



QPEC

Quality
Public Education
Coalition



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A regrettable episode

The Quality Public Education Coalition is relieved that the experiment to open a partnership school at Whangaruru in Auckland is over. Dr Liz Gordon says that the model is deeply ideological, based on the incorrect notion that the private sector can offer a better education for the poorest children than the state.

“The charter school model under which this school was formed is deeply flawed. The Minister stated that the model in New Zealand would not replicate the failures in other countries, but that is precisely what has happened”.

Problems identified by QPEC include:

- Taxpayers have had to fund the development of new schools (and these schools have not come cheap);
- There is an incorrect assumption that the private sector contains some kind of a ‘magic bullet’ for educating children from deprived backgrounds;
- These schools remove students from low decile state schools which are already on average 2.5 times smaller than high decile schools, effectively taking money from needy schools to fund this unfortunate experiment;
- Some of the partnership schools, and especially this one, were set up with more ideological fervour than research evidence; and
- The education of a group of highly at risk children has been unnecessarily disrupted as the government has tried to prove that charter schools do work.

Dr Gordon says that any objective analysis of the research literature demonstrates that this model is less effective than properly resourcing the state school network.

“It’s really interesting that the Minister aspires to the educational achievement record of ‘winner’ countries like Shanghai and Singapore, while adopting the policies of ‘big losers’ like Sweden, the United States and England”, she notes.

“The sooner we see the end of partnership schools, and more concentration of putting those resources into strengthening the public school network in the poorest areas, the better”.

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