environment naturally arising when anyone deals with citizens' three most prized possessions: their children, their rights as Americans, and their tax money.

There is no question that our schools must improve to meet the challenges of a tomorrow that will be wholly different from yesterday. And America's schools are facing up forthrightly to that need for change by addressing the right issues. These include motivating children to learn, mobilizing the whole community in implementing a plan that includes, not just the schools, but the full range of public and private services (such as safe and supervised playgrounds open during evening and weekend hours, libraries that are open when children are not in school, and other social and health services readily accessible to school children), providing sensible parental choice options within the public schools, and restructuring education from the statehouse to the schoolhouse to involve parents more in educational decision making at the schools, including revised business practices that permit working parents to participate more widely in interactions with their children's schools.

These efforts also include giving teachers more autonomy, improving the professional preparation of teachers and school administrators, and working to persuade state and federal governments to better match society's dollar investment in education with our national, state, and local expectations for school performance.

America's hope for a solid future for education is in the hands of the people, through participatory, accountable, and representative governance—not in the vagaries and disorder of the economic marketplace that most recently gave us junk bonds, S&L bailouts, and the strange "regulation" of the cable TV industry.

We will have the quality of schools that we want as a society by consciously translating our collective will into action—not by turning education over to shifting, unpredictable economic forces. Our public schools and free economic marketplace have worked well as separate American institutions over the generations to make our nation preeminent in the world. As we improve both as separate institutions, we will enter the 21st century with the tools to remain preeminent.

Thomas A. Shannon is Executive Director, National School Boards Association. 1680 Duke St., Alexandria, VA 22314

---

**Controlled Choice Avoids the Pitfalls of Choice Plans**

Response to John Chubb and Terry Moe

An educational system in which choice and control coexist has a better chance of fulfilling the needs of all.

Freedom and conformity are complementary in human society. Effective communities, institutions, and groups require both conditions in a proper balance. Either unlimited choice, an aspect of freedom, or complete control, an aspect of conformity, can be harmful. Individuals who exercise unlimited freedom tend to be insensitive; and groups, institutions, and communities that require complete conformity are oppressive. Consequently, restraint on choice for the sake of conformity and constraint on control for the sake of freedom are helpful.

Choice and control are both necessary elements in the dialogue about a reality such as effective schooling. The problem with advocating choice as the answer to reform is the supporters' failure to embrace the principle of complementarity, which recognizes the need for an opposing concept like control, which also contributes to effective education.

**The Importance of Creative Tension**

Because of our tendency to think in linear ways, we often attempt to solve complex issues with single or monistic and oversimplified approaches—one of the major pitfalls in education reform. An example of this pattern of thinking is our belief in the 19th century idea that competition, natural selection, and the survival of the fittest are universal laws in social organization. But evolutionary theory is a lin-
A pitfall of education reform plans that emphasize choice is the tendency for planners to model them in the image of the economic system.

A Faulty Assumption
Another pitfall in choice plans is the assumption that their primary objective is to attract affluent families, white families, and other high status households with children back to public school systems. These kinds of families are sought because some education planners mistakenly believe that good schools are those in which dominant people of power prevail in numbers and that bad schools are those in which subdominant people of power prevail in numbers. This fallacy persists because many educational planners continue to permit communicating and calculating skills, in which the dominant people of power excel, to rule the roost of learnings considered worthy of teaching and to deny the value of other skills learned in school.

In the Brookings Institution study, Politics, Markets, and America's Schools, John Chubb of Brookings and Terry Moe of Stanford University "focused on one major issue, academic achievement" (Chubb 1989, p. 6). They acknowledged that some will argue that schools are trying to accomplish a lot of other things as well. "But the thing we care about is academic achievement." It is not clear whether they are talking about their research team or the mind of the nation. If the latter, they are wrong.

There are people who consider the learnings associated with such ideas as justice, honesty, altruism, generosity, magnanimity, courage, compassion to be as important as those associated with communicating and calculating skills. School reform plans, including those that emphasize choice, should not be skewed to deal primarily with narrow measures of academic achievement but, rather, should be developed to accommodate all the purposes of schooling.

An Inappropriate Analogy
A final pitfall of education reform plans that emphasize choice is the tendency for planners to model them in the image of the economic system. For example, Chubb and Moe speak of the beneficial effects of schools controlled by markets and schools competing for students in the open market (Olson 1990, p. 1). Analogies are helpful up to a point, but they have grave explanatory limitations.

The rules that govern the economic institution, which is concerned with producing and distributing goods and services, are different from those that govern the education institution, which is concerned with developing and disseminating knowledge and information. In the economic system, there may be unworthy buyers who are unwilling to pay the asking price. But in education, there are no worthy seekers of knowledge. In business dealings, when a product is given away, it depresses the market. But in educational transactions, knowledge increases as it is shared and given to others. The economy moves toward its strength and nurtures those units most capable of producing goods and services for the benefit of the whole system. The educational system moves toward its weaker units and nurtures those least capable of functioning effectively in order to enhance the total system. Thus, a market orientation is inappropriate in an educational situation.

The Complementarity of Controlled Choice
Michael Alves and I have tried to avoid the pitfalls of choice plans discussed here with an educational reform plan called controlled choice (Alves and Willie 1987). We've developed such plans for several communities, including Boston, Seattle, Milwaukee, Little Rock, and St. Lucie County, Florida. We see controlled choice as an equity planning tool.

Controlled choice recognizes the complementary relationship of freedom and conformity. In so doing, it meets and fulfills the twofold goal of education. First, the individual is enhanced because all schools in an attendance zone are available to all students, who may rank-order their
Not a Case for Market Control

Response to John Chubb and Terry Moe

The evidence does not support the conclusion that current methods of school governance are responsible for poor student achievement.

Seven years into the education reform movement, John Chubb and Terry Moe's argument that our public schools are overly bureaucratic and overly regulated is hardly earth-shattering. What is jolting and worth thinking about is their contention that these features are an inevitable consequence of democratic control of schools. But what is astonishing is their claim to have proved empirically that democratic control of schools is primarily responsible for poor student achievement and, therefore, that market control is the answer to our education problems. Have they proved this?

Not by a long shot. Chubb and Moe's empirical case for market control is based on their attempt to explain what accounts for the difference in the number of correct answers to 116 questions used in the High School and Beyond survey, which tested the verbal and quantitative skills of a large sample of high school students in both their sophomore and senior years. Sophomores averaged 62 correct answers to the 116 questions on the 63-minute test. By their senior year, these students answered, on average, 6.6 more questions correctly—a very small gain. But the lowest quartile of students answered, on average, 6.6 fewer questions correctly, while the top quartile answered 18.13 more questions correctly.


Charles V. Willie is Professor of Education and Urban Studies, Harvard University, Graduate School of Education, Cambridge, MA 02138.

Bella Rosenberg

References


Charles V. Willie is Professor of Education and Urban Studies, Harvard University, Graduate School of Education, Cambridge, MA 02138.

Bella Rosenberg

Not a Case for Market Control

Response to John Chubb and Terry Moe

The evidence does not support the conclusion that current methods of school governance are responsible for poor student achievement.

Seven years into the education reform movement, John Chubb and Terry Moe's argument that our public schools are overly bureaucratic and overly regulated is hardly earth-shattering. What is jolting and worth thinking about is their contention that these features are an inevitable consequence of democratic control of schools. But what is astonishing is their claim to have proved empirically that democratic control of schools is primarily responsible for poor student achievement and, therefore, that market control is the answer to our education problems. Have they proved this?

Not by a long shot. Chubb and Moe's empirical case for market control is based on their attempt to explain what accounts for the difference in the number of correct answers to 116 questions used in the High School and Beyond survey, which tested the verbal and quantitative skills of a large sample of high school students in both their sophomore and senior years. Sophomores averaged 62 correct answers to the 116 questions on the 63-minute test. By their senior year, these students answered, on average, 6.6 more questions correctly—a very small gain. But the lowest quartile of students answered, on average, 6.6 fewer questions correctly, while the top quartile answered 18.13 more questions correctly.


Charles V. Willie is Professor of Education and Urban Studies, Harvard University, Graduate School of Education, Cambridge, MA 02138.