needs for skilled labour, and technological advances that are having an impact on our daily lives as well as in the job market. **These changes require constant adjustments to our educational practices to ensure high quality, accessibility, mobility, and accountability.**”

(Joint Declaration, Future Directions for the Council of Ministers of Education)

Journal of Business Ethics, “A Moral Basis for Corporate Philanthropy” vol. 12, pp. 745-6, Bill Shaw and Frederick R. Post). The discussion is legitimated at the outset by its seemingly natural roots in Aristotelian philosophy; in fact, Aristotle is referenced several times in the pages of this report at key points, giving the discussion of the inherently ethical nature of partnerships even more validity.

The term “partnership” implies that both parties are on equal footing; any power difference is effectively effaced simply by calling this relationship a “partnership.” And, as partnerships are, by nature, ethical, all partnerships are beneficial, win-win situations, which, not-so-coincidentally, is how they are sold to the public. But it is this power balance—or lack of it—which must be more closely examined in determining whether we are talking about partnerships at all, or an entirely different kind of relationship altogether, couched in the rhetoric of equality.

We have already explored the ways in which the public sys-

tem is being denigrated; education is “in crisis;” the public system is, by nature, uncompetitive and therefore inferior to the private; and schools have been sheltered for too long from the “real world” of the marketplace and the “quality revolution.” However, the nuts-and-bolts issue of education restructuring has yet to be examined as the most immediate evidence of the growing insecurity and decreasing self-control of the public system from a financial perspective.

The demand from the corporate sector that schools be brought into the “real world” demonstrates that the “real world” is associated increasingly with the marketplace... and *only* with the marketplace. This is mirrored by the political rhetoric, as illustrated in Snobelen’s address to the Third Annual Partnership Conference: we need “the cultivation of innovative partnership between schools and their communities.... When I use that term ‘community partners’ I’m speaking of business” (Phillip Hill and Brian McGowan 3). Accountability to the outside com-

munity, then, really means accountability to the corporate sector. But should accountability to a system based purely on profit and financial efficiency be the goal of our public schools?

As fiscal restraint is the dominant trend of the day, and with numerous powerful forces aligned against the public system, schools across Canada are experiencing unprecedented budget cuts. Frequently, cuts in some provinces are used to justify future cuts in other provinces; this tactic was used by the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training in preparation for the Fewer School Boards Act (Bill 104).

The Canadian Teachers' Federation estimates that, with spending cuts and increasing enrolments, per-pupil expenditure will experience a decline from \$7,023 (1995-96) to \$6,936 (1996-97) (1). And while public elementary-secondary enrolments increased by 0.8%, the number of full-time public school teachers fell by 0.3% (CTF Economic Service Notes 4). We have two factors here: less money for each student, and more students per teacher, resulting in less student-teacher time, as well as additional work for teachers outside of class with no increase in allotted preparation time.

Education cuts are taking place even when there appears to be no need for them. In Manitoba, government expenditures are the lowest in Canada, and the revenue of the provincial government has increased by 14.7% over the past two

years. However, cuts to education continue, resulting in layoffs of more than 660 teaching positions over the last few years (Pearce 18).

When confronted with the public's concern at these draconian cuts to education, governments are responding with the suggestion that schools will have to become more "creative" or "entrepreneurial" in raising funds to maintain existing programs...or merely to buy books and desks for increasing numbers of students. In some provinces the privatization agenda is blatant. In Manitoba, if you can operate a private school for two years, you are eligible for provincial funding. This has resulted in a decrease of provincial funding for public education by 6% between 1992-96, but a 54% funding increase for private schools. (Pearce 18).

But the most powerful and popular suggestion is for public schools to forge new relationships—"partnerships"—with the corporate sector. However, if the underlying principle behind partnerships is that both parties are on equal footing—and it is clear that schools are increasingly in an insecure position—we must briefly examine what should be corresponding "insecurity" in the corporate sector to maintain the required balance of power supposedly inherent in true partnerships.

According to Statistics Canada, "restructuring and downsizing tactics have led to record-breaking year-end profits for corpo-

rations and financial institutions. In 1995, the six major Canadian banks earned \$5.18 billion, up from \$4.3 billion in 1994. Corporate profits have almost doubled since mid-1992. StatsCan reported that corporate profits reached \$95 billion in 1995.” (Hill and McGowan 2). In 1996, the six major Canadian banks earned over \$6 billion (CCPA Monitor), and according to the Globe and Mail, “profits at 200 of the country’s biggest companies hit a record \$6.9 billion in the first quarter of 1997, up 44% from the same period a year earlier” (Bell and Clifford). Evidently, the corporate sector—or the echelon of the corporate sector involved most often and most elaborately in restructuring education—is experiencing none of the financial desperation of the public school system.

Ironically, even the enormous financial constraints put on public education are used as further justification for increased dismantling of the public system. The Reason Foundation explains that “in ordinary public schools, especially when funds are short, specialized instruction is not affordable. Consequently, students get no choice” (Reason 10). The logic appears to be that slashing education budgets limits the programs that may be afforded and therefore offered, so we must further participate in removing additional funds from the public school system by exploring privatized options. Consider, for example, the Sylvan advertisement in the Globe (C4, Nov. 13/97) under the

caption “Don’t let the education crisis become your child’s problem.” The text continues: “Crowded classrooms. School budget cutbacks. No wonder many parents worry about the quality of their child’s education. For more than a million parents, Sylvan Learning Centre is the answer. Our positive, caring, individualized instruction boosts students’ grades—along with their self-esteem. To take the sting out of the education crisis, call Sylvan today.” It is interesting that Sylvan maintains that the education community is far more accepting of [Sylvan’s] role “because they understand it is a supplemental and supportive role” (EIR 2, Nov. 1997). If the ad text is any indication, Sylvan has very little interest in supporting public education, but has a great deal invested in reinforcing and benefiting from the crisis rhetoric.

Probably the most telling interrogation of the use of the term “partnership” and all that term implies is found in the business community itself. According to the National Alliance of Business, “Many corporations are moving to ‘strategic philanthropy,’ whereby their company’s goals and charitable contributions are aligned—and nowhere is that tactic more justified than in education spending. Education grants...should support a vision as coherent and a strategy just as demanding as the dollars spent on technology, marketing and plant capacity....[Business] must be prepared to use its leverage.” It is made abundantly clear who has the power

leverage in this situation...and who is most gleefully aware of that fact.

NATIONWIDE RESTRUCTURING

General Trends: In 1994, the Canadian School Boards Association identified four trends in local school governance. These were: a reduction in the number of school boards; redefinition of school board duties and powers; centralization of power at the provincial or territorial level; and redirection of some responsibilities to school-based parent or community groups (CEA 4). With the trend towards fewer, larger school boards, there is a corresponding movement towards increased centralization of the decision-making process at the Ministry level. Provinces are also formalizing the role of parent and community councils, representing a trend towards site-based management.

Prince Edward Island: The five school boards (four English, one French) were reduced to three (two English, one French) in 1994. The province pays all education costs from property, income and sales taxes and from federal equalization payments—education remains very centralized, with the boards declining in number and in power. The 1993 School Act provides legislative support for school councils (which advise school principals on a number of education concerns) but these councils are not required to be in every school.

Nova Scotia: 22 school boards amalgamated into six regional boards, and one province-wide board for French and Acadian education. School boards do not have taxing authority. The Ministry advocates a mixture of centralization (concentration of power in hands of the Minister who “may require that the Board replace the Superintendent,” and larger, more “efficient” boards) and decentralization (“to open up the decision-making process to involve students, parents, teachers and the community”). Restructuring rhetoric has a strong emphasis on ensuring that students graduate “ready for the workplace.” (Nova Scotia Department of Education, “Education Horizons: White Paper on Restructuring the Education System.”; NSTU, “The Nova Scotia Teachers’ Union Response to Education Horizons.”)

New Brunswick: All (18) remaining school boards have been eliminated but district boundaries remain with operations managed by eight superintendents. These superintendents are advised by 18 district councils with veto power over hiring of principals and teachers. Province sets policy and standards with advice from two provincial advisory boards (Anglophone and Francophone) representing 18 districts. Province provides 100% funding from federal transfers (40%) provincial taxes (36.7%) and property taxes (5.8%). There are some user fee provisions, and teacher salaries are determined provincially. While no move has

been made toward charter schools, the government entered into an agreement with Microsoft Canada in 1995 to set up a virtual campus for primary and secondary students, and another agreement was made with Greenharm Corporation to build and maintain a school building which would be leased to the government on a long-term basis.

Newfoundland/Labrador: 27 elected denominational school boards have been replaced by 10 interim interdenominational boards with 18 members each. The province provides all funding from income and sales taxes and federal equalization programs. Property taxes were not used after 1992. While the Department of Education has considerable power in the province's education, the government has begun moving away from direct management, and is encouraging local input by moving towards more site-based program development. Teacher salaries and benefits are paid by the province.

Quebec: There are plans underway to reduce the number of school boards from 158 to 70, and to reorganize the system along linguistic lines. Recently, the Minister of Education has introduced an education bill shifting to more school-based power. A governing board in each school will oversee implementation and evaluation of the school's educational needs.

Ontario: On December 20, 1996, the Minister of Education and Training announced that funding for 1997-98 transfer payments would be frozen at 1996 levels; however, the minister cited grants totalling \$3.9 billion for 1997, which is actually a reduction of \$300 million in 1996 grants. The Deputy Minister of Education's contract revealed one of the terms of her employment—cutting an additional \$667 million from Ontario education. The Fewer School Boards Act reduced the number of school boards from 167 to 72, reduced the number of trustees and eliminated the right of boards to raise their own revenue from the local tax base. Under the new system, the province will set residential and business property tax levels and reduce the local share of education funding by 1/3rd. The Education Quality Improvement Act (Bill 160) massively restructured public education by centralizing control (financial and decision-making) at the government level while giving parents the "right" to take more of a role in education though giving them no funding to do so, in effect setting up the framework for charter schools in Ontario.

Manitoba: Manitoba has had no deficit for the past two years, and, according to predictions, will not have one in the future: in fact, a \$56 million surplus is projected for 96/97. In spite of this, the provincial government has chosen to give no increase to public schools for the '98 year, although \$40 million has al-

ready been cut from public schools over the last four years. A modest funding increase of only 2% would amount to \$15 million (compare this figure to the Manitoba government's "rainy day fund" of \$537 million).

A number of school-based government initiatives were in the government's 1994 education reform package, focusing on the role of the principals who are the "primary instructional leaders in schools." There are currently 47 school districts in Manitoba, six remote school districts and three special revenue school districts. Provincial school divisions had their taxing authority limited by an amendment in the Public Schools Act. Other recommendations were that the Ministry assume a strong leadership role in education, and that parents be given more freedom in determining which school their children will attend.

Saskatchewan: In 1993 the Saskatchewan School Trustee Association Task Force recommended more site-based management. In 1994 the government announced three to five pilot projects to encourage the voluntary amalgamation of school boards—each participating division will receive a one-time grant of \$15,000. Currently there are 114 school divisions in Saskatchewan. Although very few formal education governance reforms have been undertaken, a plan for restructuring was announced in 1996.

Alberta: In October 1995, five new charter schools received approval from the government (three more were added to the list in 1996). In 1996 the Ministry released documents advocating increased business involvement in education and technology integration. On December 17, 1996, the Minister of Education announced that \$140 million had been approved for capital projects in 1998-99; this falls well short of the \$347.5 million requested by jurisdictions for 1998-99. Instructional grant money will rise by 0.8% (a \$30 increase per student)—this is the first increase since '93-'94, and the only one planned. The number of school boards was reduced from 181 to 57, and the number of trustees from 1,169 to 435 (process began in 1994). The School Amendment Act 1997 permitted school boards to charge "performance bonds" for students repeating high school courses, and allowed boards to set tuition fees for foreign students beyond cost-recovery levels, illustrating the ways in which public education is being reworked within market confines. (Alberta Teachers' Association, "The Impact of Funding Cuts on Alberta," 1997)

British Columbia: Currently there are 57 school districts in B.C., and education is funded primarily by bloc provincial grants, though school boards are able to tax property owners through special levies. However, some reforms have been made to this system, such as the government im-

posing a \$302 million cap on school district administration costs, which will mean districts will have to cut their administration budgets by \$7 million. In 1995, the Ministry created a new system of province-wide mandatory testing.

On February 26, 1996, Education Minister Paul Ramsey announced that though enrolment growth is projected to be 1.8% (10,103 students) in 1997-98, \$27 million would be cut (“saved”) from the school system. While funding for ESL, Aboriginal and special needs programs would increase to account for enrolment growth, grants for technology, school accreditation and pay equity would be frozen at 1996-97 amounts. Administration services funding remains capped, and funding for school meals, inner city and community school funding are also frozen at 1996-97 levels and have been transferred to the Ministry for Children and Families. The provincial government supports centralization in education governance, but has recently engaged in some school-based activities such as school accreditation and a pilot project in private-public manage-

ment in the Burnaby school district (private company is responsible for designing, constructing and maintaining the public facility and will lease it to the school district on a long-term basis).

Yukon: Education is administered by the Department of Education, but in 1990 the Education Act allowed for the establishment of school boards and councils (which have authority in principal selection, curriculum development and teacher evaluation) and allows for the eventual transfer of power from the government to the school boards.

Northwest Territories: Education governance duties are divided between the Ministry, 10 school boards and Community Education Councils set up in each school—each Council has a representative on the board. The Ministry has recently begun discussions to promote a decentralized governance framework.

(Canadian Teachers’ Federation, Agenda-Driven Governance; Paula Dunning, Education in Canada: An Overview; Canadian School Boards Association. “Cross-Canada Chart.”)⁸

SHAPING PUBLIC OPINION

“The Ministry poll is unbalanced. It starts with the assumption that there is over-expenditure in education that requires cutting and slashing, then pushes respondents to answer in the same fashion. **Instead of offering a legitimate range of options, it truncates options at the very outset.** The bias is clearly to support cutting back in education. The poll is therefore suspect.”

(David Livingstone, Director of Sociology, OISE)

The Ontario Ministry's push-poll was disguised by the pollsters as being for "all Canadians," perhaps to de-politicize the questions which would have specific resonance in Ontario as a province at the forefront of the education restructuring discussion. It was also presented as an OISE report in order to further de-politicize its appearance.

The poll began by asking respondents the "degree of change necessary to fix the problems of the education system...and make it work for people." This removes from debate whether or not the system needs to be fixed at all; this sort of non-analysis bears a striking resemblance to discussions of commercialization in the classroom that ask "how much is too much," as if only a little bit is okay. Further push-poll questions (limit your answers to the choices provided, please) included: "Would your opinion about change be affected if you were told that major changes in education have not been made in over 20 years (yes or no);" "Education is important but we cannot spend beyond our means (yes or no);" "The cost of the education system needs to be reduced (yes or no);" "Teachers should spend as much time in the classroom as their students (yes or no);" "Most professional jobs require additional hours of preparation that are not paid for. Teachers should accept that the economy does not support as much paid planning time as it once did (yes or no);" "To cut education spending, would you increase class size, reduce

class time, or cut salaries by 5% (no other choices were provided);" "Leaders of teacher unions have been right to refuse to discuss how they can help cut \$400 million or about 3% from school board budgets (yes or no);" "Breaking contracts is OK as teachers have had it too good for too long (yes or no)." Clearly, the discussion has been structured in such a way to manipulate the discussion, placing it securely within the realm of "crisis," or, at the very least, "necessary restructuring."

This poll, in addition to illustrating the ways in which misinformation masquerades as fact, provides a potent example of how the debate in which we should all be vigorously engaging—who is telling us we need education restructuring, where is the information coming from and what stands to be gained by some and lost by others—is replaced by questions of "how much," "how quickly," and "to what degree."

We are moving towards a philosophy of education and society where it is near-impossible to think *outside* of the market metaphor. This is made even more evident when recent discussions of the school borrow the language and terminology of the business sector: students are clients, parents are customers, teachers are front-line service providers. Education is increasingly referred to as a business, and we are told it must compete in the manner of every other good private sector institution. Taxpayers want their money's worth.

STANDARDS

“We believe that a movement toward broader and more stringent national standards will create a strong investment opportunity for for-profit education companies, who already operate under internally imposed standards in order to market the quality of their services in a competitive environment.”

(EIR 4, June 1997)

We must strive for efficiency. But there is something intensely troubling in equating virtually every human impulse with a consumer transaction, making consumerism *the defining act* of citizenry. In the words of Michael Apple: “Instead of people who participate in the struggle to build and rebuild our educational, political, and economic relations, we are defined as consumers. This is truly an extraordinary concept, for it sees people by and large as either stomachs or furnaces. We use and use up. We don’t create. Someone else does that. This is disturbing enough in general, but in education it is truly disabling. Leave it to the guardians of tradition, the efficiency and accountability experts, the holders of ‘real knowledge.’” (Apple x)

We may also want to consider that the education industry maintains that it is parents, because of their unhappiness with and distrust of traditional public schools, and business leaders who are driving the education reform movement, predominantly associated with for-profit education. Based on the ways in which public opinion is clearly shaped by the political agenda, the validity of parental dissatisfaction

must be examined. However, the pressure by the business community to explore for-profit education is certainly a reality—if not a gross understatement.

The call for national standards in education is one heard with increasing frequency from government, from business, and from parents. How are schools accountable to the public, begins the question, if there are no tangible standards by which a child’s education can be judged at any given time? And this is a loaded issue; after all, who can possibly take issue with higher standards in education?

Taking issue with standards, however, is not the issue at all. If we look closely at what these standards are based on, one thing becomes abundantly clear: apparently the only standards worth their salt are those which emphasize competition between students, teachers, schools, districts, provinces...and, eventually, entire nations. We have returned to the original claims of the private sector: public education is inferior because it is not private—and therefore not based on fostering or responding to competition. According to Dr. Myron Lieberman, “parents and school boards won’t be able to

generate significant improvements [in public education]. Improvements come from competing producers, not from consumer organizations. We've got to have competition between producers" (EIR 3 Feb. 1997). Tell that to Ralph Nader. Or to General Motors.

The suggestion that the only reason why there is any product quality in the consumer world is because of "natural" laws of competition between producers is ludicrous at best. Clearly, a "better" product depends on whether the consumer or the producer writes the definition. And this argument is only valid if we determine that public education must be, under the laws of the marketplace, treated as a product like refrigerators or cars—something that can be bought or sold, that operates on the profit motive, and that is by nature unresponsive to democratic or community sensitivities. The call for "national standards" implies that the expectations and successes of education are objective, but objectivity is virtually impossible when dealing with thousands of children at a variety of ages and grade levels, from a multitude of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. In fact, our democratic tradition is largely based on the understanding that objective ideals are for the most part a hallucination that only a select few can come close to attaining—often those who have in fact crafted the definition of those "objective ideals."

All this aside, however, the education industry maintains that objective standards are not only possible, they are necessary because the private sector already operates according to standards in the manufacturing of refrigerators and cars. So the marketplace model (with which the private sector is obviously most comfortable), which has "worked" (more or less, according to who writes the definition) in the marketplace, is now superimposed on the public sector by the waiting investors in the education industry, and public education must be restructured to follow the marketplace model. "K-12 education reform needs structurally to foster competition that establishes objective rankings among schools, districts and programs. Strong performers should ultimately prevail in this competitive system. Weaker performers will be forced to improve by adopting different curricula or instructional methods, but, in the end, this too will raise the overall quality of education" (EIR 4, June 1997). Can't get much clearer than that.

And once education is restructured to follow the marketplace rules—objectivity, competition, standards—and school boards attempt to "search for strategies to improve objective outcomes without increasing budgets, for-profit players with demonstrated and cost-effective results will stand ready to provide innovative solutions" (EIR 4, June 1997). This is a very convenient set-up: the private sector deter-

mines the needs of public education, pushes to reform it according to those determined needs, and then provides the solutions and subsequently reaps enormous financial rewards. Clearly, the private sector interest in restructuring public education, in spite of the more altruistic claims of community involvement

and “good corporate citizens,” is of a far more self-serving nature: “Tangible reform of K-12 education...will advance the agenda of many for-profit education companies in the near term” (EIR 4, June 1997). Reform education along business rules, and it is the business sector that will profit.

TEACHER BASHING

“Critical pedagogy needs to develop a theory of teachers as transformative intellectuals who occupy specifiable political and social locations. **Rather than defining teachers’ work through the narrow language of professionalism, a critical pedagogy needs to ascertain more carefully what the role of teachers might be as cultural workers engaged in the production of ideologies and social practices.** This is not a call for teachers to become wedded to some abstract ideal that removes them from everyday life or turns them into prophets of perfection and certainty; on the contrary, it is a call for teachers to **undertake social criticism not as outsiders but as public intellectuals** who address the social and political issues of their neighbourhoods, their nation, and the wider global world. As public and transformative intellectuals, teachers have an opportunity to make organic connections with the historic traditions that provide them and their students with a voice, history, and sense of belonging.”

(Giroux 43)

“In public education, Kolderie Center for Policy Studies finds that the mission of educating children often takes second to the interest of boards, teachers and administrators. He explained, **“For the (district) organizations and the people in them, nothing really depends on whether students learn.** The organization will be there, the jobs will be there, the pensions will be there.”

(EIR 3, Oct. 1997)

Certainly teachers have received the brunt of anti-public education rhetoric, illustrated by several of the push-poll questions listed earlier. This fact has not gone unnoticed by the education industry—in fact, it has provided the industry with a new angle. Teacher concerns with privatizing public education can be explained away as purely self-motivated, or as evidence of labour’s knee-jerk reaction against the corporate sector. Legitimate concerns or criticisms are negated, and unions themselves are suspected of corruption, or, at the very least, unwillingness to let go the status quo. Anti-teacher sentiments played a part in the last American presidential election: “If education was a war, you would be losing it. If it were a business, you would be driving it into bankruptcy. If it were a patient, it would be dying...I say this not to teachers, but to their unions” (Robert Dole’s campaign speech).

Such open hostility does not go unnoticed by the education industry. In fact, it presents a new angle—promoting the privatization of public education by delegitimizing union concern at increasing private sector involvement while at the same time appearing to separate teachers from an unwieldy union bureaucracy. Privatization could be, and is, promoted as “democratizing” an unwieldy public, union-controlled system. “After Dole’s broadsides against the unions, the teachers’ unions are going to be scrutinized like they’ve never been scrutinized

before....The teachers’ unions are now fair game” (EIR 3, Feb. 1997).

The Association of Educators in Private Practice (AEPP) is a self-described “people” organization with five lofty goals: 1) to support and advance the education of students; 2) to aid and assist educators in private practice in performing their lawful functions; 3) to enhance the effectiveness and professionalism of educators in private practice; 4) to encourage, sponsor, and facilitate the intercommunication and sharing of ideas and issues identified as common and relevant to educators in private practice; and 5) to otherwise promote and exchange the instruction and training of an educated citizenry (AEPP website).

Teachers in private practice, however, is another concept which applies market principles to public education. These teachers want to work as “professionals” and entrepreneurs, not mere employees; they can set their own work schedule, and even their own fees. As Alex Molnar explains, “to those who contend good teachers are too often yoked to incompetents by union protection, the idea is also presented as a chance for good teachers to take their competence to the marketplace and receive the greater rewards their talents will command” (Molnar 163). However, it is highly unlikely that teachers will have control over their fees—this will be influenced by the number of teachers “competing” for teaching positions. And “since the money available for public edu-

cation is tightly constrained, it is more likely that cost, not competence, will often be the most important factor in whether someone is hired” (Molnar 163).

Certainly there has been increasing interest, and encouragement, in moving the discussion from privatizing custodial and cafeteria services to privatizing instructional ones; this clearly has far-reaching implications for virtually all aspects of public education. “Government entities do not move into contracting out services quite so readily since terminating employees has significant community, labor relations, and political ramifications for local school districts. However, private sector involvement in delivery support services continues to grow, and in recent years companies have moved aggressively into the core function of public education—instruction” (Flam and Keane 46).

What the movement “for” teachers in private practice is all about, at its core, may be compared to the “Right to Work” movement in the United States. Opting out of union affiliation means fewer, if any, benefits for private-practice teachers, while at the same time ensuring them basic work standards achieved by those same unions. When private-practice teachers have successfully managed to erode union numbers, strength, and support, we can predict what has in fact already happened in Right to Work states: lower, income, poor working conditions, no benefits, no job

security, all under the catchphrase “doing more with less.” This is the ultimate result of groups like the AEPP, which actively promote this aspect of contracting-out in education.

Implementing regulatory bodies, and blatant attacks on collective bargaining agreements are two other examples of ways in which teachers are constrained. In Ontario, the College of Teachers gives unprecedented search and seizure powers to that regulatory body, consisting predominantly of non-teachers, unlike other professional regulatory bodies. In Manitoba, new legislation (Bill 72) strengthens the Ministry of Education and Training and weakens collective bargaining agreements, threatening teachers’ salaries and benefits. Additional regulations may also be passed by agreement in cabinet on any given Wednesday.

In addition, as previously mentioned, teacher prep time is being reduced, class size is increasing, there are fewer basic classroom supplies, and money is increasingly siphoned out of the classroom as costs are divided up into “essential” (students, teacher) and “non-essential” (libraries, transportation, utilities, cafeterias, custodial services, curriculum development, etc.) expenditures. It is also interesting to see the ways in which the education industry has been able to capitalize on providing these services which are in the process of being defined as non-essential...but just try to run

CONTRACTING INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES

“Some of the issues that have contributed to privatizing support service in the past have now emerged in the relatively new initiatives to privatize instructional services, the one area in which educators feel their expertise is unassailable.

There are many reasons for this growing interest:

- the general dissatisfaction with the results of public education, which is often articulated by business leaders and fostered by press accounts of low achievement by American students in national and international tests of achievement
- impatience with the inability of public schools to acquire modern technologies in order to improve classroom instruction
- a growing perception that schools are attempting to alter the value systems that children learn at home
- a discontent arising from the belief that students are undisciplined and schools are unsafe
- an impression that public school teachers, especially those represented by labor unions, are overpaid and unmotivated to do better

Schneider and Houston (1993) and Berliner and Biddle (1995) have provided **objective evidence that many of the premises upon which these views are based are inaccurate. Nevertheless**, the public is looking for alternatives, and school officials, more often driven by shrinking financial resources, are also looking for options to present delivery systems.”

(Flam and Keane 35-6).

a school without them. However, as the following quotation clearly indicates, privatization of instructional services is seen as a virtually inevitable boon.

Truly, where education “crisis” and the need for private “options” are concerned, public perception *is* almost everything.

CONCLUSION

Increasing corporate involvement in public education must be examined within the broader and

multi-dimensional contexts to recognize the more significant implications of the enforced relationships between education and the private sector. The North American Education Industry is growing at an unprecedented rate, fuelled by corporations that see education not as a fundamental public service but rather as yet-untapped and virtually inexhaustible market.

The war of rhetoric that has been waged against our public institutions—in this case, our schools, teachers and students—has turned

the mandates of governments and business to “create a crisis” in education into what now passes as (to borrow a phrase dear to the Ontario Government,) “common sense.” The public is told daily that we can no

longer afford our social programs in the race to “balance the nation’s bank books.” Of course, at a time when social inequalities are ever more deeply entrenched, we have never needed these publicly-funded programs more than we do now.

Individual Analyses

Fraser Institute Five Year Plan: “Towards the New Millennium”

The Fraser Institute’s Five Year Plan, “Towards the New Millennium,” was leaked to the media in the fall of ’96...and then literally vanished from public sight. Well, perhaps not quite. To counter the potentially explosive effects of this document which clearly outlined the ways in which the Fraser would attempt to change the public notion of “freedom,” the entire document was uploaded onto the Fraser’s website—with two significant changes. Most obviously, the proposed budget of an additional \$2.7 million (more than doubling the Fraser’s 1995 budget of \$2.536 million) was eliminated from the uploaded version. Secondly, a rather catty swipe at the Vanier Institute for (“well *against*, actually”, as the Fraser elaborated) the Family was deleted, possibly because it provided clear evidence of the Fraser’s deliberate intent to eliminate any opinion running counter to the ultra-conservative-free-market perspective of the Fraser Institute.

But the bulk of this 29-page document remains intact. And it is in those 29 pages that the Fraser Institute, in its sweeping and arrogant

fashion, demonstrates how it intends to further “change the ideological fabric of the world.”

Take freedom, for example. It is a term loaded with symbolism and invested with positive meaning, one with which it is virtually impossible to take issue. But it is clear that “freedom” is becoming forcibly associated with a variety of new concepts, courtesy of the Fraser Institute Freedom Index, “the most utilized index of Economic Freedom in the world” (6). If the Fraser has its way, corporate-friendly concepts like “freedom of commercial speech, freedom of choice in education, and freedom in the labour market” will be included in our understanding of national liberty.

What is even more telling is the Fraser’s plan to “enlist the help of no less than 25 multinational companies in supporting the development of the [freedom] index” (7). Clearly, this is a concept of freedom which is most user-friendly for those who would benefit most from an untethered free market economy. What we are witnessing is the market concept of “freedom” being forcibly applied to a social and com-

munity understanding of freedom. But are these two interpretations identical? Are they even parallel? This in no way approaches what freedom means to the young, the sick, the elderly, to people of colour, to workers and to women.

HEALTH CARE RESEARCH PROGRAM

The Fraser Institute intends to continue its interest in health care by looking to alternative American (read: privatized) methods of delivering care and treatment. To ensure that any public dissatisfaction with our health care system receives adequate media attention, the Fraser will construct a “survey of patient satisfaction” (comparing U.S. and Canadian health care); encourage Canadian patients to “give interviews to the press about their experience” and “expand the Survey of Hospital Waiting Lists to include the accumulation of...patients who have been waiting longer than the Medically Desirable Time....The names of patients who are willing to talk to the press will be released” (8-9). Finally, the Fraser Institute’s lofty aim is to “become Canada’s leading source of information on *private* health care.” Clearly, this project has at its goal the promotion of a agenda to privatize Canadian health care so that it better resembles the free-market, two-tiered version of the U.S., which is presumably more desirable to the Fraser’s many corporate sponsors.

THE LAW AND MARKETS PROJECT

The Fraser Institute’s description of the law as “the principal means of non-market decision-making,” setting up the law as potentially running counter to what may be a truer measure of justice. To ensure that these two means of “decision-making” work in conjunction, “the Law and Markets Project will gather the information required to assess the situation, analyze the economic impact of specific legal practices, and make specific policy recommendations for the reforms required *to create a legal system that will promote, rather than inhibit, economic growth*” (10). Presumably, judges will be presented with this project before they reach a decision on a particular case in order that they may bear in mind the economic ramifications of each and any of their legal judgments.

THE COST OF THE JUSTICE SYSTEM IN CANADA

“To understand fully the economic and financial dimensions of the Canadian justice system, much more work is required,” explains the Fraser. Do we have too many lawyers? Are law schools teaching the right (no pun intended) curricula? Are “questionable science and economics” being validated in courtrooms? (This of course, neatly paves the way for the Fraser to develop an elite list of those scientific and economic experts and opinions suitable

for courtroom use. Based on the Fraser's leanings, it's clear which economic opinions will be given credence, and subsequent legal endorsement.) Does economic "reality" require us to clamp down on class action suits? Is it just too damn easy for just about *anyone* to have their day in court?

LAW AND THE ECONOMY INDEX

The piece de resistance is the Fraser's "plan to refine the measurements for the legal system's impact on economic freedom, and develop a standardized 'law and economy index'....[to] formulate "a vision of how the law and markets could best interact in Canada" (14). In Fraser-Land, even the law must be shaped to serve the economy, as opposed to ensuring that the economy is legally held to health, safety or employment standards.

FRASER FORUM PROJECT

The Fraser Forum is currently the "largest circulation economic policy journal in Canada" (15), but to further its viewpoint—and the public's consumption of it—the Fraser Institute is even more ambitious. A concerted effort will be made to systematically provide all media with the Fraser's perspective, broadening the circulation beyond subscribers and members of the institute. In time, the Fraser Forum will be developed into a "full fledged magazine of comment" for sale at local

news stands, with a proposed circulation of 20,000 within 5 years. An even more ambitious and deliberate goal—to ensure that 80% of the economists and Chartered Financial Analysts (most of whose clients are already "sympathetic to Forum's positions on the major issues") in Canada are subscribers (16). And to encourage more mainstream readers, the Fraser intends to inject a little humour into the Forum, and pull popular American ultra-conservatives like P.J. O'Rourke on board as columnists. From the quotation below, it's clear how closely the Fraser and O'Rourke are aligned, but perhaps the Fraser feels that O'Rourke can provide a brash, comical, user-friendly front for the institute's "survival of the fittest" rhetoric.

"The rise of private enterprise and trade provided a means of achieving wealth and autonomy other than by killing people with broadswords. And the industrial revolution allowed millions of ordinary folks an opportunity to obtain decent houses, food and clothes....**Collectivism doesn't work because it's based on a faulty economic premise. There is no such thing as a person's "fair share" of wealth.** The gross national product is not a pizza that must be carefully divided because if I get too many slices, you have to eat the box. The economy is expandable and, in any practical sense, limitless" (P.J. O'Rourke "How to Explain Conservatism to your Squishy Liberal Friends—Individualism 'R Us!").

STUDENT PROGRAMS

Youth are awarded a substantial role in the Fraser's plan because many attendees of these forums have risen "to positions of influence within political parties or within the policy making apparatus of governments" (5). Student programs are seen as areas of "unexploited opportunity"—to remedy this, the number of seminar programs and weekend colloquiums will be increased, and a residential internship (for university credit) will be established to help open the eyes of the most politically active students to the world according to the Fraser Institute.

THE EDUCATION DIVISION

I'm going to quote this section of the five Year Plan extensively, because it demonstrates not only how fundamental education is to the Fraser's plan for ideological "revolution," but demonstrates the allocation of substantial resources—financial (\$250,000 annually) and human (hiring an education policy "specialist")—to the enormous task of promoting what is called school "choice," but is in actual fact the privatization of public education.

"AT THIS MOMENT THE INSTITUTE DOES NOT HAVE AN ON-GOING PRESENCE IN ONE OF THE CENTRAL DEBATES OCCURRING IN NORTH AMERICA—NAMELY THE ISSUE OF EDUCATION CHOICE. WHILE WE HAVE PUBLISHED SEVERAL BOOKS IN THE AREA, RECENTLY AWARDED THE PRIZE FOR ECONOMY IN GOV-

ERNMENT TO THE IDEA OF CHARTER SCHOOLS AND ALSO PUBLISHED A SPECIAL ISSUE OF FRASER FORUM ON THE SAME SUBJECT, WE HAVE NO CONTINUING THRUST INTO THIS AREA. WE SHOULD HAVE. ACCORDINGLY, OUR OBJECTIVES OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS INCLUDE:

- TO ESTABLISH LINKS AROUND THE WORLD WHICH ARE CONCERNED WITH THE PRIVATIZATION OF EDUCATION. IN PARTICULAR WE WILL WANT TO WORK WITH THE FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION TO PURSUE PROGRAMS OF MUTUAL INTEREST .
- TO ESTABLISH AN INDEX OF SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS BASED ON PUBLISHED DATA AND ON SURVEY DATA COLLECTED FOR THE PURPOSE.
- TO PUBLISH A MONTHLY COLUMN IN FRASER FORUM COMMENTING ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES.
- TO PUBLISH TWO STUDIES PER YEAR DEALING WITH EDUCATIONAL CHOICE ISSUES.

WE ESTIMATE THAT A **MINIMUM COST OF \$250,000 PER YEAR** WILL BE REQUIRED TO ACCOMPLISH THIS PROJECT." (FRASER INSTITUTE, TOWARD THE NEW MILLENNIUM 20)

Education "choice" is an issue which is gaining international resonance as the privatization movement gathers momentum in Europe, the United States and New Zealand. Milton Friedman (author of Public Education: An Autopsy) has long been a proponent of dismantling public education in favour of a privatized system—the "private competition is good, public institutions are anti-democratic and inherently evil" mantra. The Reason Foundation illustrates Friedman's commercialized view of open-market school choice:

"Milton 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'.... Friedman believes those parents who send their children to these high-priced commercial schools will become the early adopters who demand top-notch schools for their children—and that the most innovative features of their 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" (Reason Online, Rick Henderson 2-3, "Schools of Thought," Jan./97).

It is not difficult to predict qualifications for the Fraser's "index of school effectiveness"—particularly if the corporate sector is to be extensively consulted in order to determine notions of schools "effectiveness." And if, like "Tax Freedom Day," this "index of so-called effectiveness" becomes just another Canadian "idea," in the ideological fabric of the world, it is clear to see how this will contribute to the pro-privatization debate about education. It is also significant that the education debate, and the corporate and organizational collaboration, goes beyond Canada—the corporate agenda where education is concerned cannot be limited to national borders because those corporations are themselves unfettered by national-

ity. The Fraser's education agenda must be international for the corporate sector to fully realize the financial benefits of a market-based education system.

True to its stated intent, the Fraser has already published a special issue of the Fraser Forum this year, dealing specifically with education (September 1997). The title leaves no doubt as to the tone of this publication: "Fixing Education in Canada," with articles including "The Private Options as a Solution to Education Problems," "Ontario Takes Aim at Educational Bureaucracy," "School Choice in the U.S." and "Accountability: Measuring School Performance." In the Fraser's world, equal access to education is not the most important issue here—it is school choice. In fact, explains David Kirpatrick ("School Choice in the U.S.") "school choice is a civil rights issue of the '90s, or perhaps even the civil rights issue of our generation" (19). In this rhetoric, the children of the elite, (those who can afford to espouse the "values" of the so-called "even playing field" of the marketplace) are fighting for their rights—to attend school with like-minded individuals, to pay user fees only their families can afford, and to change the notion of public education to the extent where it is no longer public or democratic. And this is what the Fraser feels is the real civil rights issue of the '90s?

Ontario's education restructuring has attracted national and international interest, but while the

Fraser applauds the Harris government's attempt to revamp education in Ontario, far more must be accomplished. "If the Ontario government is truly interested in improving the quality and efficiency of the Ontario school system, it must liberate the market for education and end the virtual monopoly enjoyed by public schools. It is only through choice and competition that the diverse needs of different students can be met. And the only way to introduce competition and choice into the educational system is to enable other types of schools to enter into the educational market" (16).

It's interesting that the Fraser feels that the inclusiveness and diversity within public education is synonymous with a "one size fits all" approach to schooling, while international EMO chains openly state that their model is one which they will use over and over in various communities, and maintain specific control over the number of students "required" to open an outlet in a particular area. Private EMOs certainly have an education philosophy which they replicate in teaching techniques, curriculum, philosophy and the "type" of student eligible for enrolment.

ENVIRONMENTAL ECONOMICS

Like health care and the legal system, even the environment must be brought into line with free market principles—at least according to the Fraser Institute's Five Year Plan,

which calls for the development of a bilateral environmental impact index. In addition, each year the Fraser will publish a book "demonstrating a private property, market-based solution to an environmental problem," as evidently these are the only kind which are relevant. The Fraser will also compile a consumer's guide to environmental groups (market-based like the corporate-backed Ducks Unlimited, and non-market-based groups like Greenpeace). This is intended to expose these groups' "activities, objectives, tactics and impact on public policy" (21), which, in the world of the Fraser, is aligned first and foremost with economic policy. Clearly, those environmental groups less responsive to corporate demands (i.e. those which are not financially sponsored by the corporate sector) are distinctly at a disadvantage when determining exactly which environmental organizations promote or limit an unfettered free market.

COST OF REGULATION INDEX

The Fraser's underlying impulse is to argue for the extension of the free market, and the reduction of any government action, protection, responsibility or 'interference.' With this in mind, the Cost of Regulation Index will measure "the impact of government regulation" on the economy. The Fraser also notes the current distrust of big government and intends to 'take full advantage of the opportunities pre-

sented in this area” (22).

To further the Fraser’s influence on public perception, adult seminars, among other programs, will be established and developed. These are described as “self-contained programs designed in a series to cover the central economic issues of our time”—at least, central according to the Fraser. In order for this program to become self-sufficient, as the Fraser intends, we can expect to see some carefully designed advertising.

THE SOCIAL AFFAIRS UNIT

This new addition tackles the apparent assault on the family, of which “proponents” (such as the progressive Vanier Institute) must be eliminated. To this end, the Fraser (presenting its perspective as an “alternative viewpoint”) intends to ‘become the central point of reference for economic information about social policy issues’ and will develop a corresponding Family Distress/Crime index. Even more ominous, the Fraser intends to redraw and encourage universal acceptance of the poverty line at \$7,480 (for an adult living in a midsize city), as opposed to the current StatsCan figure of \$15,479.

LABOUR MARKETS AND THE RIGHT TO WORK

This project further illustrates the Fraser’s rigid alignment with free market ideology in a “program of research and publication designed

to shed more light and provide a clearer focus on the role of monopoly unionism in Canadian labour markets” (25). The Fraser’s true focus is made apparent in its promotion of the Right to Work movement in the U.S.: a book will be published promoting Right to Work laws; conferences will be held “in jurisdictions likely to be sympathetic to the idea of establishing Right to Work by law” (26); and a handbook will be published on the establishment of Right to Work laws in Canada.⁹

The Fraser intends to play an even more direct role in shaping students according to the needs of the free market, and ensuring that the principles of the Fraser (and its corporate sponsors) become “part of the common knowledge of Canadians” (2). To this end, the Fraser will compile another index “showing the differences between community college, universities and private institutions measured by the success of their graduates in finding work in the specialty for which they have been trained” (26). Evidently, this will be a rival to the (admittedly bland) MacLean’s university poll, but while MacLean’s had a series of criteria upon which these rankings were based, the Fraser’s index measures post-secondary institution effectiveness only by a graduate’s employability “which would justify the investment which has been made to earn the university degree” (26). Apparently in this equation the only real justification for education is employment—presumably prolonged

schooling is only a form of post-secondary welfare or further evidence of “government interference,” since, if public universities and community colleges weren’t subsidized by our taxes and protected by the government, fewer people could afford to go.

The second step here is for the Fraser to conduct a survey of the “effectiveness” of training programs in Canada. Hmm. What criteria should be used to judge “effectiveness?” And whose definition will be implemented? The Fraser’s plan to enlist a minimum of 25 multinationals in creating its “freedom indices” is very significant—there is no such specification made for community groups, representatives from the social services, seniors, lawyers, or educational institutions. And the private sector has overwhelmingly led not only the *criticism* against our public institutions—particularly schools—but the call to *restructure* education to reflect the needs of business which is apparently the primary recipient of the “products” (read: students, or future workers) of these schools. Funny. I always thought it was *society* that was both the immediate and the ultimate beneficiary of the graduates of our public education and training institutions.

In typical business arrogance, the private sector has again been elevated—this time by its mouthpiece, the Fraser Institute—in stature and importance, thus neatly reinforcing the catch phrase: “what’s good for

business is good for society.” But is this even remotely the case?

“The Institute has ‘worked’ in exactly the way that the founders anticipated that it would” (1) comments the Fraser in the opening paragraph of the five year plan. By providing “a tangible empirical focus for...policy concern,” the Fraser has succeeded in defining and occupying “a certain niche in the public policy process” (2). Therein lies the Fraser’s success—and its ability to, in its own words, “become part of the common knowledge of Canadians” (2); a prime example of the Fraser Institute’s ability to develop a concept (personal income tax siphoned into government coffers with no visible benefits to the public) and promote it as Tax Freedom Day which has become simply a decontextualized *idea* with which we, as Canadians, live each year, reinforcing the concept of Canada as an overtaxed, over-regulated, over-governed society.

The Fraser Institute’s Five Year Plan is all the more ominous because of the past success of the Institute in promoting its corporate propaganda as an extension of natural laws like gravity and buoyancy—or the survival of the (financially) fittest. And it is precisely because of its past success that the Fraser can afford to write with such arrogance of future intentions to promote the agenda of its free-market-espousing founders and sponsors. Fundamental Canadian institutions like health care and public education are reconfigured as

detrimental not only to economic forces but to Canadian freedom itself; even our legal system and environmental concerns must, according to the Fraser, exist *only* to promote economic prosperity—for the corporate sector—rather than ensuring that *all* Canadians (not only those who can afford to) live in a safe, healthy, just and responsible society. It is precisely this sort of caring society that our public institutions not only attempt to create, but ensure. And because this sort of society is apparently a barrier to the immediate accumulation of further wealth by the corporate sector, the Fraser is, on behalf of its sponsors, advocating and working towards the elimination of those institutions so fundamental to our notion of democracy in Canada.

First Annual Canadian Education Industry Summit September 24, 1997

ART GALLERY OF ONTARIO

CHARLES IVEY

INTRODUCTION

According to Charles Ivey, Summit chair, there was an “overwhelming response” to the First Annual Canadian Education Industry Summit, sold out and with a long waiting list, prompting him to enthusiastically assert that this would have to become an annual event. Of the 307 attendees, the breakdown was as follows:

- 25% public universities and colleges
- 44% private career colleges and training institutions
- 6% education associations and organizations
- 19% finance and investment community
- 14% government

The education industry is on the “verge of exploding,” declared Ivey, who cited the 3 objectives of the Summit to be:

1. to define the context and framework for industry growth
2. to assist industry operators to place products/services in the “right context” to make money
3. to search for capital

In an interview in the Education Industry Report, Ivey continued his glowing analysis. “It was very much an awakening for parties on both sides...parties on the demand side who are private, for-profit operators unaware that there were so many players already in the United States, and that there might be players in Canada who would help them. From the supply side, legal and financial people were very happy to see all of the potential deals walking around the room....[The Summit] will be a platform for the education industry and the investment community to discuss unique opportunities in this industry” (Nov./97, 11).

The Summit provided a momentous opportunity to witness not only the future “players” on the education industry horizon, but illus-

trated the context in which education restructuring and analysis is being discussed and shaped. Terms and concepts like the “knowledge economy,” “education capital,” “filling the gap between formal education and the real world,” “skills gap” and the reinforcement that public education means the same as “not for profit” education—as though the concept of public life exists only within the market construct and market values. But not to worry at the enormity of the restructuring task ahead, says Doug Knight of the Financial Post. There is no shortage of capital for the education industry. In his words, “Isn’t it great to be in an up-cycle?” Of course, the very existence of this so-called up-cycle is questionable depending on who is being asked.

GERALD ODENING
SMITH BARNEY

Gerald Odening of Smith Barney was happy to set the scene for the fledgling Canadian education industry. Smith Barney has produced some major reports on the education industry in the last couple of years which provided detailed background information on the reasons for the lucrative nature of this area of investment. Two trends are vital here: public and corporate dissatisfaction with education (coupled with increasing acceptance of private enterprise in education as a result of for-profit institutions’ strong results and focus on employment)

and technological progress. This trend is somewhat more elaborate; it involves a more flexible workforce (code words: individual paced learning and monitoring, mobility), downsizing and outsourcing trends (unemployment, lower wages and fewer benefits for employees) and the usual references to the “shift to the information-based economy.”

Education “restructuring” closely parallels the health care sector model (EMOs and HMOs are terms which both originated on Wall St.). EMOs have a high earnings predictability because modest capital needs result in high returns-. They potentially achieve a 15-20% return on capital, with no drop-offs during economic downturns, and the ability to price above inflation—truly, at least to investors, “manna from God.” The move to private, for-profit models of education “delivery” is as a result of the continuing shift of funds, school “reform and improvement” and irate mothers or “bitchillantes.” This has evolved into charter and voucher movements which have capitalized on the rhetoric of “choice,” all of which has resulted in tremendous success for the for-profit “side.” The for-profit sector will grow any time people are stretched to the financial limit, as they are now. And this has many implications for education—after all, kids go to school to get a job, unless it’s to an elite university for sports or a degree in intergalactic philosophy.

John McLaughlin of the Education Industry Report (self-described “bible of the education industry”) encouraged attendees to reflect on this event as a turning point, because this summit was the first exploration of education as an investible area in Canada.

“Education is open to greater investment and market forces in Canada for the same reasons as in the US,” he explained, and this conference is an unprecedented opportunity to “increase knowledge of the industry and its investible potential.” As an aside, the two terms “education” and “industry” were never put together earlier than three years ago. And make no mistake, the education industry is a huge industry: in the United States, it is the second largest after health care, and more than twice the size of the defense budget. Presently, technology and development is the largest for-profit area of the education industry.

According to McLaughlin, education is already in the midst of public and private ownership—which may come as a surprise to some: apparently, the public owns the teachers, while the private sector owns the “goods” such as desks and books. However, we experience “trouble” when the private sector moves into areas traditionally thought of as public—specifically instruction.

The “confusion” surrounding education (government-delivered and ubiquitous) relies in part on the fact that it is a poorly understood economic phenomenon, and its ability to “measure outcomes as a result of money spent is elusive.” In this climate, there is therefore pressure for schools to “change, show results, and respond to consumer needs.” In the United States, this has resulted in dropping school district boundaries, magnet schools, and voucher initiatives, almost all of which are supported by corporate donations. This is what McLaughlin calls “public education opening up to consumer needs.”

But even with these initiatives, it’s still too little, too late. This education market is going to explode for a number of reasons, including the use of unions as a convenient scapegoat by the public, corporate sector and government. The industry has been able to take advantage of new demands placed on the “marketplace” by women in the workplace, for example, growing private practice education, recent and moneyed interest by Bay and Wall Sts., and the purchasing of services by school boards (contracting-out), to name but a few. Faced with the pressure to do more with less taxes while serving a greater number of children’s needs, schools will be forced to turn to outsourcing of services, says McLaughlin—and as long as the private sector thinks *quality, profitability* will follow.

One of the major foci of the summit was on Information Technology and private learning centres. International Data Corporation, Academy of Learning, Sylvan Learning Centres, ITI Education Corporation, International Business Schools, and the Bank of Montreal Institute for Learning explained their role in the developing education industry. The message is simple: if you get into it now, you're set for life. If you don't, in five years it'll be too late. Public education has some catching up to do in technological advancement—for example, the commodification of knowledge has fundamentally changed learning principles. Instead of CEOs, we are now seeing CKOs—chief knowledge officers. We are reminded that people now play multiple roles in today's market, and that just-in-time learning is becoming far more important from the perspective of employers. Evidently, this must be something incorporated into public education. Apparently, "half of what you learn in first year university will be obsolete by education"—it's the process that counts, and specifically a process geared to the needs of employers which are increasingly mobile, "versatile," and unstable. Competition has established "new value propositions" which will drive the demand for more/different/cheaper options.

Private learning institutions are becoming increasingly insistent

that they be seen as comparable to degree-granting institutions. In fact, the "monopoly" of publicly-funded colleges and universities was a recurring theme at the conference. Private learning institutions, because market-responsive, claim to specifically address the "gap" between what schools turn out and what industry needs by offering very career-specific courses. In fulfillment of this promise, the ITI Education Corporation will "convert" university grads to IT professionals in nine months at the mere cost of \$21,600—predicted profits for 1998 are \$28 million, up from a mere \$2.4 million in 1995. No wonder these institutions enjoy the continuing financial support of the investment community. These institutions are "filling the gap between formal education and the real world," explains the Academy of Learning, whose conservative expansion plans include focusing on students from Malaysia and Hong Kong, in addition to their 140 franchises in all the provinces and some states.

Sylvan Learning Systems ("in the business of learning") is probably one of the best-known private learning institutions, but its services go far beyond instruction. It has moved into content distribution as well as testing, on its way to being "the world's leading provider of education services to families, schools and communities." Through the ubiquitous nature of its services, carefully-forged partnerships with the education establishment, inclu-

sion of technology as a “core competency,” and the development of its testing capacities (reinforcing its credentials with the education establishment), Sylvan has established itself as a formidable private force. It is not in competition with public education, you understand, but is only providing supplemental services, with an increased emphasis on testing, which is apparently the “gatekeeper of society.” And it is in this position, between where people are, and where people need to go, that Sylvan has situated itself.

STEPHEN BEATTY
KPMG “STANDARDIZING AN APPROACH FOR
EVALUATING EDUCATION COMPANIES”

This evaluation section provided some of the more significant ways in which public education is brought more and more securely into the realm of private capital. For one thing, we are told we must understand that the public sector, because it gives away services for “free,” has an advantage over the private sector. The fact that public institutions are not “free,” but rather paid for by and of benefit to all of society is ignored in this equation.

Notions of “value” (which means different things to consumers as it does to employers) are also prominent in this framework—and what denotes “value” are convenience, accessibility, relevance of course content, the speed with which the course can be completed, interaction with other students, ex-

posure to “stars,” charisma of leaders, brand value, and of course the market demand for graduates, which may reflect either brand value or ties to employers. And these new for-profit institutions can realize additional profits through raising tuition fees, pushing more students through at faster rates, and increasing use of “innovations” like distance education which remove the need for transportation, classrooms, and even a human instructor. It is for this reason that computer-assisted learning is increasingly popular in these profit-making institutions.

While not-for-profit (a term used in place of “public”) institutions are popular because they give away goods for “free,” it is for this absence of the profit motive that it is difficult to value an institution. Educational institutions are thought of as “loss-making organizations” because they charge less than the “economic cost of education” and students are unaware of the real costs.

The goals of these private institutions are far more tangible—they must place students in a job or close. Non-profit education institutions may have higher level goals...but clearly this is a liability in the education marketplace. So, while there is no “real” reason—read: financial—for non-profits to exist, there is for profits—to make money. And this is the most clear representation of value, apparently.

There are economic realities working in favour of private enterprise in education. First of all, gov-

ernments no longer have the ability to adequately fund educational institutions as in the past (demographics, changing economy). Secondly, privatization is a well-established trend (here and accepted in areas such as health care, infrastructure, and prisons). The parallel is strongest with health care, where there are implicit strong social values, professionals are involved in the delivery, and the outputs are difficult to quantify.

So how to determine the “true” value of an educational institution? As in any profit-making institution, we must break it down into its “meaningful components,” develop a framework suitable to determine the value, measure the value of each component and then calculate: total components = total value of institution. Education-as-a-whole experience, or as something far beyond individual components, is a concept not even considered—in fact, it appears irrelevant, in this equation.

And what does the industry have to look forward to? Tuition increases—which will almost surely make private learning centres appear less costly by comparison. There is also a growing “trend” to demand a function for education—and considering the “valueless” function of public education compared to the for-profit’s clear *raison d’être* of profit, the function hierarchy appears clear. Finally, will payment arrangements change—and this discussion is currently going on

now in government with suggestions like income-contingent loan repayment plans, clearly benefiting private learning centres which are toying with the idea of offering money-back guarantees if graduates do not get a job within a certain period after graduation.

Of course there are many other avenues to consider in generating revenues: endowments, food services, student accommodation and sponsorship. And there are not only a growing number of benchmarks in this area, but a good deal of money to be made in becoming a benchmark. And for those non-profits stubbornly holding their own as best they can in the education marketplace, the private sector will provide them with valuable lessons on what business “is,” and how it works.

LISA DAVIS, BYRON LOEPPKY
HEENAN BLAIKIE

“BARRIERS TO ENTRY AND OPPORTUNITIES
FOR INVESTMENT”

This legal perspective began with the prophetic words: “change always provides opportunity”—and there is significant opportunity in the education industry. For example, private schools have multiplied—there are 700 in Ontario alone—particularly within the last five years. Future trends we can look for include charter schools (publicly-funded and governed at the local level) and electronic delivery (distance education), as well as increasing number of private tutoring centres such as Kumon

(unregulated except in Alberta).

These innovations are not just in K-12, but can be seen in post-secondary education as well. Alberta DeVry students can get a U.S. degree from Colorado. Here, colleges may have a bit of a leg-up on universities as they are more likely to be competitive with for-profit institutions because they operate on

training basics. And apparently the ministry of education—at least in Ontario—is considering allowing OSAP to be used to attend private vocational schools, which at this point receive no government subsidies. Currently, a quarter of the costs of university is the tuition, which there is no incentive to raise unless post-secondary institutions are pursuing a cost-recovery model.¹⁰

SUMMARY

“I am overwhelmed by the fact that...in education, profit is a filthy word....To battle this prevalent bias, companies must not apologize for turning a profit. They (company leadership) have to become comfortable with the fact that profit is okay, you have to believe it yourself first....The reason words are considered nasty or terrible is because of their non-usage. The more we use the word profit, the less sting it has.”

John Rosica, Rosica-Mulhern & Associates Inc., PR firm (EIR 1, Nov. 1997)

National education restructuring has provided an optimal climate for the rapidly-expanding—and apparently borderless—education industry. This is not limited to post-secondary institutions, as K-12/13 in Canada is undergoing fundamental changes: budget cuts, school board amalgamations, off-loading of services and an onslaught of crisis-conscious rhetoric. The language of the private sector is used increasingly in the discussions of “necessary” and “inevitable” reform—standards, client and consumer accountability, commodification, just-in-time learning, knowledge capital and cost-recovery. And with this rhetoric comes the weight of corporate associations

and implications for public education which may even be antithetical to this fundamental institution. In fact, they are only compatible if “public” does indeed mean the same thing as “not for profit,” which in fact it does not. *Public* is a philosophical term which reflects the social commitment to and the benefits from a universal system of education. *Not for profit* belongs to the mindset that believes financial goals dictate importance and therefore outcome. The two are not synonymous—it is the conceit of the education industry that assumes they may be used interchangeably. But it is part of the wider erosion of public institutions which are so fundamental to the workings of a democratic society. ☹

ENDNOTES

¹ In the words of Russ White, a teacher at Gordon Grayson High School in the GTA, “the world is spinning and changing, and education has to change with it. We’re living in a global economy, and business has to be international. So we have to be international in education.”

² “At all levels of national and daily life, the breadth and depth of democratic relations are being rolled back. We have become a society that appears to demand less rather than more of democracy. In some quarters, democracy has actually become subversive.” (Giroux 37)

³ “However specious in theory the project might be of giving education to the labouring classes of the poor, it would be prejudicial to their morals and happiness. *It would teach them to despise their lot in life, instead of making them good servants in agriculture and other labourious employments.* Instead of teaching them subordination...it would render them fractious and refractory...It would enable them to read seditious pamphlets, vicious books and publications against Christianity; it would render them insolent to their superiors, and in a few years the legislature would find it necessary to direct the strong arm of power towards them.” (MP British Parliament, Davies Giddy, 1807)

⁴ “Any system of education is a political way of maintaining or modifying the appropriation of discourses, along with the knowledges and powers which they carry.” (Foucault)

“It is by an apprenticeship in a variety of know-how wrapped up in the massive inculcation of the ideology of the ruling class that the relations of production in a capitalist social formation...are largely reproduced. The mechanisms which produce this vital result for the capitalist regime are naturally covered up and concealed by a universally reigning ideology of the School, universally reigning because it is one of the essential forms of the ruling bourgeois ideology; an ideology which represents the School as a neutral environment purged of ideology...where teachers respectful of the ‘conscience’ and ‘freedom’ of the children who are entrusted to them (in complete confidence) by their parents...open up for them the path to the freedom, morality and responsibility of adults by their own example, by knowledge, literature and their ‘liberating’ virtues.” (Althusser)

⁵ For further information, see later notes on the First Annual Canadian Education Industry Summit.

⁶ “Creating a useful crisis is part of what this will be about... so the first bunch of communications that the public might hear might be more negative than I would be inclined to talk about (otherwise). Yeah, we need to invent a crisis and that’s not just an act of courage, there’s some skill involved” (qtd. in Brennan, “Minister Called Dishonest: Proposed Creating a ‘Useful Crisis’ in Ontario Education.” The Hamilton Spectator 13 Sept. 1995: A1-A2.)

⁷ For an excellent analysis of Outcome Based Education, please see the Nova Scotia Teacher’s Union’s Curriculum Committee paper “Outcome Based Education,” released in November 1996.

⁸ This information may have changed by the time of this report’s distribution due to the ongoing restructuring of public education. For more information, contact the Canadian School Boards Association.

⁹ “Right to work” states lag behind the rest of the U.S. in minimum wage legislation. Seven of the 21 “right to work” states don’t even have minimum wage at all...Workers in “right to work” states suffer job fatality rates far above those in non-‘right to work’ states, mainly because there are fewer unions to help enforce job safety regulations....According to the latest U.S. government statistics, poverty rates in the “right to work” states are on average 12% **higher** than in free-bargaining states....Infant mortality rates....are generally **higher** in the “right to work” states, eight of whom are among the 10 states with the worst infant mortality rates” (CCPA Monitor 3, Sept./97).

¹⁰ For more information, please refer to The Canadian Education Industry Summit “proceeding document”.

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Canadian Association of University Teach-
ers
2675 Queensview Drive
Ottawa ON K2B 8K2
(613) 820-2270 / (613) 820-7244

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Vancouver, BC V6H 1C5
(604) 734-2721 / (604) 732-4559

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Edmonton, AB T5N 0Y4
(403) 482-7311 / (403) 482-5659

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Regina, SK S4P 3M7
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Westmount, PQ H3Z 1T3
(514) 482-7522 / (514) 482-9399

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P.O. Box 605, Station M
Halifax, NS B3J 2R7
(902) 420-9195 / (902) 429-7405

Nfld. & Labrador School Boards' Assoc.
The National Life Building (First Floor)
33 Pippy Place
St. John's, NF A1B 3X2

PEI School Trustees Association
P.O. Box 8600
Charlottetown, PE C1A 8V7
(902) 368-5126 / (902) 368-5395

Labour Organizations:

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350, 10451-170 St.
Edmonton, AB T5P 4T2
(403) 483-3021 / (403) 484-5928

Amalgamated Transit Union*
701-1450 Meyerside Dr.
Mississauga, ON L5T 2N5
(905) 670-4710 / (905) 670-3659

B.C. Federation of Labour*
4279 Canada Way
Burnaby, BC V5G 1H1
(604) 430-1421 / (604) 430-5917

Canadian Auto Workers*
205 Placer Ct.
Willowdale, ON
M2H 3H9
(800) 268-5763 / (416) 495-6554

Canadian Labour Congress
Education Advisory Committee
2841 Riverside Dr.
Ottawa, ON
K1V 8X7
(613) 521-3400 / (613) 521-4655
(A major focus of the CLC is public education in Canada)

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377 Bank St.
Ottawa, ON K2P 1Y3
(613) 236-7238 / (613) 563-7861

Canadian Union of Public Employees*
21 Florence St.
Ottawa, ON K2P 0W6

(613) 237-1590 / (613) 237-5508

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1900-350 Albert St.
Ottawa, ON K1R 1A4
(613) 230-5200 / (613) 230-5801

Graphic Communications International
Union*
901-21 St. Clair Ave. E.
Toronto, ON M4T 1L9
(416) 961-0267 / (416) 961-3933

Industrial Wood and Allied Workers-
Canada*
2088 Weston Rd.
Weston, ON M9N 1X4
(416) 247-8628 / (416) 247-5893

International Association of Fire Fighters*
403-350 Sparks St.
Ottawa, ON K1R 7S8
(613) 567-8988 / (613) 567-8986
-contact James Fennel, 15th Division

International Association of Machinists and
Aerospace Workers*
182 Sheppard Ave. W.
Willowdale, ON M2N 1M8
(416) 225-9003 / (416) 225-9007

Manitoba Federation of Labour
101-275 Broadway
Winnipeg, MN R3C-4M6
(204) 947-1400 / (204) 943-4276

Metro Labour Education Centre*
1209 King St. W.
Toronto, ON M6K 1G2
(416) 537-6532 / (416) 537-6000

National Union of Public and General
Employees*
15 Auriga Dr.
Nepean, ON K2E 1B7
(613) 228-9800 / (613) 228-9801

New Brunswick Federation of Labour
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Moncton, NB E1C 6L9
(506) 857-2125 / (506) 383-1597

Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of
Labour
P.O. Box 8597, Station A
St. Johns, NF A1B 3P2
(709) 754-1660 / (709) 754-1220

Northwest Territories Federation of Labour
5112-52 St. P.O. Box 2787
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2R1
(403) 873-3695 / (403) 873-6979

Nova Scotia Federation of Labour
212-3700 Kempt Rd.
Halifax, NS B3K 4X8
(902) 454-7655 / (902) 454-7671

Office and Professional Employees International Union*
4595 Canada Way, 2nd Fl.
Burnaby, BC V5G 4L9
(604) 299-0387 / (604) 299-8211

Ontario Federation of Labour*
15 Gervais Dr. 2nd fl.
Don Mills, ON
M3C 1Y8
(800) 668-9138 / (416) 441-1893

P.E.I. Federation of Labour*
420 University Ave., Rm 113
Charlottetown, PE C1A 7Z5
(902) 368-3068 / (902) 368-3192

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Ottawa, ON K2P 0P1
(613) 560-4273 / (613) 563-3492

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545 Cremazie Blvd. E., 17th Fl.
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Saskatchewan Federation of Labour*
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Regina, SK S4T 1J3
(306) 525-0917 / (306) 565-8960

Service Employees International Union*
810-75 The Donway West
North York, ON M3C 2E9
(416) 447-2311 / (416) 447-2428

Sheet Metal Workers International Association*
33 Applewood Cres.
St. Thomas, ON N5R 1H1
(519) 633-2479 / (519) 633-7328

Teamsters Canada*
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Laval, PQ H7T 2S3
(514) 682-5521 / (514) 681-2244

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Transportation Communications Union*
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Mississauga, ON L5T 2N5
(905) 564-2500 / (905) 564-2898

United Food and Commercial Workers International Representative*
61 International Blvd., Suite 300
Rexdale, ON M9W 6K4
(416) 675-1104 / (416) 675-6919

United Steelworkers of America*
700-234 Eglinton Ave. E.
Toronto, ON R3T 2N2
(416) 487-1571 / (416) 482-5548

United Transportation Union*
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(613) 747-7979 / (416) 747-2815

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106 Strickland St.
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Association for Media Literacy
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Toronto, ON M6C 2V2
aml@interlog.com

Canadian Federation of Students
170 Metcalf Ave.
Ottawa, ON K2P 1P3
(613) 232-7394 / (613) 232-0276

Center for Commercial-Free Public Education (UNPLUG Campaign)
1714 Franklin St. #100-306
Oakland, CA 94612
(800) UNPLUG-1 / (510) 268-1277
unplug@igc.org

Consumers Union
Anita Holmes
101 Truman Ave.
Yonkers, NY 10703
(914) 378-2575

Council of Canadians
502-151 Slater St.
Ottawa, ON K1P 5H3
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International Forum on Globalization
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gmartell@yorku.ca
contact: George Martell

People for Education
Annie Kidder
(416) 532-1484

Progressive Publications:

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1243 West 7th St.
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<http://www.mnsi.net/~flipside/>

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Canadian Education Industry Summit
Chair: Charles Ivey
2060 Queen St. E.
P.O. Box 51550
Toronto, ON
(416) 698-2925 / (416) 698-3303

Cato Institute
1000 Massachusetts Ave. NW
Washington, DC
20001-5403

(202) 842-0200 / (202) 842-3490
<http://www.cato.org>

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125 Adelaide St. E.
Toronto, ON
M5C 1L7
(416) 865-1904 / (416) 865-1866
<http://www.cdhowe.org>

Center for Education Reform
1001 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 204
Washington, DC
20036
(202) 822-9000 / (202) 822-5077

Conference Board of Canada
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Ottawa, ON K1H 8M7
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20 Park Plaza, Suite 1012
Boston, MA
02116
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Fraser Institute
626 Bute St.
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(604) 688-0221 / (604) 688-8539
<http://www.fraserinstitute.ca>

Industry-Education Council (Hamilton-
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P.O. Box 57451, Jackson Station
Hamilton, ON L8P 4X3
(905) 529-4483 / (905) 529-5525

George Klima
<http://www.interlog.com/~klima/ed.html>
(a detailed and extensive international list
of education reform groups and publica-
tions)

Stephen Lawton
Developing Quality Schools
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
252 Bloor St. W., 6th fl
Toronto, ON M5S 1V6
(416) 923-6641 x 2421 / (416) 926-4741
slawton@oise.utoronto.ca

The Learning Partnership
1 Dundas St. W. Suite 504
Toronto, ON M5G 1Z3
(416) 204-4478 / (416) 204-4378

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New York, NY

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Education"

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<http://www.nab.com>

Ontario Association of School Business
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Toronto, ON M5S 1V5
(416) 923-3107 / (416) 923-3490
<http://www.interlog.com/~oasbo>

Organization for Economic Co-operation
and Development
2, rue Andre Pacal
75775 Paris France

Organization for Quality Education
170 University Ave. W., Suite 12-218
Waterloo, ON N2L 3E9
(519) 884-3166 / (519) 884-7054
<http://www.oqe.org>

Reason Foundation
3415 S. Sepulveda Blvd., Suite 400
Los Angeles, CA 90034
(310) 391-2245
<http://www.reason.org>

Separation for School and State Alliance
4578 N. First, #310
Fresno, CA 93726
(209) 292-1776 / (209) 292-7582
<http://www.sepschool.org>

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Teachers For Excellence
[http://www.geocities.com/Athens/7192/
index.html](http://www.geocities.com/Athens/7192/index.html)

[http://www.atlas-fdn.org/fonebook/
index.html](http://www.atlas-fdn.org/fonebook/index.html)

(a list of email addresses and websites for market-based organizations and individuals)

<http://www.aims.ca/similar.html>
(links to free-market organizations)

Industry Publications:

Education Industry Group
Education Industry Report
"Education Industry Directory"
122 South Phillips Ave., Suite 200
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
(605) 339-1688 / (605) 330-1662
<http://www.edindustry.com>

Phillips Business Information, Inc.
Selling to Kids
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Potomac, MD 20859-1130
(301) 424-3338 / (301) 309-3847
clientservices.pbi@phillips.com

Privatized Curriculum

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40 Kodiak Cres., unit #13
North York, ON M3J 3G5
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11 Winchester St.
Toronto, ON M4X 1A6
(416) 968-2060 / (416) 968-9380

EDEN Learning Centre
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(705) 325-9279 / (705) 325-3114
<http://eden.scbe.on.ca>

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200 First Stamford Pl., P.O. Box 120023
Stamford, CT
203-705-3600
<http://www.lls-online.com>

Marwil Communications Inc.
103 Riverdale Ave.
Toronto, ON M4K 1C2
(416) 466-2617 / (416) 466-6463

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381 Park Ave. S. #713
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(800) 243-6877
<http://www.modern.com>

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<http://schoolmatch.com>

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THE NORTH AMERICAN EDUCATION INDUSTRY AND EDUCATION
RESTRUCTURING IN CANADA

By ERIKA SHAKER

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