

Schools: Battlegrounds with Three Fronts

Hardly a week goes by without the state school system providing the media with another juicy morsel of scandal or controversy. Parents who have their children in these institutions have to negotiate their children through three major fronts of battle simultaneously if they are to: 1) survive physically intact; 2) survive morally intact; and 3) actually learn something useful. As we know, many of these children do not survive intact or learn what one would expect after 10 years of compulsory schooling.

Academic Front

With the shocking news from the Ministry of Social Development's Literacy Report of August 2004 that 46% of adult New Zealanders (and a heart-breaking 64% of adult Maori) are functionally illiterate, it seems only fair that all of the recent past Governments apologise and seek to make restitution. Surely with unbelievable figures like that New Zealanders should be able to sue the Ministry of Education for serious fraud: squandering billions of dollars, forcing attendance and not delivering the goods. Parents with the commitment to apply for exemptions should be given them without question. Read the Report for yourself at: <http://tinyurl.com/arhgs>.

Kerry Howe, Professor of History at Massey University's Albany Campus, made the fascinating observation, after observing this for 30 years, that "the whole schools' qualifications structure matters little at university – students at university either do well, or not so well. I'm unaware of any research that links success at university with success at

school."

According to Professor Howe, students "pass or fail depending on what effort they put in." It holds true whether they just did an NCEA or got the old UE eight years ago or bombed out of school back in 1964. School leaving qualifications do not appear to either prepare or to point out a potentially successful university student. One then has to wonder: why is so much emphasis placed on it?

Professor Howe hints at behind-

the-scenes political machinations: "NCEA, or any other end-of-school qualification, is now essentially a commodity with enormous commercial, institutional, ideological and political investment. It has the capacity to operate as a 'system' for its own sake rather than for the benefit of students. After all, in our modern world, real education starts rather than stops at about the age of 16 or 17."¹ I've been saying exactly that for years: as parents enquire about home education and express doubt about what they could teach, they soon agree that the most important lessons they ever learned in life did not happen in the classroom.

Taking a slightly different tack, a group comprised of Qualifications Authority officials, vice chancellors committee representatives and school principals indicated that NCEA is acting as a somewhat

Germany Pursues HEs Across International Lines

The German politicians and courts argue that we must force the children by all means to attend public schools in order to control the Muslims living in Germany. Private schools also must be forced to operate according to government policies, pursuing the same state mandated social agenda. Ex-Chancellor Helmut Schmidt recently stated that only forced school attendance will keep us from the dangers of Islam. What is becoming more and more evident in the attitudes of politicians and the general public and the rulings of the courts is that Islam is being used as a tool in order to promote a socialistic agenda being foisted upon our children and society.

Rights guaranteed German citizens under the constitution are no

longer being granted in areas of religion and parental rights. School authorities no longer grant exemptions from the school attendance law, which according to the school laws of almost every state must be granted for certain reasons, e.g., illness, parents who must move about due to their profession, religious convictions and so forth. The new school laws of North Rhine Westphalia, for example, omit this exemption clause but will exempt from school attendance only if the child is a temporary resident.

We have children who, because of the serious nature of their illnesses and injuries, have been given notices by their doctors that they are unable to attend school on a long term basis. The state simply forces the parents of these children to have

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more restrictive filter in keeping students out of university. The group suggested newly introduced literacy and numeracy requirements were too hard. One option suggested in a discussion document was to lower the literacy requirement to “better reflect the literacy levels currently attained by most candidates”.² Read that again carefully. It is a suggestion to do away with objective qualification standards and basically throw open the doors to all comers. This kind of thinking will eventually reflect poorly on the value of all university degrees.

Moral Front

Even though values have always been taught in schools (both overtly and perhaps more effectively covertly in what is known as the “hidden curriculum”, the attitudes and values actually displayed and modelled by teachers and other students rather than just talked about), the Ministry of Education is making lots of noises all of a sudden about introducing values into the curriculum. The MoE hopes to see its list of values consulted over in 2006 and integrated into the curriculum in 2007. The nasty twist it is adding this time is to say, “because parents

are failing to teach them at home.”³

Let us remember that the vast majority of these parents are products of the public school system which, as we noted, has always taught values. But the poor teachers are encountering increasing numbers of badly behaved children. This is really only the chickens coming home to roost. When earlier generations were encouraged to work out their own value systems with “values clarification” courses taught at school, when all values are to be accorded equal respect as demanded by Political Correctness (which is itself a value position), then it is rather odd for teachers to complain that little Johnny lies and bullies because he has no values: he only has different values than the teachers, or values they do not agree with.

Perhaps it would be more profitable to promote virtues rather than values, as these are more closely connected to actual behaviour patterns. It wouldn't be PC, however, since virtues imply a hierarchy of good and bad, wise and unwise, right and wrong. Everyone has values: some are good and some are bad. But all virtues are good.

Paul Henderson's book, *Vying for Our Children: the Ideological Struggle for Hearts and Minds* (Maxim Institute, 2003), closely analyses the New Zealand Curriculum documents and identifies 13 things philosophically wrong with it. Each of the 13 stems from one of the four main ideologies fighting for dominance and a piece of the brainwashing action of public schools:

The ideology of Progressivism has:

1. placed children on pedestals, when they should be at desks;
2. perpetuated an absurd basis for education – constructivism – which holds that the

process of learning is “constructed” by the individual child;

3. diminished the content of the curriculum;
4. removed discipline from learning.

The ideology of Neo-Marxism has:

5. for fear of hegemony, focused on outcomes and the goals of education, rather than the process of learning and the mastery of historic knowledge and a set of standards;
6. bent education to politics – or political correctness;
7. brought about skills-based curricula;
8. killed history;
9. fostered indoctrination.

The ideology of Economic Reductionism has:

10. trivialised education as utilitarian and instrumental, relating learning solely to employment and the needs of the economy;
11. forced arbitrary levels of learning into the curriculum in an effort to introduce key performance indicators and measurable outcomes.

And the ideology of Postmodernism has:

12. introduced confusion with regard to critical judgements, the possibility of clear and decisive content in curricula, and the teaching of values;
13. legitimised subjectivism.

Progressivism and postmodernism openly contend for the world of the pupil. Child-centredness and the rights of the individual are fundamental to both ideologies and are at the heart of the NZ Curriculum Framework. Yet education can never simply be characterised by what a child believes or wants to pursue.⁴

As Henderson summarises, “[The] curricula...seem bent on producing politically correct or indoctrinated citizens ready for the work force in a utopia. [T]he influence of neo-Marxism has been especially degenerative. It has introduced a measure of dishonesty with regard to history and literature which is unbecoming and shameful.”⁵

TEACH Bulletin

is a monthly publication of the Home Education Foundation and is concerned with those things which may impact on home educators. Articles will deal with political developments, statist and professional trends, correspondence with educationalists and other items of general interest to home educators. Information herein is not to be construed as legal advice. Opinions expressed in TEACH Bulletin are those of the writer and should not be assumed to reflect those of the Home Education Foundation Trustees or Board of Reference Members. TEACH Bulletin is available for a subscription of \$16 per year for 11 issues (none in December) or two years for \$30.

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Hear, my son, your father's instruction,
 and reject not your mother's teaching.
 — Proverbs 1:8

Physical Front

Bullying is so common place it barely raises eyebrows anymore. In the UK a recent survey indicated that bullying is the main reason parents educate at home. "More than half of parents who teach their offspring at home do so because the children have been verbally or physically attacked by bullies or because they wished to avoid a school with a reputation for bullying."⁶

Armed with pieces of timber, a gang of 15 invaded Onehunga High school earlier this month looking for someone and then took out their feelings on the head and a couple other of staff. What chance do the children have if even the adult staff can no longer guarantee their own safety on public school grounds? Am I going to yield to the arguments of my anti-home education acquaintances that I should send my well-behaved and studious children into those environments in order to be a good influence? No way! Principal Chris Saunders said some of the thugs carried timber weapons and one carried a hammer. "I think we were pretty lucky to have got off as lightly as we did. It is horrendous. It was absolutely unprovoked. It was about as ugly as it gets."⁷

Morrinsville College is simply the latest school to be crying the blues about the drug use of students. Only this time Principal John Inger is recommending parents drug-test their own children for cannabis after 13 and 14-year-old students were caught with the drug. "It is money well spent, as you will then know if your child is using cannabis," Mr Inger said of the \$30 urine tests.⁸

People often act as if home educators are from another planet. When I hear comments such as these, I *know* these folks are from another planet: Mr Inger's starting point is that parents are so disconnected from their own children that it takes a urine test for them to work out whether their kids are on dope. This is what sending your children off to an institution can do to your connectedness with your own children: destroy it. Not to mention the fact that, as John Inger says, it is often the peer pressure, one of those marvellous benefits of state school so-

cialisation, that gets the children into drugs in the first place. Our advice is to avoid such institutions at all costs.

Green MP Nandor Tanczos – who supports legalising cannabis – commended the school for not suspending or expelling students. He said schools needed to take drug use very seriously, and determine if it was experimentation or abuse.⁸ Isn't that a clever ploy: indulging in an illegal activity is termed by a sitting MP as harmless, youthful experimentation. Such people with standards that have disappeared off the bottom of the score chart most emphatically do not fill parents with confidence. And when Morrinsville College Deputy principal Marian Sogarty said drug use was rife in the community⁸, those home educators who are strangers to that "community" and who want to remain, and who want their children to remain, uninitiated to the drug scene will hopefully be forgiven for apparently "standing aloof" and "not getting involved".

Notes:

1. *NZ Herald*, "At university the clock starts again", 4 August 2005, <http://www.nzherald.co.nz/index.cfm?ObjectID=10338988>
2. *Dominion Post*, "Varsity entrance standard may drop", 18 August 2005, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/stuff/0,2106,3381051a11,00.html>
3. *Dominion Post*, "Schools to teach respect, honesty", 18 August 2005, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/stuff/0,2106,3381046a10,00.html>
4. Paul Henderson, *Vying for our children: the ideological struggle for hearts and minds*, 2003, (Maxim Institute: Auckland), pp. 152-153.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 170-171.
6. *Independent*, "School bullies are forcing parents to teach at home", 9 August 2005, <http://education.independent.co.uk/news/article304636.ece>
7. NZPA, "Armed thugs who terrorised school looking for a specific student", 11 August 2005, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/stuff/0,2106,3373862a7694,00.html>
8. *Waikato Times*, "College urges parents to drug test their kids", 24 August 2005, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/stuff/0,2106,3387950a7694,00.html>

(Continued from page 1: *Germany*)

state-employed doctors examine their children. Without exception, these doctors rule against the families' doctors, even when the children are nearly bed-ridden! School phobia, a fear of school possessed by many children who have been severely beaten by their school mates, is no excuse for children not to have to attend school.

The courts argue that children must be integrated into society solely by means of the school classroom experience. The idea is that a proper exposure to differences within society cannot otherwise be accomplished or ensured. Empirical studies from around the world that disprove this idea do not affect the attitudes or decisions of the courts.

In a recent court ruling over the custody of a seven and an eight year old child, the court ruled that the children have a right to proper development within the public school setting. And since the government now owned the custody of the children, they would guarantee that the children's rights were maintained even if it meant that the children would be placed into foster homes.

The courts have ruled that it is in the power of the schools to determine what is against the conscience of the children and parents! If the school presents something that is against the conscience of the child then the child's conscience must be changed. The government's social service department has endorsed an article and published books stating that the parents of two and three year olds should sexually stimulate their children and allow these children to stroke them also. If parents disagree with government or school officials by removing their children from such influences, protecting their little souls, they are fined, jailed and eventually are forced to leave the country or else lose custody of their children. Their rights guaranteed them in the federal constitution are ignored. The strict hand of the government is reminiscent of the DDR regime (the old Communist East Germany). A secular journalist told us recently that the Berlin Wall has not yet been removed. It has just been moved.

The threat of Muslims and terrorism serves the government to crack down even more harshly on Christian homeschool families. The former school minister of North Rhine Westphalia, Ute Schaeffer, was quoted in newspapers saying, "We are searching for all homeschool families who educate their children at home for religious reasons in order to prosecute them." Mrs. Schaeffer knew very well, and so does everyone else, that it is the serious Christians and not Muslims who home educate their children. It was not surprising then that the newspapers were quick to label the Christian homeschool families "fundamentalists", a term normally reserved for Muslim terrorists.

And so, being labeled fundamentalists, the government publicly asks them to leave the country. The secular and nominal-Christian communities both alike cheer together. If such families leave then the problem would be solved for the family, for the churches, for the communities and for the government.

The big word in Germany now is "integration". All must be made to conform. No one must be left behind. Even the children of foreign workers who are here only temporarily are to be taken into the loop. A one-size-fits-all attitude reigns. Integration involves state prescribed emancipatory sexual education and occultism (to replace religion?). Children are set free from their natural inhibitions and from their parents, whose authority is replaced by the state.

Our organization, School Instruction at Home (Schulunterricht zu Hause) was formed to help homeschool families. They are coming to us in larger and larger numbers. They have nowhere else to go. The typical family is large, where the father has a good paying job and has provided a house suitable for the size of his family. Because of the size of his family, he normally does not have extra savings. For the actions he takes to protect his children from the state schools, the relatives shake their heads and do not want to become involved; their neighbors turn away from them.

This is the typical family who comes to us for help. In the initial stage, when schools report that a child is not attending school, social workers are sent to the home. In almost every instance they report that the family is intact and that the children are doing fine in every way. However, and legally this is not within their competence, they recommend that the mandatory school attendance laws be enforced, even if it means that the children will be separated from the parents. They claim a violation of parental custody when a child is not allowed to go to school, which is essential for the well being of a child. At this point, a judge makes a ruling without a hearing that the custody of the child is to be removed from the parents and given over to the state. Later, there is a hearing and the same judge rules that the custody is to be permanently removed.

The parents then have no other recourse but to leave the country. But in order to leave, they must first receive permission from the state. In the case where the family receives permission, the state contacts their new country of residence to ensure that the fleeing families observe the school attendance laws there — even though they know that it is legal to homeschool there! According to a recent newspaper article the German government went so far as to insist that the authorities in Austria ensure that children receive sexual education even if they are homeschooled. We just received word that a village in France received notice from Paris that German families wanting to homeschool in France should be limited to only the first four grades. The reason given was to ensure a good relationship between Germany and France. The window of opportunity for Germans fleeing to other EU countries who allow homeschooling is being blocked up! The German persecution of homeschoolers does not stop at the German borders.

This kind of thing has happened in Germany before. In June of 1943 German courts ruled that the chil-

dren are too much influenced by their parents and are therefore no good for society. The custody of the children was removed and given over to the state.

Presently, 6 mothers and 29 children of the Paderborn families are huddled together in one house in Austria. The fathers are forced to stay behind because of their jobs. These families are all Russian-German. Several of them suffered harsh persecution in the former Soviet Union and are willing to be martyred in Germany if the government does not back off.

Apparently the German government looks upon the children (and all its citizens) as actually belonging to the state. Merely moving them across international borders changes nothing in the thinking of the government. If they renounce citizenship in Germany, apply and gain it elsewhere, then the government finally consents to relinquish ownership.

(Edited from: *Germany: the state of the union*, by Richard Guenther, Director Schulunterricht zu Hause e. V., 25 August 2005.)

New Zealand Parents Could Lose Their Authority

I went to the top and wrote to Police Commissioner Rob Robinson asking what assurance he could give parents that they would not be charged with assault if Section 59 of the NZ Crimes Act (justifying parents in using "reasonable force by way of correction") was repealed and parents subsequently smacked their child with an open hand on the backside. In his reply dated 11 August 2005, he said, "[S]macking a child by way of corrective discipline would be an assault." There you have it: an assurance from New Zealand's top law enforcement officer that a parent who smacked his or her child would have thereby committed a criminal act of assault and would be looking at a maximum two year jail sentence according to Section 194 (a) of the Crimes Act (which says, "Every one is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years who assaults any

child under the age of 14 years.”)

But Commissioner Robinson said more: “If section 59 was repealed in its entirety, parents would not be authorised to use reasonable force by way of correction” but could use force to prevent harm. Since parents would be unauthorised to use “reasonable force” by way of correction, it is clear they would be unauthorised to use unreasonable force. What kind of force is left? The use of no force: nil, zero, nada. Parental authority to correct children *would be reduced to making suggestions* in the hope that the child would voluntarily do that which the parent requires or stop doing that which the parent prohibits.

Parental authority would effectively be removed. Effective parenting would effectively be outlawed.

I wrote the Police Commissioner again on 15 August asking, “Since parents will have no legal justification for using force by way of correction toward their children should Section 59 of the Crimes Act be repealed entirely, can your office assure the parents of New Zealand that they *will not* be charged with assault should they subsequently require a child under the age of 14, against the child’s will, to be confined to a room for three minutes as an enforced period of ‘time out’?” He replied 25 August: “I am not in a position to give you definitive advice about whether or not Police would prosecute in the circumstances you described.”

The Police Commissioner cannot give us parents any assurance that enforcing a 3-minute period of “time out” will not be prosecuted. This is exceedingly serious. We cannot allow Bradford’s Bill to repeal Section 59 to proceed.

The Bill itself is very short and is composed mainly of a lengthy explanatory note by the author and sponsor of the Bill, Green Party MP Sue Bradford. It is very instructive, for her worldview and motivation are clearly revealed:

The purpose of this Bill is to stop force, and associated violence and harm under the pretence of domes-

tic discipline, being inflicted on children. Presently, section 59 of the Crimes Act 1961 acts as a justification, excuse or defence for parents and guardians using force against their children where they are doing so for the purposes of correction and the force used is reasonable in the circumstances. The Bill will repeal that provision. The effect of this amendment is that the statutory protection for use of force by parents and guardians will be removed. They will now be in the same position as everyone else so far as the use of force against children is concerned. The use of force on a child may constitute an assault under section 194(a) of the Crimes Act, a comparatively new provision in the criminal law, and the repeal of section 59 ought not revive any old common law justification, excuse or defence that the provision may have codified.

[See the Bill at www.legislation.govt.nz, click “Bills” and scroll down to “Crimes (Abolition of Force as a Justification for Child Discipline) Amendment Bill”.]

The first sentence is fraught with rather non-statutory-like emotive language. Its subjectivity really is out of place and un-Parliamentary in a Bill before Parliament. The second sentence is merely a statement of fact, except that she inserts a couple of extra emotive words “excuse or defence” as if to imply that parents could never have a proper reason for using force toward their children by way of correction. She points out that S.59’s protection for parents, the protection against being constantly exposed to a charge of criminal assault as they go about their normal parenting tasks, will be removed. She didn’t mention that their authority is being removed as well.

The last two sentences are highly significant. She is at pains to tell readers that her Bill will reduce parents to “the same position as everyone else so far as the use of force against children is concerned.” Parental authority to enforce their corrective requirements or prohibitions on their own children will be the same as any total

stranger passing by; that is, it will be reduced to zero. In case the reader should not see the terrible implications of this, the next sentence spells it out, just as the Police Commissioner spelled it out: parents endeavouring to actually enforce their corrective requirements or prohibitions upon their own children face criminal charges of assault. In other words, parents could face a two-year jail sentence for trying to force an 11-year-old son to apologise to the neighbours for throwing a rock through their kitchen window or for trying to force a 12-year-old daughter to stop swearing and blaspheming. As a final cap, the Bill’s author makes it clear that this repeal is to be seen as a cut with any ties to our centuries of British common law precedents.

We must oppose this Bill for it follows in the pattern of the German situation, that the state knows better than parents what is best for children. To assume that the state can legislate in this area is to assume the state has prior responsibility toward the children over the parents. (There is a lot more information on this topic at www.FamilyIntegrity.org.nz.)

Exclusive Brethren Leave Home Education for Own School System

The next time we see official MoE numbers of Home Educators on exemption certificates, it will be fewer than the previous total by hundreds. The Exclusive Brethren have established for themselves Westmount Independent School with ten campuses operating around the country, including Auckland, Marlborough and Waikato.

The current roll is 476, but that will increase next year to about 950 as another five campuses open in Wellington, Northland, Westport, Nelson and Christchurch.

Education consultant Tony Robinson said, “The national curriculum is being taught at Westmount to a large degree. Children do NCEA, and it is a very strong cohesive school environment.” Mr Robinson

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Coming Events

Thur, 15 Sept 2005

5th Annual Homeschoolers Science Fair

Venue: Trinity Reformed Baptist Church, corner Matai and Miro Streets, Maeroa.

Cost: \$3 for 1 or 2 entries, maximum \$5 per family.

Contact: Helen Hunt, (07) 856-4867; www.nowTHEN.bravehost.com

Programme:

This is a non competitive opportunity to display your work! Everyone aged 3 years up to and including High School age is welcome to make a display, which is limited to the size of one regular Science Fair display board. Children are welcome to make a shared display.

9 - 10 am set up

10 - 12 noon exhibit

12 - 1.30 pm lunch / chatting / cleanup

Sat, 8 Oct 2005

Manukau Homeschooling Support Group: Maths, Molecules & Motivation.

Keynote Speaker:

Steve Demme

- Creator of the award winning Math-U-See Programme
- Father of successful home schooling graduates
- Former principal of mainstream school
- Teacher of Mathematics

Venue: St Andrews Presbyterian Church, 150 Great South Road Manurewa, Auckland.

Cost: Pre-registrations receive a \$5 discount over those that arrive on the day without pre-registering. Pre-registrations close on Monday 3rd of October and payment **MUST** be received in full by that time. Costs (including \$5 discount):

Single, \$25

Couple, \$35 per couple

Student, \$10 (14yrs and over)

Evening only - \$5 per person

Contact: Shona Rakete, PO Box 7534, Manurewa, Phone: (09) 269 5646 wsrakete@otg.quik.co.nz

Registrations on line: www.learnex.co.nz/conference

Programme

8.45am Registration and viewing of resources

9.30am Welcome and introduction of Keynote Speaker: Sue Abernethy, homeschooling mum of 7.

10.30am Morning Tea (provided)

10.50am Workshop One

- 1 What to Expect from an ERO visit - Rob Williamson
- 2 Classical Education - Robyn Mellar-Smith & Michelle Jorgensen
- 3 Educating the gifted child - Chantelle Philip
- 4 Connections: maths, ministry and the real world (from a Christian perspective) - Anthony White; Math-U-See Australasia, South East Asia
- 5 A Phonics Based Approach to Teaching Reading - Dorinda Duthie
- 6 Enjoying life with your teenagers: a discussion offering encouragement and support (**exclusively for parents of teenagers**) - Denise Walmsley

12.00pm Lunch (available to purchase or BYO) and resource viewing

1.00pm Welcome and introduction of Keynote Speaker: Steve Demme, creator of Math-U-See

2.20pm Workshop Two

- 1 Getting started and applying for an exemption - Kay Christensen
- 2 Introduction to the Charlotte Mason Approach - Sarah Ghent & Sonia Ray
- 3 Avoiding and Fighting Back from Burnout - Denise Walmsley
- 4 Science - Rosalind Peterson/ Karla Burton
- 5 Teaching a Second Language - Meg Wilson & Erena Fussell
- 6 Homeschooling: The Father's Role - Steve Abernethy

3.20pm Afternoon Tea (provided) and resource viewing

3.50pm Workshop Three

- 1 Negotiating the Curriculum Maze - Carol Munroe
- 2 Studying NZ: a unit study perspective - Christine Whetton
- 3 Learning disabilities/delays - Steve Demme; founder of Math-U-See
- 4 History from a Literature Perspective - Robyn Mellar-Smith
- 5 Marriage enrichment for wives - Sue Abernethy (from a Christian perspective)
- 6 Organisation for the organisationally challenged - Sharon Drinnan

5pm Veteran panel - Question & Answer forum

6pm Tea/Dinner - make your own arrangements. Viewing of resources

7pm Venue open for final viewing of resources

7.30pm Welcome and introduction. Approaching maths with mind and hands - Keynote speaker: Mr Steve Demme; creator of Math-U-See

9.15pm End of programme

16-22 October 2005

Home Education Awareness Week

Check out what is on or create something for your own area

Sat, 29 October 2005

10th Annual Home & Country Show, Manawatu

Contact: Lynne Prior (06) 353-6840 dca@xtra.co.nz

(For more information on Coming Events throughout the month, see www.hef.org.nz and click on Coming Events)

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says the school is independent, receiving minimal Government funding. "It is a values-based school with a special character similar to all other Christian schools."

(From *Principals Today*, http://www.academy.net.nz/?location=news_item&item=108)