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The Eli Hurvitz Conference on Economy and Society



Toward a New Paradigm in Israeli Education

The Working Group

Head **Prof. Dan Inbar**, Chair, Education Department, The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute

Members **Dr. Amnon Karmon**, Research Fellow, Education Department, The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute; Author of position paper: "Teacher Policy along a Pedagogical Fault Line"

Dr. Varda Shiffer, Research Fellow, Education Department, The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute; Author of position paper: "Restructuring Educational Human Resource Management in the Israeli Education System"

Prof. Shlomit Amichai, Chairperson, Teach First Israel, JDC-Israel

Prof. Tamar Ariav, President, Beit Berl College and Chair, RAMA (Council of Education Colleges)

Mr. Ido Avgar, Junior Researcher, Education Department, The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute

Prof. Michal Beller, Director-General of RAMA: National Authority for Measurement and Evaluation in Education

Ms. Yael Guron, Principal of Hartuv High School, literature and citizenship teacher; Fellow, Mandel School for Educational Leadership

Ms. Nurit Herman-Almoznino, Director, Education Department, The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute

Mr. Avi Kaminsky, Director of Educational Division, Municipality of Rosh Ha'ayin; Chairman, Israel Union of Education Directors in Local Municipalities

Ms. Ravit Mizrahi Shtelman, Junior Researcher, Education Department, The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute

Ms. Amira Perlov, Principal of Experimental-Integrative School, Kfar-Adumim

Ms. Naomi Riftin, Chair, Pedagogical Secretariat, Israel Teachers Union

Mr. Noam Zussman, Economist, Research Department, Bank of Israel

Preface

Prof. Dan Inbar

In recent decades, deep fault lines have developed between schools and the social environment in which they operate. The school's activity in its current format is not only dysfunctional but also harmful from important educational and social perspectives. At the heart of the tensions between the school and the society are the teachers, who draw fire from all directions: the pupils, the parents, the school principal, the Ministry of Education and the general public.

In light of this, we propose that the 2013 Eli Hurvitz Conference on Economy and Society serve as a starting point and catalyst for a process of strategic thinking about alternative paradigms for the school – worthy and feasible paradigms for the Israeli reality in the early 21st century. We propose using these paradigms to derive practical recommendations for teacher-related policies: the comprehensive array of training processes, professional development, accreditation and employment of teachers in the education system.

In preparation for the Conference, and based on the activities carried out over the last three years at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, we hereby present two position papers.

The first position paper analyzes five fractures or “fault lines” that have emerged in recent decades between the school and society and the questions they raise as well as the educational damage inherent in them. This is followed by a description of the problems these rifts create for the community of teachers. The problems created by the growing rift between the school and society are different from regular problems in education for two main reasons: the first is that understanding and confronting them requires a broader perspective that transcends the field of education. A discussion that remains within the bounds of education will not suffice; a more extensive look at the totality of social phenomena is required. Second, the fault lines create a structural mismatch between the elements on either side that require significant movement to mend them. First-order changes are not enough; second-order changes are necessary.

The second position paper outlines a collaborative and gradual process of deliberations aimed at clarifying and defining the roles, powers, and responsibilities associated with the management of the teaching workforce and redistributing these roles, powers, and responsibilities between the central government (primarily the Ministry of Education) and the local authorities in a well-thought-out and mutually acceptable fashion. The outline for discussion will generate the readiness and commitment necessary for the success of the process, and will boost the trust among all stakeholders in the field of education.

This is a process aimed at development of a supportive team of teachers who are committed to all of the pupils in the community, a work environment that encourages creativity, partnership, and trust—which are prerequisites for enhancing the teaching and learning processes and of the education system in general. The goal is to weaken the strong and longstanding correlation between

socioeconomic status and educational achievement. In other words, the goal is do away with the intolerable gaps in educational services between the center of the country and the geographic and social periphery, once and for all.

Teacher Policy along a Pedagogical Fault Line

Dr. Amnon Karmon

Executive Summary

In recent decades, deep fault lines have developed between schools and the social environment in which they operate. The school's activity in its current format is not only dysfunctional but also harmful from important educational and social perspectives. At the heart of the tensions between the school and the society are the teachers, who draw fire from all directions: the pupils, the parents, the school principal, the Ministry of Education, and the general public. In light of this, we propose that the 2013 Eli Hurvitz Conference on Economy and Society serve as a starting point and catalyst for a process of strategic thinking about alternative paradigms for the school – worthy and feasible paradigms for the Israeli reality in the early 21st century. We propose using these paradigms to derive practical recommendations for teacher-related policies: the comprehensive array of training processes, professional development, accreditation and employment of teachers in the education system.

The document presents five fault lines between schools and society that require innovative thinking:

1. Schools are affiliated with a particular nation-state, but operate in a global environment.
2. Schools educate for economic, individual and national competitiveness, but operate in the context of a global environmental crisis that is largely attributable to this competitiveness.
3. Schools are “industrial,” but are supposed to train workers for a knowledge economy.
4. Schools are based on the print medium, but operate in a digital environment.
5. Schools assume frameworks of family, childhood and adolescence, but these frameworks have fundamentally weakened.

The combination of these contradictions poses four central problems for teachers: an excessive workload, low effectiveness, lack of relevance and a developing rift between the state and teachers. These problems require a new policy for teachers. The State of Israel must devise and build institutions, tools and processes that will facilitate strategic thinking and planning in the field of education and create the essential conditions for successfully contended with the problems of the fault lines associated with the teacher's work today.

Therefore, the document presents six main recommendations. The four initial recommendations address institutions and tools required for driving the processes of strategic thinking and planning; the other two recommendations refer to the teacher policy needed today. The recommendations pertaining to strategic thinking in education are:

1. Establish a center for strategic thinking in education.

2. Establish a strategic planning unit in the Ministry of Education.
3. Initiate a short-term process of formulating a future education vision for the State of Israel.
4. Create “laboratory units” within the education system for testing the proposed changes.

The recommendations in the field of teacher policy are:

1. Establish an entity to integrate and lead the proposed pedagogical changes.
2. Make the training and professional development of teachers transformative in nature.

Introduction

The nature of professional training, professional development, and accreditation and hiring procedures of professionals should be determined by the overarching goals, role, and patterns of activity in the social institution in which these professionals are meant to work. Therefore, the prevalent discussion of these topics with regard to teachers (which we will call “teacher policy” as an inclusive term for all these processes) takes for granted the current patterns of activity, goals, and role of schools. Most of the outlines for teacher policy offer frameworks, content, teaching methods, and evaluation and accreditation mechanisms that enable teachers to work in the best way possible in the existing school.

But how should we approach questions related to teacher policy when the current overarching goals and role of schools are in doubt and many eminent educationists are searching for alternatives? And what is to be done when it becomes apparent that school’s activity in its current format is not only dysfunctional but also harmful from important educational and social perspectives? In this case, addressing teacher policy requires that a clear choice be made between two options: adopt the existing paradigm of the school and suggest recommendations to improve it, or set in motion a process of strategic thinking to examine alternative paradigms that are suitable for the Israeli reality in the early 21st century. We propose that the 2013 Eli Hurvitz Conference on Economy and Society serve as a starting point and catalyst for a process of strategic thinking about alternative paradigms for the school – worthy and feasible paradigms for the Israeli reality in the early 21st century.

The Israeli discourse on education currently addresses matters of teacher policy in terms of the existing paradigm. However, we now have an opportunity to begin an educational deliberation of a different type. Therefore, the current document does not take the form of a standard position paper that presents a defined problem and alternative solutions. Instead, it focuses on explaining the need to change the existing school paradigm and suggests the institutions, tools, and processes essential for setting in motion a methodical process of designing an alternative paradigm.

The paper begins by presenting five “faults lines” that have developed over recent decades between the school and society and points out the issues they raise and the educational harm inherent in them, followed by the problems these rifts create for teachers. Six vital recommendations for mending these faults are introduced in the last part of the paper.

The Fault Lines between the School and the Environment in which It Operates

The relationship between the school and the social environment in which it operates in the early 21st century can be compared to a geological-pedagogical fault (Karmon 2009, Apeloig and Shalev-Vigiser 2010). A geological fault is caused when forces inside the Earth cause layers of rock to move. When such a fault occurs, a mismatch is created between layers of rock that previously

constituted a single continuum. In this metaphor, the school and its surrounding environment once constituted a strong, continuous rock formation created by powerful social forces. However, various social forces gradually created a fault line between school and society; society moved from its location along the fault while the other side—school—remained firmly in place. This geological-pedagogical fault developed from the combination of three processes: (1) the creation of the (modern) school in the late 19th century, in the context of the needs and values of that era; (2) the institutionalization of school patterns and the creation of powerful mechanisms that maintain them; and (3) fundamental changes that have taken place in all the social factors that created the school. The fault emerged as a result of schools' failure to undergo the necessary changes that would have addressed those social changes.

Below we review several major social changes that created the fault-line and examine some questions that these changes pose for the school. It is important to note that this list of social changes deemed significant for education is incomplete. The goal of presenting them is to demonstrate the magnitude of the rift rather than to describe it fully.

Five fundamental social changes have taken place in recent decades: globalization, an ecological crisis, the rise of a knowledge-based economy, the development of digital media, and a basic change in the institution of the family.

1. Globalization: The school was created as a key institution of the nation-state. It would not have been possible to mold the national ethos of the nation-state or its citizens without the school, and it would have been impossible to establish the modern school—which provides free compulsory education to all—without the nation-state. The school structure, its rituals, curriculum, and teaching style were all designed to serve the goals and needs of the new nation-state (Gellner 1983, Green 1990). Globalization poses difficult questions for the school. For example, in addition to “building the nation,” should school also construct “global citizenship”? What is the proper approach toward globalization—integration or segregation (Karmon 2011, Nussbaum 1994, Appiah 2008)? Should providing tools to compete successfully in the global economy become the overarching goal of the school? Does this goal require the standardization, international tests, and strict inspection that have become endemic in the educational systems throughout the world and in Israel (Alexander 2010, Ravitch 2010, Sahlberg 2011)? Can the school, which was meant to serve the nation-state, cope with the challenges of globalization (Resnik 2008, 2009; Ben-Peretz 2009)?

2. Ecological Crisis: The tremendous economic and demographic growth, which has proceeded at an unprecedented pace since the 1950s, has created the conditions for an extremely grave ecological crisis. Most of the researchers in the field insist that in the absence of far-reaching changes in basic political, economic, cultural, and technological patterns, on both national and global levels, we will fail to prevent the impending crisis (Worldwatch Institute 2013). What role should school play in this context? Should it make education for sustainability one of its

overarching goals? Should schools lay down the foundations for the supranational and intercultural collaborations that will be necessary for addressing ecological problems? If so, what does this mean for methods of teaching and learning and their constitutive content and values?¹ For example, should the “core subjects” continue to be the same fields of knowledge that train graduates for economic competition, or should a new “core curriculum” be designed that emphasizes entirely different social needs and values?

3. **The Knowledge Economy:** The school was founded to train workers for the industrial age, and the factory served as the model for the school’s organizational structure and work patterns. The nature of educational assignments, methods of evaluation, teacher-student relations, promotion from grade to grade, and awarding of a diploma upon completion of uniform standards, can all be explained by that strong link between the school and the factory. The problem is that, in the early 21st century, most jobs in Western economies are associated with the knowledge economy rather than the factory. The knowledge economy requires a capacity for active and creative processing of knowledge, advanced learning skills, and teamwork, whereas schools in their present format teach for the repetition and reiteration of knowledge on tests, do not convey necessary learning skills, and focus on individual and competitive learning (Aviram 2010, Fiske 1992). How, then, should a school that trains its graduates for the knowledge economy look? On what pedagogy should it rest? What methods of student evaluation would be appropriate? And, of course, what would be the role of teachers in such a school? Would their main work still be limited to transmitting knowledge in a classroom?
4. **Digital Media:** The Hebrew word for school “*beit hasefer*,” lives up to its name, “house of the book”; it is still based on the print medium that reigned when it was first established. But today, the dominant medium throughout the world is digital and Web-centric. Education systems world-wide are engaged in accelerated and expensive processes to computerize the school. In most cases, this means integrating new technologies into the existing school structure with little or any in-depth thinking about the changes required of schools in order to make the most of these new tools (Salomon 2000). Even more serious is the fact that almost no one in the school system has stopped to examine the effect of many hours of exposure to digital media on students or the educational ramifications of these effects.² We must emphasize that schools cannot ignore digital technologies, since they affect students, teachers, as well as the nature and transmission of knowledge and information. This leads to the inevitable question: How does one learn and how should one teach in the digital age? Should the school become as digitized as possible or should it instead try to create a “sterile field” that is mostly free of digital technologies? And

¹ For an attempt to address these questions, see Karmon et al. (2012).

² In recent years, scientific demonstrations of the profound and disturbing effects of the Internet on our cognitive skills, emotional system, construction of identity, and even brain structure have been proliferating (Turkle 2011, Carr 2011).

what of the printed book and the reading of long texts? Should these be abandoned, or should there be a deliberate effort to preserve them and the thinking, concentration, and imaginative and creative skills that their study entails?

5. **Family:** The existing school is founded on a concept of family and childhood that has been significantly weakened in recent decades (Postman 1982; Lemish 2006). The school is predicated on the assumption that the family provides a child with his or her “initial socialization,” by showing acceptable patterns of behavior, setting clear boundaries, and offering crucial emotional support. In this arrangement, the school is charged with the task of conveying the knowledge and skills needed for the suitable civic and economic functioning of these individuals in the modern state. But what role should schools play when many families no longer provide their children with parental presence and support, or set clear boundaries and instead employ a permissive style of parenting that clashes with the traditional authority figure that prevails in school (Mayseless and Scharf 2009). Should the school become a “substitute” for the family and take on a significant share of parental functions? Should it change its defined target group and include parents as part of that target group? And what are the implications of this for the teacher’s role and the main patterns of school organization and operation?

These five fault lines present the school with difficult questions that necessitate re-examination of the entire paradigm of the school in its current form. The lack of such a discussion and the continued operation of the school as it functions today threaten to lead to some extremely significant social and educational ills, including:

1. **The information flood** – The harmful effects of the flood of information on children (and adults) is becoming clearer, and is manifested in attention deficit disorder, superficiality, distraction, fragmented thinking, emotional apathy, etc. (Carr 2011, Turkle 2011). The school as it currently exists, with the constant transmission of masses of information, exacerbates the situation.
2. **Alienation** – Current pedagogy pays little attention to the crises and problems of pupils in the classroom, who express alienation from and boredom with the current learning format. Many young people wonder aloud why they have to listen to long lists of facts from their teachers in the classroom when they could get the same information with the click of a button. Alienation is a main cause (though not the only one) of the many disciplinary problems and disruptions in the classroom, and, even more, contributes to the development of a negative attitude toward learning and prevents serious engagement with knowledge. The school has lost the narrative that can justify teaching for teachers and learning for students (Postman 1995).

- 3. Instrumentality** – The hidden (but sometimes overt) message children receive at school today is that one studies in order to “to succeed in the test” and eventually to “make a career” for oneself. This message is readily absorbed; high-school graduates go on to college and university in order to “get a degree.” This explicitly instrumentalist attitude, which is becoming the only “reason” for secondary and higher education, is undermining the foundations of schools and higher education as they now exist and could lead to their collapse in the not-too-distant future.³

Teachers on the Fault Line

The social changes described raise difficult questions regarding all aspects of the school paradigm, but teachers—more than any other players—stand on the edge of this fault and the teachers are the ones who draw fire from all directions—pupils, parents, the school principal, the Ministry of Education, and the general public.

This claim is strongly corroborated by the conclusions of the first Van Leer Jerusalem Institute conference on education, entitled “Education from Vision and Policy to Implementation,” which took place in May 2009, with the participation of directors general and educators from 14 OECD countries. One of the main conclusions of the conference was that teachers are the factor that has the greatest impact on the quality of education. Teachers’ importance for the nature of the education system came up again in the deliberations of two subsequent Van Leer conferences—on teachers and teaching policy (2010) and on regulation and trust in the education system (2012). In this context, the statement in the McKinsey Report that “the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers” is well known (Barber and Mourshed 2007, 13).⁴

The convergence of the fault lines described earlier creates a series of “fault line problems.” These problems, created by the growing rift between the school and society, are different from regular problems in education for two main reasons: the first is that understanding and confronting them requires a broader perspective that transcends the field of education. A discussion that remains within the bounds of education will not suffice; a more extensive look at the totality of social phenomena is required. Second, the fault lines create a structural mismatch between the elements on either side that require significant movement to mend them. First-order changes are not enough; second-order changes are necessary.

Below are four problems affecting the work of teachers, each one the result of the interactions of the educational fault lines described earlier:

³ See Almog and Almog (2013) and a number of responses to their article by young people, which appear in the subsequent issue of *Hed Hahinukh*.

⁴ Restructuring Educational Human Resource Management in the Israeli Education System.”

1. **Overload** – Each of the fault lines contributes its part to this, which is perhaps the most serious problem of all. In addition to the traditional job of teaching—which is a difficult task in and of itself—today’s teachers must act *in loco parentis* to give emotional support and set the boundaries that are often not established by the parents, teach pupils who have become accustomed to a different educational approach at home, teach digital-age children with the antiquated tools of chalk and blackboard, prepare students who have no interest in abstract ideas for matriculation exams, and meet the demands for accountability that are frequently made of them (Ariav 2013).⁵
2. **Low effectiveness** – Teachers’ educational influence is decreasing even as the demands made of them are increasing. This problem is the combined effect of two processes: (1) during the past several decades, in-school education has gained rivals of unprecedented power. Children today spend more time in front of screens—televisions, computers, and smartphones—than in front of teachers in school; moreover, the latter are stimulating pastimes as opposed to the alienating “distraction” of school (Carr 2011, Turkle 2011); (2) today’s teachers perform in an environment where they are subject to many and contradictory educational demands, which stem from contradictory educational ideologies operating at the system, school, and teacher levels (Back, in press).
3. **Irrelevance** – The fields that are truly essential for teachers to address today are ones that teachers are unable to tackle in schools in their current format. For example, instead of encouraging teachers to discuss questions of identity and values with which students are struggling, they are told to prepare them for tests using pedagogical methods and materials that are far from the students’ world of association and are also distant from the teachers’ own educational aspirations. As a result, all those involved in in-school education—pupils, teachers, and parents—have a growing sense that the school as it currently exists is losing its relevance and educational importance.⁶
4. **The rift between the State and teachers** – This last problem is a result of the previous three, but also stands on its own. The combination of overload, lack of effectiveness, and sense of irrelevance, exacerbated by the lack of support from the education system and the general public—leads many teachers to feel alienated, frustrated, and distrustful. Adding to these the attitude that teachers are an “economic resource” to be exploited for success in the global economy, further exacerbates their sense of alienation and diminishes their social standing (Back, in press). We are on the brink of a mutual crisis of faith between teachers and the State.

⁵ A notable and tangible expression of this situation can be seen in an article by a teacher, Gili David, in a booklet entitled *Dear Education Minister: 30 Suggestions for a Beginning Education Minister*, which was published in 2009 by *Hed Hahinukh*. The title of her contribution, “Teachers in Israel need fresh air” (p. 18) speaks for itself.

⁶ See a selection of remarks by teachers at a conference at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute in 2007 that took place during a strike of secondary-school teachers (Karmon, 2009).

In this situation even initiatives designed to improve conditions for teachers are met by them with skepticism.

From Analysis to Action

The situation described above leads to three main conclusions:

1. We must recognize that the current school paradigm has outlived its usefulness. Consequently, Israel needs to set in motion a process to change the educational paradigm.
2. A change of this type requires the development of institutions, tools, and processes that enable effective and long-term strategic thinking and planning in the field of education.
3. Teacher policy must create the essential conditions that will make it possible to deal with these fault-line problems affecting teachers' work today and lay the foundations for the necessary paradigm changes.

We must keep in mind that substantial change in education can occur only as a result of an intelligent and dynamic combination of “top-down” and “bottom-up” changes. Attempts at change should be encouraged at the level of local authorities, schools, and teachers in the classroom. The Israeli education system is full of such initiatives for change, but today many are undertaken “subversively” and, therefore, do not receive the support and mentoring they desperately need. Moreover, many of these attempts at change are not studied and researched and have no impact beyond the specific context in which they are undertaken.⁷ At the same time, suitable institutions should be established to change the top-down patterns of action in the Education Ministry. Eliciting grassroots ideas is effective only to a certain point. A single school or a single local authority cannot amass the academic expertise, practical knowledge, ability to conceptualize, and budget necessary to bring about second-order change in education. To bring about change of this magnitude and order requires systematic collaboration between various entities, in-depth and ongoing research, and, above all, the integration of knowledge and experience from Israel and the rest of the world. Although the futility of educational changes that are dictated from the top down is now known, this is insufficient reason to reject initiatives for change that originate in the Ministry of Education or other central institutions. In fact, some of the most interesting attempts at change have been taken at the Ministry's initiative, employing incentives instead of coercion from on high.⁸ Therefore, the Ministry should encourage changes that originate in the field and, at the same time, establish the

⁷ The exception in this field is the Education Ministry's Department for Experimental Schools. We welcome its work and call for a massive expansion of such work.

⁸ For example, the 30 Localities Project, which was undertaken in the 1990s under the guidance of then-chair of the Pedagogical Secretariat, the late Prof. David Gordon, and the Pedagogical Horizon project, led by the past chair of the Pedagogical Secretariat, Prof. Anat Zohar.

institutions and organizations that will allow such changes to develop, expand, and take root over time. Some of our recommendations below will relate to this.

The past several decades have been characterized by numerous attempts to introduce educational reforms, both in Israel and abroad. Most of these attempts failed, for a variety of reasons (Cohen 1989, Cuban 1990, Eisner 1992, Tyack and Cuban 1995). Important lessons should certainly be learned from the extensive research on reforms, but we believe that the very concept at the root of the commonly accepted idea of “reform” is not suitable for the type of change recommended here. “Reform” is generally viewed as a transition from state A to state B within a given number of years. However, the situation described in the earlier sections of this document does not permit reform of this type. We do not yet have a clear description of state B; and even should such a description exist in the future, it should be as tentative and flexible as possible. At the same time, it is clear to us that during the years in which this change is in progress, there will also be significant social changes that will require amendment of the initial changes. Therefore, rather than suggest another “reform,” we propose creating the tools for crafting a culture of ongoing change that can be monitored on a routine and regular basis.

Recommendations for Action

Below are six recommendations of various types of action. Some of the recommendations focus on creating the tools needed for setting in motion and managing the strategic process of changing the educational paradigm; others suggest processes in the field of teacher policy that are essential for laying the foundations essential for that change. Some of the recommendations are more open and propose desirable lines of thought without deciding among them; others propose more concrete courses of action.

1. Establish a Center for Strategic Thinking in Education

We propose establishing a national center for strategic thinking in education, which will operate separately from the Education Ministry but will nonetheless maintain close ties to it. This past April, the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute held an international seminar for researchers and experts in strategic thinking from all over the world; its goal was to discuss strategic thinking in education and the nature of a center that would work in this field. Here are the main recommendations regarding the nature of such a center that came up during the seminar.

- The center should have a structure that enables fruitful interaction by professionals from the field and academic experts. Its main goal is to examine and suggest educational structures, methods, and practices from Israel and abroad and to share them with parties of interest.
- The center should create a basis for gathering information about the Israeli education system. There is a need to consolidate as broad a picture as possible regarding the education system over

time and independent of changes in the political regime. The database should include qualitative and quantitative information about students, teachers, parents, etc.

- The center should make use of external experts as mentors. It is important to bring in experts from Israel and abroad on various issues in order to create a deep and informed discussion of the meaning of the information.
- The center should find and create successful links between academic research and decision-makers. It should translate academic knowledge in a way that is accessible and available for decision-makers.
- The center should present its products to decision-makers and educators in the field and submit them for broad public discussion.
- A critical role of the center is to help the media understand the research findings and the conclusions that can be reached from them, so as to generate fairer and more trustworthy reporting about education.
- The center should create a system for the flow of information between various entities that deal with education. One way to create such a system is to bring representatives of various organizations together in order to discuss a variety of education issues.
- The center should train young researchers to specialize in education policy.

2. Establish a Strategic Planning Unit in the Education Ministry

It is important to make a clear distinction between strategic planning and strategic thinking: planning is an action taken by governments, whereas strategic thinking should be conducted in an environment that is as free as possible from immediate political and economic constraints. “External” thinking should support the “internal” strategic planning. The planning unit in the Education Ministry will mediate between the center for strategic thinking and decision-makers. Based on the thinking done outside the Ministry, it must propose courses of action that are realistic and feasible from a political and budgetary standpoint. At the same time, it should help provide the statistics and information that the strategic thinking institutions need.

The strategic thinking and planning institutions must make decisions on three basic issues related to teacher policy: pedagogy, organization, and content.

- a. **Pedagogy** – Because the heart of school pedagogy is the teacher’s presentation of information in the classroom, it is not surprising that a substantial portion of the teacher-training process addresses this facet of the job. But this aspect is currently surrounded by many questions that stem, first and foremost, from the possibilities offered by digital technology and the needs and skills necessary for finding employment in the knowledge economy. For example, the technique of flipped classes, in which information is presented outside the classroom by digital means (e.g., TED, Coursera, Khan Academy), after which the classroom session itself is used for processing the information with the teacher’s help, is quickly taking over higher education, and there are signs that it is on the way to taking over

a significant portion of teaching time in schools as well (Christensen, Horn, and Johnson 2010). How should a teacher-training program whose main pedagogical strategy is the flipped class look like? What skills are needed by a teacher whose main job is processing information presented by an external (digital) entity?

- b. **Organization** – The dominant organizational pattern in the school is that of a single teacher who has many roles (which are increasing in number); the teacher-training process is based on this assumption. The modern teacher is supposed to specialize in one or more fields of knowledge, in the didactic methods relevant for those subjects, in integrating pupils with special needs, in individual tutoring, in working with parents, in dealing with their pupils' emotional sides, and more. Any new need that arises from changes in the external environment is quickly translated into additional knowledge or skills that the teacher must acquire during the training process. This inflation of the teacher's role demands a rethinking of the premise that underlies this organizational pattern. Should there be a move to a different organizational pattern in which a school has a staff of "educators" of different types who work in tandem? If so, what types of educators are needed and how should each be trained?
- c. **Content** – What is the most important content that each teacher or educator needs to learn during training? Can we still get by with the "holy trinity" of teacher training: mastering the subject, the didactics and practical training for teaching that subject, and the basics of education? What is the place of the social processes described in the previous section? Should the core of teacher training include material related to globalization, sustainability, the impact of digital media, shaping identity in a digital environment, and so on? Moreover, if the main burden of presenting information is indeed passed along to "über-teachers" who employ digital media, what place in teacher training should be allotted to subject specialization? None of these questions has a clear answer as of yet, and we must give them serious and in-depth consideration.

3. Initiate a Short-term Process of Formulating a Future Educational Vision for the State of Israel

Actions that are visible and effective in the short-term are needed to set in motion the strategic change process proposed here. One of the main recommendations made at this year's international seminar at the Van Leer Institute was to create a process that would last no more than one year and aim at drafting a serious document of a future educational vision. This vision document will be a catalyst and starting point for the strategic thinking and planning processes in education. The idea is to gather a small group of Israeli and foreign education experts for an intensive discussion, lasting a few days, of Israel's future educational vision. The experts group will produce a short document that includes the main aspects of the proposed vision alongside the proposed decisions about each of them. This document will serve as a basis for discussion in

focus groups convened all over the country, conducted in both homogeneous and heterogeneous settings, and composed of educators from the field and the academy, prominent public figures and intellectuals, representatives of various sectors of Israeli society, parents, and pupils. The comments by the various focus groups will be collected and integrated into a broader vision document, which will be revised in light of these comments.

The first three recommendations propose action that should be taken as soon as possible. They are meant to create structures, tools, and an organizational culture that will make it easier to base educational decision-making on (1) a long-term strategic view, (2) an intelligent and broad theoretical and ethical dialogue, and (3) credible scientific evidence rather than short-term political considerations.

4. Create “Laboratory Units” within the Education System for Testing Proposed Changes

Education is by nature practical and is therefore extremely sensitive to the various contexts in which it takes place. In addition, as a practical subject, much of the knowledge it requires is not theoretical but hands-on, amassed only through reflective experience. Furthermore, when it comes to significant changes in education, there is no reason to initiate them horizontally before they have been duly tested on a more limited basis. Therefore, we recommend that the Education Ministry encourage and provide incentives for “educational units” on various levels of operation (meaning a local authority, network of schools, or individual school, or a specific classroom subject) to serve as living laboratories to test the changes, with professional, research, and budgetary support by the Ministry, if necessary. The findings gleaned from the “laboratory units” will serve as a database of essential information for implementing the changes on a wider level.

5. Establish an Entity to Integrate the Proposed Pedagogical Changes

Currently, the Education Ministry does not have the requisite means to introduce pedagogical change throughout the Israeli education system. In theory, the chief inspectors of the various subjects, who are subordinate to the chair of the Pedagogical Secretariat, are responsible for the materials taught in a subject and the way that subject is taught and tested. However, the chief inspectors are entrusted with implementing the instructional methods that currently exist and focus on methods of teaching in their field of instruction. By contrast, what is needed to introduce comprehensive pedagogical change is ground breaking thought about teaching and learning and a focus on generic pedagogy, namely the pedagogical aspects that are common to the various subjects. In the absence of a generic and comprehensive pedagogical outlook (tailored to each specific subject area), there is no way to bring about the changes discussed above.

Therefore, we propose establishing an entity to integrate the process of the pedagogical change chosen. This body could be an arm of the Pedagogical Secretariat and work together with the chief inspectors, an independent unit within the Education Ministry, or an adjunct unit

of the Education Ministry (like the National Center for Testing and Evaluation). We recommend that the Education Ministry examine the various options and work to establish such an entity as soon as possible.

We recommend that the integrating pedagogical entity be based on several main patterns of action:

- Learning from successful pedagogical approaches in Israeli schools. The system has chalked up a long list of successful pedagogical initiatives. Because, as noted, most of them have never been studied methodically, valuable practical knowledge about pedagogy is going to waste.
- Learning from successful pedagogical models abroad, including concrete models that have been implemented in the field as well as the theoretical literature.
- Creating mechanisms to support and mentor teachers in schools, and, in particular, developing and mentoring professional communities of teachers within a school or in several schools.
- Running training programs for pedagogical facilitators, with the goal of modifying the current form of pedagogy in the schools. These facilitators will be selected from among outstanding teachers, who will be offered a career advancement track.
- Extensive involvement by teachers and principals in thinking and planning.
- Creating mechanisms of evaluation (primarily formative) and feedback to examine the processes of pedagogical change and the manner in which they are implemented.

In addition, the integrated pedagogical entity must have three main characteristics:

1. **Continuity** – It takes time to implement pedagogical change (usually 3–5 years). Consequently, this body must have a robust ability to withstand the frequent political changes that characterize our education system.
2. **Professionalism** – It must be composed primarily of professionals in the field of education.
3. **Collaboration** – It should create novel mechanisms for including and integrating many public sectors in thinking, planning, and monitoring the implementation processes.

6. **Make the Training and Professional Development of Teachers Transformative in Nature**

Teacher training should be viewed as a tool for changing the education system. Namely, it should bring about a transformation—a thorough and permanent change—in future teachers' educational outlook and methods of action, thereby facilitating the transformation required by the education system as a whole. Such a demand runs counter to the natural tendency of a professional training program, whose role, in normal circumstances, is to prepare people to teach in the existing system. However, the fault lines described above require teacher-training institutes to operate with an internal tension that is difficult to bear but unavoidable. On the one

hand, they must teach their students to function appropriately in schools as they currently exist; on the other hand, they must train teachers (or at least some of them) to be agents of change. Teachers who are agents of change will arrive at their schools dedicated to changing them and trained to do so. This task is complex and sometimes frustrating, but it is possible so long as it is discussed openly as part of the training process and is continued during the teachers' development in the field. Therefore, transformative teacher training requires, first, an in-depth discussion of the basic questions that affect the state of teachers today, especially teachers' appropriate professional identity in the knowledge age, and second, to change the processes of teaching and learning used in the training program itself so that trainees experience first-hand alternative forms of pedagogy they will need to apply in the future.

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Restructuring Educational Human Resource Management in the Israeli Education System

Dr. Varda Shiffer

Executive Summary

This position paper addresses two problems: The first is the ongoing failure by the Education Ministry, as the principal employer of teachers in the education system (and particularly in elementary education, to regulate the distribution of teachers in a way that ensures a comparable quality of teachers in all parts of the country and in all educational subsystems. This failure is particularly evident with regard to the training of teachers in the core subjects, including the sciences, English, and mathematics and the assignment of teachers of these subjects to schools in the periphery and in localities categorized among the lowest socioeconomic clusters. The second is the continuing distortion in the distribution of powers, roles, and responsibilities between the central government and the local government. This distribution does not take into account the transformations that have occurred in local governments since the enactment of the Law for the Direct Election of Mayors; it also fails to take into consideration the responsibilities the local authorities have assumed in order to provide a range of services to their residents.

It is suggested that these two problems hinder the development of a teacher workforce that could significantly improve teaching and learning in the entire education system. These shortcomings impede the development of a supportive team of teachers who are committed to all of the pupils in the community, a work environment that encourages creativity, partnership, and trust—which are prerequisites for enhancing the teaching and learning processes.

The paper outlines a collaborative and gradual process of deliberations aimed at clarifying and defining the roles, powers, and responsibilities associated with the management of the teaching workforce and redistributing these roles, powers, and responsibilities between the central government (primarily the Ministry of Education) and the local authorities in a well-thought-out and mutually acceptable fashion. The proposed outline for discussion will generate the readiness and commitment necessary for the success of the process, and will boost the trust among all stakeholders in the field of education. In the medium and long term, such a redistribution process, in which all stakeholders in the field of education will take part, will help resolve the undesirable phenomena described, and may consequently weaken the strong and longstanding correlation between socioeconomic status and educational achievement, to which these phenomena significantly contribute.

Other positive outcomes of the process proposed here would include an enhancement of the status of the Ministry of Education as the agent responsible for providing a genuine opportunity for all children to fully exploit their abilities and become active members of society, regardless of the

socioeconomic status of their family or locality. This would require the Ministry of Education to outline a comprehensive policy for teachers that includes, inter alia, a policy of regulation and incentives to ensure appropriate compensation for weak local authorities. The local authorities—after engaging in study, improvement, and empowerment—would assume responsibility and authority for creating a work environment that is safe, open, and encourages creativity and trust for teachers in the community's education system, and that improves the teaching and learning processes, and enhances the teacher's standing.

Introduction

Technological advances, population migration, the presence of minority groups that are not necessarily interested in integrating into the majority culture, the demands of the global economy, open and readily accessible modes of communications, and more—all of these exert a major influence on the political and social systems of every country, including of course, their education systems. Reports by the OECD (2005) and research on the education systems in its member states highlight the profound changes they have undergone in recent decades and the vagueness and uncertainty of the work environments that serve as the basis for defining policy and making decisions that are relevant for the well-being of future generations. In most countries, the importance of schools as the main entity in which education activity takes place has increased, and there have been changes in the work methods of education ministries, in the division of powers, and principles of regulation.

The possible approaches to the governance of education systems and schools are influenced by changes experienced by the public sector in all democracies since the early 1980s, including the shift from bureaucratic administration to what is called “New Public Management” (NPM), with the emphasis that the latter places on privatization, outsourcing, performance evaluation, and outcomes.

Israel is one of the few democracies that has not undertaken a planned and comprehensive reform of its civil service (until today, when discussions are finally taking place about the reform of human resources management in the civil service), even though, like the civil service in other countries, it too has been hit by repeated cuts in budgets and personnel. In Israel, services have been privatized or outsourced, due to budgetary constraints (and sometimes to intentional “drying up”) rather than as the result of a comprehensive and coherent policy.

The education system in Israel faces unique challenges: in tandem with the huge cuts in social-service budgets during the 1980s, the middle of that decade saw the start of waves of immigration by two groups with unique characteristics—new immigrants from the former Soviet Union and from Ethiopia—who required a specific organizing effort by the educational and welfare services. The population—both long-time residents and new immigrants—expected that the younger generation would receive an education that would enable its members to participate in the global economy and enjoy an improved standard of living, of the sort blazoned in the—also global—media. The expectations held of schools in Israel and in most democracies swelled. In the 1990s it seemed that the principles of NPM would provide the answer and help education systems meet the new challenges. Standards, local and international tests, differential compensation for successful teachers, and increasing the autonomy of the school as the unit in which teaching and learning take place are several examples of the application of the principles of NPM to education.

By the early years of the present century, questions were being asked about the ability of the NPM reforms to cope with the challenges, especially those facing education systems. According to

Mulford (2003), most education systems in the OECD countries switched from classic (Weberian) bureaucratic regimes to regimes that upheld values borrowed from the business world—meaning, for education, NPM methods, which include, as noted, decentralization of power to the schools but also centralization of curricula and evaluation, encouragement of competition among schools, mobilization of resources from the public and NGOs, and greater supervision over the subjects of instruction. But this did not lead to the anticipated results. Mulford (2003) notes further that in some OECD countries (and Israel is a classic example) there is a hodgepodge of models, which frequently generates internal contradictions and incoherence between the elements of bureaucratic centralization left over from the old regime and the demand that the schools be accountable and satisfy performance metrics. According to the findings of Dunleavy and colleagues (Dunleavy et al., 2005), supported by other researchers as well, NPM has increased the complexity of the systems (a single bureaucratic organization that controls all elements of the system has been replaced by a proliferation of entities, a lack of clarity about authority and responsibility, and so on) but has made absolutely no headway toward finding solutions for social problems. Dunleavy, like Mulford (2003) and De Vries (2010), looked for a way to reconnect the divided social sectors and crystallize agreements, and to do so as part of a redefinition of the role of the state that does not include a return to paralyzing centralization.

Any proposal to improve some component of the public services, and in particular a complex and sensitive system such as education and the management of the teacher workforce, must take account of these developments and the ideas associated with them.

Management of the Teacher Workforce in Israel: The Current Situation

Teachers in Israel are employed by three main entities (or types of entities).

1. Most teachers are employed directly by the Education Ministry, through its districts. The Ministry's Division for Senior Personnel in Education is the employer of record of teachers in the "official" educational streams (meaning schools that are "owned" by the state or local authorities). This responsibility includes assigning and transferring teachers, hiring and firing them, as well as handling their retirement, social benefits, and promotion.
2. The teaching personnel of senior high schools and some junior high schools are employed by the school's "proprietor"—educational networks, NPOs, and sometimes corporations. A few secondary schools (both junior and senior high schools) are owned by local authorities.
3. Many teachers (their number is not known) are employed through intermediate agencies, some of which are NPOs that work in the schools (State Comptroller 2012a), while others are organizations that have no direct link to the school's activities and serve exclusively as employment contractors. Recently, the issue of teachers employed by outside agencies has been

a frequent topic of public discussion, with the emphasis on the abusive modes of employment and the fact that this method of employment creates different categories of teachers within the same school.⁹

A chapter of the State Comptroller's Report 63c for 2012 is devoted to aspects of personnel management in the education system (State Comptroller 2013), with the focus on teachers who are employed directly by the Education Ministry, mainly in elementary schools. According to the report, in 2011/2012 there were 107,900 teachers in the official education systems, filling 86,200 full-time positions. Roughly one-third of them taught in junior high schools. That same year, there were also 53,000 teachers in senior high schools, some of them employed by the local authorities with supervision by the Education Ministry. The report avoids specifying how many of these teachers were employed by the Ministry and makes do with the statement that the Ministry employs more than 100,000 teachers. Apparently the precise number of those directly employed by the Ministry at any given time is not known. The findings of the State Comptroller's report would suffice to tell us that the Education Ministry does not carry out the complex task of managing the teaching workforce appropriately. Here we will briefly survey some of the findings:

- The Ministry's databases of teaching personnel do not constitute an adequate management infrastructure or basis for forecasting future needs in light of changes in the supply.
- The Ministry has no tools to plan the complex apparatus of teaching personnel and has not allocated any budgets or full-time personnel for this task.
- Thousands of teachers in senior high schools are teaching subjects for which they were not trained. This includes 50% of those teaching civics and a similar proportion of those teaching Hebrew literature. In history, geography, and Hebrew language, the percentage of teachers with no training in these subjects approaches 40%.
- The Ministry has no reliable information about subjects of instruction in which teachers specialized before they were hired and does not cross-check the information at its disposal against that held by the teacher's colleges. This makes the assignment of teachers to the different districts and placement according to needs impossible.
- With regard to methods for identifying candidates for teaching positions, examining them, screening them, and finding places for them, the State Comptroller writes that these functions "are insufficiently structured and are not conducted in accordance with detailed guidelines that would guarantee an orderly and efficient process" (ibid., p. 994). A

⁹ On this topic, see also: Knesset Research and Information Center, "Employment of Teachers by Outside Entities" (Vurgan 2011); Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, Yaacov Hazan Center for Social Justice and Democracy, "On the Seam between Private and Public: Privatization and Nationalization in Israel—Annual Report" (Amir Paz-Fuchs and Sarit Bensimhon-Peleg 2012); "Director General's Report on the Employment of Teaching Personnel through Personnel Firms in the Education System" (Ministry of Education 2012).

conspicuous example of the deficiencies in these areas is the fact that many teachers are informed about their placements only a few days before the start of the school year.

Post-Primary Education: Human Resource Management in the Thicket of Ownerships

Post-primary education refers to grades 7–12 (divided into junior high school, grades 7–9, and senior high school, grades 10–12). Both the State Comptroller’s report referenced above (63c, 2013) and a study by the Knesset Research and Information Center on “Junior High Schools and their Place in the Structure of Post-Primary Education in the Education System” (Vurgan 2010) note the diversity and lack of uniformity between the junior and senior divisions and within each division from school to school. Most junior high schools—462 (Vurgan 2010)—are attached to senior high schools to compose six-year schools. The Education Ministry prefers this arrangement, because it is compatible with the recommendations of the report of the Commission to Study Reform in the Education System (Dovrat Commission 2005) that it is preferable for children to experience only one transfer between schools during their scholastic career. Nevertheless there were still 174 independent junior high schools in 2010 (Vurgan 2010).

Most junior high schools are state-owned, like the elementary schools,¹⁰ whereas senior high schools have various proprietors, including local authorities, school networks, and NPOs. Teachers, too, are affiliated with different organizations: junior high-school teachers in the lower classes are members of the Histadrut Teachers’ Union, whereas those in post-primary education belong to the Secondary School Teachers’ Association. In junior high schools, and especially in six-year post-primary schools, faculty colleagues may have different terms of employment and status. In recent years, with the implementation of the Ofeq Hadash reform, and even more so the start of the introduction of the Oz Litmura reform (promoted by the Secondary School Teachers’ Association), the friction and disagreements between the different groups of teachers have risen to the surface and are threatening to impede the implementation of Oz Litmura in the schools in question.

Another factor that is particularly prominent in weaker local authorities is the transfer of administrative authority and sometimes even part-ownership of post-primary schools to private entities—mainly networks that specialize in school administration. Officials of those local authorities say that they lack the knowledge and experience required for effective administration of schools and consequently prefer to transfer the post-primary system in their towns to specialist organizations. Interviews with officials indicated that the Education Ministry encourages them to

¹⁰ The reason for this is that the two lower grades of junior high school, seventh and eighth, were attached to elementary schools before the Rimalt Committee reform that modified the structure of the school system from eight years of primary education and four years of post-primary education to a six-year elementary school, three-year junior high school, and three-year senior high school.

follow this path (see also HCJ 7947/05, *Sederot Parents' Committee v. the Sederot Municipality and the Ministry of Education*). These networks include the veteran ORT and Amal, Amit, the relatively new Darca Schools founded by the Rashi Foundation, Atid and Tomashin (both of them evidently commercial enterprises), and Sakhnin College (there may be others as well).

We are unaware of any longitudinal studies of whether scholastic achievement rose in localities where outside networks and entities took over administration of the schools. However, a focused study of several local authorities¹¹ found a school that was transferred from one network to another after having been on the verge of collapse, and the transfer of all the post-primary schools in a locality to a network with a particular worldview, thus affecting the 'neutrality' of the public education.

These phenomena indicate the absence of a clear overarching policy and principles of regulation that would define the obligations of the authorities (whether central or local) toward their residents, guarantee their implementation, and support public and open education that gives expression to the full spectrum of acceptable worldviews, as may be expected of public education. The role of the local authority with regard to outside owners—whether school networks or affiliation with the various species of recognized but unofficial education—is insufficiently clear. As a consequence, local authorities have a limited ability to contribute to an improvement in teaching and learning processes.

As stated above, the lion's share of teachers are employed by the Education Ministry and school owners. An increasing number, however, are employed by intermediaries—NPOs and organizations (such as local foundations; NPO's and For Profit corporations)—that are not directly linked to the schools. As indicated by the reports cited above (State Comptroller 2012b; Ministry of Education 2012), as well as the reports of the Hazan Center for Social Justice and Democracy at the Van Leer Institute (Paz-Fuchs and Bensimhon-Peleg 2012), the employment terms of these teachers—referred to as “contract teachers” and frequently defined as coaches or counselors rather than as teachers—are intolerable. Frequently they are paid by the hour, or for only ten months a year, and denied social benefits. The Education Ministry has no information about their qualifications (State Comptroller 2012b); status differences emerge among teachers in the same schools (Education Ministry 2012). In the wake of the recommendations of the Commission for Socioeconomic Change (the Trajtenberg Commission) and the decision to lengthen the school day for preschoolers and lower-grade elementary school pupils, in July 2012 the Education Ministry invited bids (Ministry of Education, 17/6.2011) for operation of all components of the extra hours of children's presence in preschools and schools. This means that the Education Ministry itself is encouraging the employment of an additional 15,000 workers through a contractor, in inappropriate working conditions.

¹¹ Including Tira, Yeroham, and Sderot.

The impression is that the Education Ministry (like the Israeli civil service in general) prefers to have teachers without tenure and social benefits, who can be transferred freely and dismissed at will, and to whom the employer has no commitment. In these conditions, can teachers function as they should? Can they be committed to their pupils, invest in them, and engage in their own professional development?

How Are Teachers Employed in the OECD Countries?

In most OECD countries, teachers are employed by local authorities (or regional education authorities) or directly by the schools. In the Netherlands, the most decentralized country with regard to personnel management, the school (in practice the school principal) is responsible for hiring, training, managing, and dismissing faculty members. England has a mixed system: Teachers in State schools are employed by the local (or sometimes regional) authorities, while those in private schools (independent, or academies with the status of independent schools) employ their teachers directly (Royal Statistical Society 2012). The greatest centralization is found in Germany and France. In France, the State employs teachers, while in Germany it is the individual federal states (the *Länder*), rather than the national government, that does so (OECD 2005). In addition, in all OECD countries:

- Teachers are unionized and have an impressive ability to negotiate their salaries.
- The salary terms at all levels of instruction are fixed and obligate all public schools. In many cases, private schools adopt the same terms (although some do not). Private schools may offer additional compensation in forms other than salary.
- The salaries of teachers in public systems vary from the mean per capita national product to twice that, and tend to be higher in poorer countries.
- The scope of the position (an average of 190 working days a year) and of paid professional development days (in-service programs)—an average of five days a year—is also fixed in collective agreements and apply to all teachers in the public systems.
- The employer is responsible for the hiring and firing of teachers, career development, and retaining good teachers.
- In most countries, pensions are defined in collective agreements.
- Most countries have centralized their teacher evaluation system by means of tests. Based on the findings of the OECD, however, peer evaluation and the creation of teacher communities (by their employers) have a greater impact on the quality of instruction than outside evaluations do.
- The phenomenon of the employment of teachers by entities other than public agencies and school proprietors is not mentioned in the reports or relevant literature. The proprietors of educational institutions may be NPOs, but there is no phenomenon of the use of intermediaries exclusively for the purpose of employing teachers.

The Gulf between the Legal Status and the Real Situation in which the Local Authorities Operate

The local authorities in Israel operate in a vague environment, one that is full of internal contradictions and sometimes even hostile, particularly with regard to the attitude of the central government. From the administrative and structural perspective, local authorities, whose heads have been directly elected since 1978 (in addition to elections for their councils), are government agencies in every respect, an intermediate level between citizens and the central government in the democratic structure of governance in Israel, which faithfully represents its residents. However, the change in how council heads are elected was not accompanied by a corresponding modification of the legislation that defines the functions of local authorities; in practice, there is no agreed upon definition of the “basket of services” that local authorities are expected to provide to their residents; nor is there a clear (or indeed any) policy as to the division of powers between the central government and local governments. An attempt to enact a new Municipalities Law in 2007 was unsuccessful. The local authorities’ role in various domains is defined only in part and these definitions are scattered in a host of different laws and regulations. With regard to education, the most important text, which could be the basis for the changes proposed in the present document, is §7(b) of the Compulsory Education Law (5709-1949), which reads as follows:

The existence of official education institutions to provide free compulsory education under this law to children and teenagers who live within the jurisdiction of a particular local educational authority will be the joint responsibility of the State and of that local education authority. The Minister, in consultation with the Minister of the Interior and with the Knesset Education and Culture Committee, will stipulate, in an order published in the Official Gazette, for each school year and for each local educational authority, the relative participation of the State and of the local education system in supporting the official education institutions in which compulsory education is provided to the children and teenagers who live within the jurisdiction of that local educational authority.

A later section of the law gives the Education Ministry the power to neutralize and curtail this “partnership” and, for example, to compel a local authority to establish recognized but unofficial schools (§10).

The same law (Compulsory Education Law 5708-1949) stipulates that schools maintained by the local authorities, whether by the authorities themselves or in partnership with the Education Ministry, are “official” schools. That is, with regard to school ownership, the status of the local authorities is the same as that of the Education Ministry. Under the same law, the local authority is required to register all children who attend schools within its jurisdiction; but if the authority fails to

do so, or does not do so properly, the Education Ministry is entitled to transfer this power to some other body.

The State Education Law 5713-1953, the second constitutive act of the education system in Israel, deals with the goals of education, with curricula, with the registration of recognized but unofficial schools and their courses of instruction, with experimental programs, and with supplementary programs and the status of parents in these contexts. This key law includes two references to local authorities—once with regard to the registration requirement and schools' obligation to report pupils' enrollment to the local authority (§22), and again as those whom the minister can compel to merge schools (§10(a) and (b)).

Despite this antiquated and largely ossified legislative underpinning, there have been significant and substantial changes related to local authorities since the early 1990s. On the one hand, State grants to local authorities, which make it possible for the authorities to provide basic services to their residents, have been cut sharply. On the other hand, with the start of the mass wave of immigration from the former Soviet Union (1989), local authorities took upon themselves the implementation and execution of the absorption process—assigning immigrant pupils to schools, offering welfare services and occupational counseling, and providing housing.

During that same period, and in the wake of vigorous activity by the Union of Local Authorities, education department directors were mandated for local authorities (incidentally requiring the establishment of education departments) and required to have advanced degrees and experience in education (Local Authorities Law [Education Department Director] 5761-2001). For the past two decades, then, the local authorities have been developing an infrastructure of abilities and resources to provide diverse educational services.

The local authorities' enlistment in the key national task of absorbing a million immigrants, even if done without choice, encouraged some localities (those which enjoyed a new burst of construction and economic development with a concomitant increased capacity to raise revenues locally) to move ahead, but accelerated the decline of others. Since the 1990s, the differences and disparities between local authorities have been increasing. Local authorities that enjoyed a surge of development and the consequent revenue stream have largely been freed of their dependence on the central government; but others, especially in the periphery, must cope with broad cuts in their budgets that impair their ability to provide basic services, exacerbated by failed leadership and corruption (Ben Elia 2007).

The term "local authorities" refers to cities and rural regional councils with sparse populations, as well as to local authorities with hundreds of thousands of residents. As noted, some local authorities enjoy large revenues from local commercial enterprises and do not receive balancing grants from the State (these are organized in the Forum of Fifteen); they provide their citizens with a fairly high level of services. By contrast, there are local authorities that provide only those services funded by the State, and those on a low level. There is the center and there is the periphery, and some places have been deprived of the right to elected officials and are run by appointed councils.

Many local authorities have had their powers trimmed and have been subjected to a comptroller, auditor, or some other oversight functionary assigned by the central government. The diversity and differences are so great that it is doubtful whether one could research, write, or recommend a policy that would be relevant to all local authorities in Israel as a monolithic unit.

Attempts to Regulate the Relations between the Central Government and Local Governments

At least five different committees have been established to study the relationship between the central government and local governments. Some of them referred directly to the education system:

- In 1980, the Sanbar Commission recommended transferring the bulk of educational activity to the local authorities.
- In 1992, the Harmelech Commission determined that the central government should set policy and supervise, while local government should implement the policy.
- In 1993, the Suari Commission recommended the encouragement of privatization and reduced involvement of the central government, while permitting greater freedom of action to various entities, including local governments.
- In 1993, the Volansky Commission focused specifically on education and recommended the establishment of regional education corporations and the pooling of educational resources.
- In 2004, the Dovrat Commission focused specifically on education and recommended that the entire education system be organized into three levels—the Education Ministry, regional educational administrations, and the schools themselves.

In addition to these commissions, many research and policy papers have been written (including that by Ronit Tirosh and Victor Lavy for the 2003 Caesarea Conference, which mentioned many of the issues and problems raised in the present document as well). Most of the committees and policy papers recommend some form of decentralization of powers to local authorities or to regional authorities.

In 2012, a largely voluntary process began for the consolidation of local authorities into clusters. These clusters file papers of incorporation and decide what domains they want to address. At the time of writing this paper, there are six such clusters, which are supported and encouraged by the Interior Ministry. The creation of such joint ventures provides the opportunity of learning to cooperate, share, and relinquish the preference for exclusivity and separation.

In light of these efforts, we may well wonder whether the present document can say anything new and what added value it can contribute. Unlike most of the commission reports and position papers, this document does not deal with decentralization, but with a process the aim of which is to realize a new division of powers and responsibilities between levels of government, while bolstering

the status, powers, and ability of each authority to set objectives and implement the tasks it takes upon itself. It should be added that the present document focuses on one specific though clearly important corollary of teacher and pedagogic policy—not a sweeping reform, but a gradual intersection with processes that are already under way.

A Description of the Undesirable Trends: A Definition of Problems

The research and legislative infrastructure reviewed above highlights a number of undesirable phenomena that can be classified under two headings and in two different domains. The first is the educational human resource management apparatus that operates with no overall policy framework and embodies essential contradictions. It is also marked by a lack of coherence among its goals, which include improving teaching and learning processes, enhancing teachers' professional abilities, and empowering teachers, on the one hand, and its operating methods, which include flawed regulation and placement of teachers, defective oversight of their hiring (Blass 2010, Donitsa-Schmidt and Zuzovsky 2012), and the increasing transfer of the employment of educational personnel (teachers, preschool teachers, counselors, and others) to intermediate entities with no direct link to the schools where those teachers work. All of these weaken schools and teachers and reduce their commitment to their pupils.

The second phenomenon is linked to the absence of a clear policy on the role of local authorities in the education system in general, and in the management of educational human resources in particular. Consequently, when it comes to the local authorities, everyone does as he or she pleases. This phenomenon distorts the relationship between the situation in the field and the statutory situation and leads to redundancy and waste of resources that are in short supply. The absence of a clear division of responsibility between the Education Ministry and the local authorities is one of the main causes of the large disparities in per pupil investment between strong and weak localities.

Taken together, these two phenomena ensure the impressive and worrisome stability of the correlation between socioeconomic class and educational achievement, a link that the State, despite its investments, has not been able to weaken. All the investments by the State, by strong local authorities, and by nonprofit organizations have fallen wide of the mark, which is the need to reorganize the management of the educational human resources, with a more effective utilization of capacities and resources, and a coherent structure that creates a strong foundation for the desired improvement in the quality of the entire education system.

Definition of the Problem

The problem is *the absence of a clear policy concerning the division of responsibilities between the Education Ministry and the local authorities in the area of educational human resource management*. This lack of policy generates uncertainty and confusion with regard to power and authority in areas related to the management of educational personnel, the employment of educational workers via personnel companies, and deficient supervision. The lack of a clear policy also reflects the failure of the stake holders to reach agreements. The result is obvious: *an inability to create and maintain a supportive work environment, one that builds teachers' trust and develops their professionalism and their commitment to their pupils*.

This definition locates the problem in the domain of policymaking. The process of reaching agreements is essential for policy formulation. The process proposed to “solve” the problem incorporates a shift to new modes of operation, by both the Ministry and local authorities.

Recommendations

The crux of the proposal below is a *process* the goal of which is to arrive at a clear division, accepted by all stake holders, regarding the powers and responsibilities related to the management of educational human resources. In addition, the process should encourage learning, foster the development of abilities, and produce a new understanding of the function of each level of government in the complex field of management of educational human resources.

An effective division of responsibilities that takes into account the various government powers, and the responsibilities of each governmental agency vis-à-vis its citizens will lead to the creation of a cohesive local team of teachers (without regard for who owns the schools) that feels a commitment to all pupils (including those attending nearby or other schools), who work in concert to advance the professional capacity of all those involved in the work of education, create a system of trust, and cooperate to enhance teaching and learning in the locality.

Proposed Process

1. The Education Ministry and the Union of Local Authorities, together with the teachers' unions, the Interior Ministry, and the Finance Ministry (hereinafter “the inner team”), will decide and declare that *the restructuring of educational human resource management and a rational division of the related responsibilities between the Education Ministry and the local authorities is a key objective for the Ministry (or the government) and will be achieved within a decade*.

They will also declare that the restructuring process will take place with the full and perceptive participation of the local authorities and other stake holders.

2. The Education Ministry, the Union of Local Authorities, and the teachers' unions will decide which organizations will take part in the policymaking process (a total of 15 to 20, hereinafter the "expanded team") and will appoint a senior personality to lead the process. During this stage, the inner team (the Education Ministry, Union of Local Authorities, and teachers' unions) will suggest four or five local authorities as the sites of a pilot of the policymaking process and its implementation; the team leader will negotiate with the local authorities to obtain their consent.
3. The expanded team will meet to clarify the goals, set the rules of procedure for the deliberations (allotted speaking time, required attendance, and so on), define the rules for making decisions (e.g., majority or consensus), decide which documents will accompany its draft proposals, and set rules for reports by the process leader and his or her superiors (including who receives the reports in each ministry). *An important function of the members of the expanded team is to guarantee that every proposal, in every area of educational human resource management, is compatible with and satisfies the requirements of good governance, as detailed below.*
4. The expanded team's first task will be to analyze and describe the various elements of educational human resource management and to propose options for a division of the attendant responsibilities between the central government and local authorities (most countries already have agreements and customs in some areas, such as the assignment to the central government of teacher licensing and definition of salary grades). The three proposals with the greatest support will be forwarded for study, comments, and remarks by a broader group of interested parties and perhaps the general public via the Internet.
5. Drawing on this feedback, one proposal acceptable to all members of the team will be formulated and forwarded to the next stage of the process.
6. In the next stage, the team will split up into smaller groups (three to five, corresponding to the number of local authorities in the pilot). Each of these smaller teams will then co-opt representatives of the local authorities (the mayor, head of the education department, legal advisor) in the pilot. The smaller teams will investigate and clarify which of the functions recommended for conveyance to the local authority they are in fact prepared to take on, how they believe it feasible to implement these tasks, what assistance and support they will require, how fast they can move ahead, what learning processes they must go through, and so on. The members of the expanded team who are part of these smaller groups will play an important role in transmitting the culture of debate and imposing the rules and criteria that have been agreed upon.

7. The outcome of this process and the insights reached by the members of the smaller teams will be forwarded to the expanded team. It will use them to outline the policymaking process agreed upon (or perhaps two or three different processes), which the selected local authorities will begin to implement. The expectation is that these seven stages, leading to the crystallization of a policy and its mode of implementation, will take about two years. The implementation process will be accompanied both by the expanded team and by such professional consultants as may be required.
8. During the implementation process, negotiations to expand the pilot will begin with other local authorities.

The process¹² will leave it to the participants to decide how to divide up the powers and responsibilities and assumes that the agreements and the learning and negotiations process will ensure successful implementation. Nevertheless, taking into account the situation in Israel and the experience of most of the OECD countries, the process should produce the following:

- The State will formulate a clear policy of education, which guarantees all children with a genuine opportunity to realize the potential of their talents and skills. This means outlining ways for a better management of educational resources, including policies to provide incentives and compensation to teachers in the periphery.
- There will be a clear and coherent definition of the roles of the State on the one hand and of the local authorities (or cluster of authorities) on the other hand with regard to educational human resource management. Solutions will be found for the duplications and waste in the system.
- A clear policy will be enunciated about the conditions for teachers' initial intake, perhaps including the creation of a countrywide database of certified teachers (including graduates of preparatory programs).
- Negotiations will take place with the participation of the Finance Ministry and the teachers' unions about salary frameworks, stages of professional advancement, and more flexible terms of hiring and dismissal, taking performance evaluations into account as well. The Ministry of Education will guarantee that the proprietors of schools comply with the agreements reached.
- Teachers will be employed exclusively by government agencies or by school proprietors; the employment of teaching staff through personnel companies will be banned.
- The Education Ministry will provide local authorities with professional and budgetary support so that they can fulfill their responsibilities.

¹² The process proposed here was influenced by one on the same topic carried out in Great Britain in 2011/2012, under the title, "Action Research into the Evolving Role of the Local Authority in Education" (Parish, Baxter, and Sandals 2012), with the support of the Local Government Association in Great Britain.

- The local authorities will develop a professional capability to manage the recruitment and placement of teachers within their geographic jurisdiction, as well as salary management; the idea is that, within a decade, the local authorities (or clusters) will become the employers of teachers in the public (official) education.
- The local authorities will create a community of schools and teachers within their jurisdictions as well as a system of professional development correlated with needs (of schools, the locality, and individuals), based on a locality-wide perspective.
- The local authorities, together with the Education Ministry and teachers' unions will devise multiple career tracks with a locality-wide perspective that includes cooperation among schools.
- The local authorities will be partners in operating the measurement and evaluation scheme for the schools and teachers within their jurisdiction, in accordance with their responsibility for the teachers' career tracks (and, in the future, hiring and dismissal as well).
- A clear policy will be formulated as to the respective roles of the Education Ministry and the local authorities with regard to "recognized but unofficial" schools and those affiliated with networks, which are located within a local authority's jurisdiction.

Main Principles of the Policy Definition Processes

The principles suggested below are compatible with the good governance recommendations of the European Union (Commission of the European Communities 2001), the goal of which is to open up policymaking processes and involve more individuals and organizations in formulating and implementing EU policy. This goal is valid for Israel as well; its principles are applicable to a process that requires broad consensus and cooperation between government agencies and civil-society organizations:

- **Openness:** The process and related documents must be made accessible, phrased in clear language, and available in media that are open to all.
- **Participation:** Decision-makers are responsible for inviting the participation of all stake holders, and especially government agencies (local and regional authorities) and civil-society organizations, in every stage of the decision-making process.
- **Accountability:** There needs to be greater clarity as to the various participants' roles in policymaking and their responsibility to report to the public and their partner agencies.
- **Effectiveness:** Policy must be based on clear goals; it must relate to needs and satisfy them promptly.
- **Coherence:** It is essential to see the big picture and avoid internal contradictions, while presenting the policy in a way that all can understand.

To these five principles enunciated by the European Union we can add, in the specific context of the present proposal, one other point that is relevant to the situation of the local authorities in Israel:

gradual implementation, adapting the process to the local authorities' situation. In other words, independent authorities with a recognized administrative capacity can switch to the new model in the early stages, whereas others will be able to do so only after a period of study, preparation, and experimentation. As noted, local authorities, with the encouragement of the Interior Ministry but on a strictly voluntary basis, have begun to form clusters and to operate in concert in certain areas of their choosing. It is possible that after a training and learning period, it will be desirable and possible to transfer the educational human resource management function to the clusters and their executives (the clusters are registered as corporations in every respect). It is important to remember that this is a long-term process and could take ten to twelve years to be completed.

In conclusion, it must be emphasized that government ministries are profoundly mistrustful of local authorities; the public also does not have great confidence in local authorities' ability to do their job. The proliferation of criminal investigations of mayors in the last year only increases this skepticism. Nevertheless, the story is more complex. On the one hand, in some places a significant improvement in educational achievements can be credited to the intervention of the local authorities. Towns such as Beer Sheva, Bat Yam, and Dimona (not to mention Ra'anana and Kfar Saba), as well as others, have improved their pupils' educational performance (as well as their citizens' confidence in them) by means of educational intervention projects that apply to the entire town. On the other hand, in recent years the Education Ministry has been working from a position of weakness and prefers to hand over the employment of teachers to outside contractors, who have no commitment to the pupils and are not concerned about the professional development of teachers or their job security; this undermines the possibility of improving the education system as a whole. The process proposed here, if carried out wisely, and made resistant to pressure or demands that it be speeded up, can lead to greater confidence among the various entities and to improved teaching and learning processes in every school.

We need to begin the process with medium-sized communities that have a reliable leadership (Beer Sheva, Holon, Umm al-Fahm) rather than with the big cities, where there are entrenched patterns of the distribution of roles that are not based on deliberate policy, but on a balance of power that in practice dwarfs the role of the State.

As for weak local authorities, as noted, they must first undergo training and recovery processes, supplemented, to the extent possible, by the formation of clusters, inasmuch as the outline may not be suitable for very small localities. In light of the impressive progress currently being made in the development of these clusters, we may hope that by the time we reach the second stage of the process there will be clusters that are interested in signing up for the process and are ready to do so.

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Human Resource Management in the Israeli Education System:

A Minority View

Noam Zussman, Research Division, Bank of Israel¹

One of the key recommendations of this position paper is to transfer the human resource management in the recognized system to the local authorities, including hiring, placement, dismissal, salaries, and promotion. I reject this idea for the following reasons:

National solidarity

Supreme importance attaches to equipping pupils with a common set of core values and reducing fissures and sectarianism. Because education is a key element in molding society, to guarantee such a core and avoid politicization of the system, it must remain fully within the responsibility of the state. Because teachers are the key factor in the education system, it is the state that should manage educational personnel.

Equality

Decentralization of powers will lead to a strengthening of the link between socioeconomic class and scholastic achievements and to increased inequality, for two main reasons: First, there are significant differences in the abilities of local authorities to administer the education system, and these differences are correlated with the locality's socioeconomic ranking. In practice, today many of the weaker local authorities are hard put to run those aspects of education that currently fall in their purview and consequently transfer these powers to outside agencies (other proprietors and NPOs). In many cases, the latter provide educational services of an inferior quality. This phenomenon would undoubtedly expand in the wake of the decentralization of powers and expansion of the domains within the responsibility of the local authorities. Second, if the salary management function is transferred to the local authorities, stronger localities will be able to offer handsome financial incentives to attract better teachers than weak and resource-poor localities can, thereby increasing inequality in education.

¹ My views do not necessarily reflect those of the Bank of Israel.

The transfer of powers to the local authorities is liable to exacerbate the phenomenon of outsourcing of teacher employment (through personnel contractors), as has occurred, for example, with regard to social workers in local welfare offices. This would have implications not only for educational services (as noted previously) but also for inequality in the labor market.

In order to decentralize powers, it would be necessary to grant the weaker authorities significant budgets so that they can run their local education systems properly. This would be in addition to the support currently given them under the rubric of the affirmative action policy adopted by the Ministry of Education for pupils from a weaker socioeconomic background.

Management considerations

If the human resource management is transferred to the local authorities, it will be impossible to guarantee that teachers meet professional standards and it will be impossible to guarantee them equal opportunities in hiring, promotion, and dismissal, on the basis of fair and uniform criteria. These phenomena are liable to get worse as a result of the polarization in society, which frequently reflects geographical lines and municipal boundaries. The processes for evaluating teachers and measuring their performance must remain in the exclusive domain of the state in order to guarantee uniform and high standards. Allowing the local authorities to have a part would open the door to preferential treatment of certain teachers for irrelevant reasons and deviations from sound management practices.

If the administrative failures of local government—mentioned in the position paper—really do exist, they should be repaired in the present format. We may assume, with a high level of confidence, that if responsibility for administration of education is transferred to the local authorities, it will suffer the same management failures that are currently widespread in local authorities, including human resource management. This applies with even greater force to weak (from the socioeconomic perspective) local authorities.

It is almost certain that the decentralization of powers will create administrative redundancy in the education system, because the management echelons on the local level will not replace all of the personnel in the Education Ministry but will be in addition to them, at least to some extent.

There is no research basis to the idea that intervention programs in Israel, conducted at the initiative of local authorities and under their management, have led to higher achievements than those of pupils in programs run by the Ministry of Education. The same applies to schools that have been transferred to self-management. What is more, the state alone runs elementary schools, whereas post-primary education is run by local authorities or private owners. Nevertheless, there is no evidence that the high schools are better administered than are elementary schools, including from the personnel aspect, nor do the outputs appear to be superior.

Naomi Riftin, Chair of the Pedagogical Secretariat, Israel Teachers Union

The responsibility of the state in general, and of the Ministry of Education as its administrative arm, is to provide equal education to all children in Israel and not to slough off this responsibility by transferring it to others. In light of the complex socioeconomic and security situation, education must be run by the state. Only the Education Ministry, an arm of central government, can handle all this complexity and balance it. The state has to concern itself with the education system and see as a primary goal to preserve its resilience. It is incumbent on the state to provide good educators who enjoy appropriate working conditions. The State of Israel is a heterogeneous country in all aspects of life and its institutions must balance between the strong and weak localities so as to provide all with optimum and equal education. The contribution of the local authorities is important as part of the system, in coordination and partnership with the Education Ministry as the main player. The proposals in this document would lead to a differentiation between local authorities and are liable to expand the disparities between them if responsibility for the education system is transferred to them.

Yael Guron, Fellow, Mandel School for Educational Leadership

The paper in question draws on how the education system sees its role and its pedagogical and social goals. The transfer of responsibility for these areas from the Education Ministry to the local authorities, even in part, would be similar to privatization, in that the strong would get stronger and the socioeconomically weaker would fall further behind. The effect would be not only economic privatization, but also the elimination of the state's responsibility for teachers' professionalism and status and the transfer of their fate to the local authorities. In the crisis situation in which teachers find themselves today in any case,² there could be no more problematic and abusive step than this. The position paper clearly highlights the serious problems that currently exist in teacher policy in Israel, but proposes a solution that I believe would merely intensify them instead of eliminating them. If teachers are important to the education system and the State of Israel, we must find the tools and way to provide them with the appropriate professional space, one that does not depend on the operation of this or that school or this or that local authority. Recognition of teaching as a profession, and appropriate professional development of teachers, is not an impossible dream. The time has not yet come to transfer this fragile and important domain and drown it in the swamp of local politics.

² The various reasons for which are detailed in the position paper, "Teacher Policy along a Pedagogical Fault Line."



Toward a New Paradigm of Education: The International Perspective

Comments by Dirk Van Damme¹

Introduction – 21st Century Education Systems Need Transformative Change

When economies and societies at large change at a rapid pace, education systems come into an awkward position. This is because they have a specific relation to time, which is different from many other social institutions. Education also serves to transmit the human heritage built over the entire history of mankind to the future generations. On the other hand school prepares not so much for the immediate future but for a lifetime and even beyond: educated parents raise their children with different skills and values than low-educated parents do, so education even has an impact across generations. So the time impact of education is huge. That's why education systems have a certain inherent slowness. It was the pioneering education philosopher and sociologist Emile Durkheim who saw education as a kind of 'condensation' of human society's history, its culture and its social structure, thus basically following social change.

On the other hand reformers want to have education playing a much more pro-active role, not only following social change, but instead preparing, anticipating and fostering change. They step in the footsteps of the American pragmatist educational reformer John Dewey, who saw education as driving social change by stressing the transformative capacities of education. In many countries policy makers and innovators ask not only whether education does things right, but also whether education does the right things. Are we preparing young people for the skills the economies and societies of the 21st century will need?; are we teaching the right kind of subjects in contemporary curricula?; are we making full use of the potential of new technologies?; have we fully understood how learning happens according to the latest research findings on learning; and do we have the best teachers, and the best teacher training and professional development, to make all this happen? In

¹ Head of the Innovation and Measuring Progress Division, Directorate for Education and Skills, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). This comment is written in my personal name and does not necessarily reflect the view of the OECD.

many countries these questions are on the table. The OECD has done a lot of work on all these questions and stands ready to support countries in driving educational transformation. Experiences of educational transformation in countries can greatly help other countries to improve processes and governance of educational change and to avoid commonly encountered pitfalls.

The document *Toward a new Paradigm of Education* is a good example of the reformist and innovative perspective that is developing around the globe. Obviously, it is fuelled by concerns on particular challenges for the Israeli educational system, but it very much shares the concerns that similar approaches have developed in other countries. The paper on *Teacher Policy along a Pedagogical Fault Line* summarizes the main challenges of contemporary education systems in a short-list of five “fault lines” and then looks at the problems teachers face in dealing with them. I will mainly focus my comments on this paper.

In reviewing this paper my main comment will be that the challenges discussed are very relevant and that the general direction of innovative transformation aspired is the right one, but that the some challenges are exaggerated while others seem to be missing. Still, I do very much support the essence of the recommendations formulated at the end.

Change, Transformation, Fault Lines and Paradigm Shifts

The document adopts quite dramatic language to describe the challenges facing the Israeli education system by adopting a geological concept in a metaphoric manner and to argue for a ‘paradigm shift’. The geological concept of fault lines might be appealing to the imagination and raise interest; the question is whether it is helpful in fostering an analytical understanding of what’s going on. Together with concepts such as paradigm shifts (referring to Thomas Kuhn’s *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*) these concepts suggest the need and desirability of sudden, dramatic changes in education.

Evidence on education change shows that education systems almost never go through such periods of short-term, dramatic, radical change. Most processes of change and transformation in education do not correspond to this image. Even from a rhetorical perspective such concepts might miss the point, as they might deter major stakeholders in the process of transformation. Also in political rhetoric language is critically important and one must be careful in choosing the right kinds of metaphors. A better metaphor might be that education systems are ‘out of tune’ with major societal transformations and need to be brought closer to what the economy and society needs. Probably a condition of being ‘out of tune’ is the case most of the time; education systems rarely precede social change. The question is how to decide whether an education system is *too much* out of tune with what is happening in society. It’s a problem of quantitative gradation, not of absolute qualitative discontinuity as concepts such as fault lines and paradigm shifts seem to suggest.

The OECD, and the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation in particular, has done a lot of work on educational innovation. Projects such as *The Innovation Strategy for Education and Training*, *Innovative Learning Environments* and *Innovative Teaching for Effective Learning* have accumulated a lot of knowledge and policy experiences on contemporary educational change, its rationales and challenges. A closer look into this international knowledge base undoubtedly could have improved the analytical quality and policy relevance of the paper. OECD/CERI is planning to hold an international conference in November 2014 on the topic of innovation in education, to which our Israeli colleagues already are warmly invited.

The Multidimensionality of Educational Innovation

More serious than the language question is whether the challenges to innovate educational systems have been well conceptualised in the paper. The main origins of challenges (or “fault lines”) are situated outside the educational systems. This is of course right: most education systems change because of external pressures, when they become so much out of tune that change is inevitable. There are very few examples of relevant change which are driven by internal forces. The paper focuses on globalisation, the ecological crisis, the demands of the knowledge society, the impact of technology and digital media, and the fading role of the family in socialisation. All these external factors are very relevant, but there are probably many more.

The main problem with the paper is that the precise ways in which these external factors translate into educational challenges and issues for educational policy and practice remain unclear. The paper briefly discusses three “educational ills” (again a very dramatic term) such as the information flood, alienation and instrumentality. Next the paper immediately jumps into the main problems with which teachers, who find themselves “on the fault line”, are confronted.

From the OECD knowledge base educational reform and innovation need to be conceptualised from a more comprehensive perspective. Space and time are lacking to discuss these issues at length, so I will confine myself to a very short overview with the help of a couple of tables. My main point is that it would be wrong to conceptualise the changing professional roles of teachers in a decontextualized way, without looking at the system-wide changes needed.

A perspective on educational transformation should first of all look into the skills demands, the consequences for the curriculum and the changes at the level of pedagogy. The following table summarizes the direction of change on a number of dimensions. Others could be added, but my main point is that any view on educational change should first of all look into the essential questions of the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ in education. All education systems around the world find themselves somewhere along the way in transforming from an industrial view on teaching and learning into a 21st century perspective. I don’t know where exactly Israel would stand in any of these continuums, but certainly it will not completely be on the left of the diagram. And in some indicators it might maybe be already rather at the right side of the axis.

SKILLS AND PEDAGOGY	
Industrial societies	21st century societies
Cognitive skills	Cognitive, social and emotional skills
Discipline	Character
Routine skills	Non-routine skills
Curriculum centred	Skills centred
Linear concepts of learning	Non-linearity
‘Learning to the test’	‘Joy of learning’
Formal education centred	Continuum from formal to informal
Evidence-poor learning environments	Evidence-rich learning environments
Pedagogy for selection of few	Pedagogy of success of all

These changes have enormous consequences on the institutional contexts and the organisation of learning, as the following table makes clear. Institutionalised teaching and learning takes place in environments which we commonly label as ‘schools’, but the reality of what we imagine in schools may be quite diverse.

ORGANISATION	
Industrial societies	21st century societies
Educational provision	Supported learning
Standardisation and uniformity	Personalisation and flexibility
Focused on the median	Fostering all talents
Confined in time and space	Time and space independent
Bureaucratic control	Devolved local responsibility
Vertical accountability	Horizontal accountability
Capacity at the top	Capacity at point of delivery
Reform by prescription	Schools and teachers reform
Teachers as administrators	Teachers as professionals
Management	Leadership

And, finally, educational transformation also requests some important changes at the level of the system itself.

SYSTEM-LEVEL CHANGE	
Industrial societies	21st century societies
Weak research evidence base	Strong research evidence base
Weak innovation in education	Very innovative education sector
Low knowledge dynamics	High knowledge dynamics
Schools as services	Schools as learning organisations

The main idea behind this short overview is that it would be risky to view one area of innovation, for example teachers, in isolation from the others. While some dimensions might change more rapidly than others, the direction of change in the system as a whole should be in line with changes in all of its dimensions in order to be effective.

The Governance of Educational Transformation

Any discussion of innovative transformation in education systems is confronted with the question how such change can be made to happen. In fact, this is a governance issue and we should understand the complexity of this issue. This issue is briefly discussed in the remarks in the paper on the concept of educational change. While these paragraphs lack clarity, the view which comes out of them – and which also fuels the specific recommendations – is that the top (or ‘centre’) of the system should initiate a culture of continuous change (different from a process of ‘reform’ which is meant to move a system from point A to point B).

There are several problems with this notion. First of all, as already noted, educational change should encompass all levels and dimensions of a system. It is difficult to imagine a process of change where the driver is located in only one part, how powerful it might be. I agree with the need to strengthen the capacity of the system’s centre (the ministry) with regard to strategic analysis and planning. But education systems have become more and more complex, with a multiplication of stakeholders and steering mechanisms, which go beyond the well-known ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ visualisation. Most education systems have evolved formally or informally in multilevel systems, with their own specificities and governance challenges. OECD/CERI’s project on *Governing Complex Education Systems* specifically looks at the consequences of fully understanding the governance challenges in education from a ‘complexity theory’ perspective. The project also looks into the consequences of multilevel and multi-stakeholder governance for the design of educational change and transformation. The research for example shows that strengthening the capacity of de-central or local nodes is equally important in driving change. It is of crucial interest to have ‘laboratories of change’, but they should not merely be conceived as units where innovations designed elsewhere should be tested. The paper lacks a vision on how to empower local levels in education systems and its many stakeholders in becoming active partners in educational transformation. Schools should no longer be conceived or treated as passive recipients of changes designed elsewhere and implemented on them instead of with them. And teachers are not the administrators of educational change, but are the professionals of educational change.

The second problem – referring to the second note in the paper on the concept of change – has to do with the discrepancy between a model of continuous, adaptive change on the one hand and the recommendations of strategic planning in the centre of the system. The concept of continuous, adaptive change – in contrast to the concept of ‘reform’ – might be a bit naïve: educational

transformation also needs moments of stabilisation (or in the words of the theoretician of change Kurt Lewin: change is a process of ‘de-freezing’ – ‘moving’ – ‘freezing’). But I like the paper’s ambition to initiate a process of continuous transformation, a system designed around transformation rather than stability. But in such a vision of systemic change, it is all the more necessary to locate change in all parts and dimensions of the system, not only in the centre. Mobilising de-central parts and stakeholders might even be of more strategic importance as strengthening the strategic foresight and planning in the centre of the system. One of CERI’s most recent publications, *Innovative Learning Environments*, looks at innovations at the level of schools or individual learning environments and how they fuel and foster change in different directions.

Teachers and Teacher Policies

Apart from the recommendations to strengthen the strategic management capacity at the Ministry, the main focus of the document is on teachers. The first paper includes a few very important statements on teachers, while the second discusses the required changes – mainly with regard to teacher allocation – in greater detail. I feel not very competent to comment on the specific reforms advocated in the second paper, but will formulate a few general points on teachers policies and decentralisation.

The paper describes four main problems affecting the work of teachers, which are overload, low effectiveness, irrelevance and the rift between the state and teachers. While these are important issues and while some of the recommendations for actions are very relevant, a coherent view on teachers’ professionalization is missing. In several publications – such as *Teachers Matter* – and initiatives – such as the Teacher Summits – the OECD has advanced a comprehensive and ambitious view on teachers’ professionalization. Some comments in the document seem to be in line with this view, while others seem to be more out of tune with it. The crucial thought underpinning the OECD’s view on teachers is that modern education systems facing huge challenges and demanding transformative change, need excellent and high-skilled professionals. Teachers are architects of learning in more challenging conditions and environments. Teacher training is a crucial element in the chain of professionalization processes, but certainly is not the only one. As TALIS has demonstrated, continuous professional development throughout the career is as equally important.

The second paper discusses one specific issue in much more detail, namely the process of allocation of teachers, and argues for a radical decentralisation of the allocation and employment regulations of teachers. This position is challenged in a minority report.

Overall, my position is that the issue of central or de-central teacher allocation is not the main issue with regard to bringing transformative change in an education system. While it is true that in the past the OECD has favoured decentralisation in educational governance arrangements, it always has stressed the necessary accompanying conditions and frameworks. Some countries with huge

levels of decentralisation, such as The Netherlands, in general do well in international assessments such as PISA, but there are also counter-examples. There also is a lot of evidence that decentralisation needs to be balanced with specific steering and accountability arrangements. But my main point is that local autonomy in teacher management is not the crucial factor in moving a system to transform itself. I cannot judge very well whether radical decentralisation would provide answers to important challenges in the Israeli education systems (I am somehow sympathetic to the view that an agency is needed which could ensure that the best teachers are allocated to the most demanding environments, a view expressed in the minority report), but in an international perspective local autonomy in teacher management is not a very critical factor.

Conclusion

Contemporary education systems need to engage in processes of innovation and transformative change in order to address the challenges that 21st century economic and social environments put onto them. Over-dramatizing the changes needed will not help to develop the understanding or to raise the political support for them. Changes needed are very comprehensive and deal with all dimensions of educational systems. It will not suffice to modernise pedagogy if the curriculum remains unchallenged. The question of governance of transformative change is a critically important one. Strengthening the strategic management and planning capacity in the centre or top of the system makes a lot of sense, but will remain an ineffective measure if all the decentral parts of the system, including its many stakeholders, would not also acquire a stronger capacity of understanding and action. Teachers are crucial 'nodal points' in any education system and whether a system is ready for the 21st century will ultimately be felt in the work of teachers and their impact on student learning. But teachers should be viewed as competent professionals, not as administrators of innovations designed elsewhere.