

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, account-

able, 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. □

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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-

ear way of thinking about biological change that ultimately is misleading in the social order. Parental choice of schools is a monistic concept, and autonomy with accountability is a linear approach to school reform. The true problems of living, according to E. F. Schumacher, author of *Small Is Beautiful*, are problems of reconciling opposites. Autonomy or choice alone is insufficient to solve the problems of schooling unless linked with their opposites, regulation and control.

School reform must promote human diversity, require that all learning environments offer an adequate education, distribute common educational resources to all population groups equitably, and facilitate choice. School reform is effective when it achieves all of these goals simultaneously. These and other responsibilities of schooling as an institution are too great to be fulfilled by autonomy or a choice mechanism alone. Regulation *as well as* autonomy and choice *as well as* control are essential in school reform. These two, like mercy and justice or excellence and equity, ought always to be kept together.¹ When held together in creative tension, opposites inform and correct each other. Accordingly, an educational system that experiences the creativity of freedom and the discipline of conformity is better positioned to meet the twofold goal of education: individual enhancement and community advancement, not one or the other but both.

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.

A pitfall of education reform plans that emphasize choice is the tendency for planners to model them in the image of the economic system.

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 unworthy 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

schools of preference. And, second, the interests of the community are advanced because racial and socioeconomic diversity is guaranteed, since all groups have genuine proportional access to all schools within a zone.

Moreover, in a controlled choice plan, the school system is obliged to make all of the relatively large zones that embrace multiple schools equivalent in range and quality of services offered so that no one is harmed by reason of residence. And so that the total system is continuously upgraded, such a plan requires a district to use community resources disproportionately in those schools that are least chosen.

Further, controlled choice does not cater to any racial population or social class but, rather, treats all fairly. However, spaces in schools are reserved

for bilingual and special education students first so that they as well as others may choose good schools and be mainstreamed in the same school when remedial programs are completed. Magnet schools are accepted as schools with special offerings that should be available to all interested students, regardless of aptitude. But the ultimate goal of controlled choice is to magnetize all schools.

Because it accomplishes all of these things and achieves them simultaneously, controlled choice truly promotes excellence without compromising equity. □

¹Inabeth Miller and I tried to put this issue in perspective in our book, *Social Goals and Educational Reform*, (1988). (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press), pp. 3-10.

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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, 4.66 fewer questions correctly, while the top quartile answered 18.13 more questions cor-

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