PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS:
AN ANALYSIS OF POLICIES OF EDUCATIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

By

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Abstract

Debate about the appropriate role for the private sector in public education is a recurrent theme in the education literature, yet it remains an issue that is both poorly defined and inadequately analysed. Controversy revolves around the incongruence between the expectations of the private sector to reduce costs and maximise profit while training students for the workforce, and the expectation that a public school system has loftier goals such as the betterment of society and the attainment of each student's full potential. At the heart of the matter lie questions about the purposes of public education and contentions about who should control curriculum and its delivery in the schools. Various groups involved in public education in British Columbia have formulated guidelines and policies to address concerns regarding sponsorships, partnerships, and the provision of teaching resources.

This study explores and critiques the current policies of school boards and the Ministry of Education in British Columbia, providing commentary on the role of the private sector as it relates to the delivery of public education. The three main goals of this study are:
• to identify what kinds of private sector involvements are recognised by school boards and the Ministry in British Columbia during the 1998/99 school year;

• to clarify what these educational organisations define as the purposes and perceived benefits of private sector involvement in public education; and,

• to identify what problems these organisations wish to preclude or issues they intend to address through the implementation of policy.

It was found that three waves of policy have developed since the early 1980s. The first wave of policies was from the 1980s, the second from the early and 1990s, and the third from 1997 to the present. These three waves are differentiated on the number and complexity of school/business types, purposes, and issues that are dealt with. The first wave policies that are still in existence are from small and rural districts, whereas the third wave policies are from large and urban districts that are facing pressures for resources due to increased student enrollment and diversity of student needs and backgrounds. The latter policies spoke to seven purposes for involvement, seven types of involvement, and four sets of anticipated issues.
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Chapter One: Introduction

"A recent Environics' poll finds that a substantial majority of 75 percent of Canadians are in favour of greater links between business and elementary and secondary schools. Moreover, these levels of support remain relatively stable across regional and party lines. ... smaller majorities of Canadians also support the idea of business helping to design the content of programs and actually teaching and/or supervising some programs. However, this confidence does not extend itself to advertising. Substantial majorities of Canadians are opposed to corporate advertising in classrooms (74%), in schoolyards and hallways (64%) and on school computer programs (57%)." (Environics Research, 1997)

A vice-president with the company observed, "Canadians are comfortable with the idea of letting business have ... a significant impact on what is taught in the classroom. These findings suggest ... that Canadians feel business has an important role to play in helping to prepare our young people for an increasingly challenging work world."

(Environics Research, 1997)

These data portray a public that is divided not on 'whether' but rather on 'how' businesses ought to interact with our public schools. My own experience indicates that they do interact on a daily basis. I have two daughters in the public school system in Vancouver, one in Kindergarten and the other in grade five: in the first three months of the 1998/99 school year, they came home with,
• A dental care kit emblazoned with several Crest™ toothpaste logos complete with information sheets for parents about dental hygiene and related products, a calendar with stickers, and a "CrestCare™ Award" certificate to motivate children to brush regularly. (Crest, no date)

• From Roger's Cable™, a Hallowe'en safety brochure (about the red Rogers vans that would be cruising neighbourhoods on October 31st so kids could ask for help should the need arise), with a card of orange Hallowe'en punch-out shapes, and a reflective Velcro™ armband sporting the Rogers Cablesystems™ logo. (Rogers Communications Inc., no date)

• A home fire safety brochure from McDonald's™, replete with two sets of golden arches. (McDonald's, British Columbia Ministry of Forests, Fire Prevention Officers Association of British Columbia, & Canada, no date)

• A brochure from Dairyland™ asking parents to save grocery receipts for Dairyland™ products to help the school qualify for cash donations. (Dairyland, no date)
• A 64-page booklet in French, about child literacy by Ben Wicks featuring a front cover dominated by the Sears™ Canada logo, a back cover displaying the Canada Post™ logo, and small print declaring that "the children of Canada particularly thank" nine sponsors including AT&T™, Wrigley's™, IBM™ and Mediacom™. (Wicks, 1996) My younger daughter brought home an English version which includes several simple recipes by Kraft™. (Wicks, 1998)

• An inquiry as to whether I, as a parent, would represent the school to Kellogg's™ "Education is Tops" (i.e., as in "box tops") program in which "participating elementary schools across Canada will receive curriculum building materials from Kellogg Canada™ and its partners." A visit to the website indicates that the curriculum-building materials consist of a welcome kit with stickers, posters and nutrition fact sheets to assist "students, friends and family" as they collect UPC barcodes for a chance to win one of three Hewlett Packard™ computer systems. (Kellogg Canada Inc., 1998) (Interestingly, the first line on the Kellogg's "Education is Tops" web page is, "Please ask an adult to make sure your browser is JavaScript enabled." It is a fair inference that children are the intended users of this site.)
Kidsworld magazine, distributed free to elementary classrooms (or a one-year, ten-month subscription may be purchased for $16.99). This vehicle for advertisements aimed at children is published by MIR Communications of Toronto. Twelve and a half of its 30 pages (excluding front cover and table of contents) are advertisements for Disney™, Warner Brothers™, Universal™, Sony™, Post™, YTV™ and Lip Smackers™; seventeen and a half are short news blurbs or general interest articles. Of these, three of the articles actually mention sponsors, including two full pages of reviews of movies that are advertised on other pages, an article on fake chain letters that mentions 1,300 (non-existent) free trips for two to Disney World in Florida, an article on Le Cirque de Soleil (which mentions the Cirque's permanent show at Disney World in Florida), and a half-page review of a book touted as, "The ultimate guide to Star Wars vehicles and spacecraft." The answers page for the brainteasers includes this "Fruit by the Foot™ 'factoid': The world is more than 40,000 km in circumference." The magazine also included a full-size pull-out poster which advertises (on both sides) for Universal Films. I have only seen the poster on my daughter's bedroom wall because although she was pleased to give me the magazine, she needed that poster for her
room. This is advertising, pure and simple. The articles (at least those that do not mention sponsors) are not particularly objectionable -- a piece on Nelson Mandela, another on Canada's fossil record, a Canadian trivia quiz and a few less notable others -- but they are disjointed and not at all contextualised for the reader. Advertisements are more than 50% of a publication that is distributed free to my child in her school during class time.

Private sector involvement in the schools is not new; recently, though, this sector has expressed renewed interest in the school system, and this interest has been actively supported by many educational stakeholders amid budget cuts and calls for greater community involvement in schools. (Wideen, 1996) During the past decade, for example, over 6,000 agreements were struck between the Canadian school administrations and companies. (Porter, 1998a) Teachers and students may benefit from the goods, services and expertise that the private sector offers without seeming to engage in Faustian deals in which advertising and market forces encroach on the curriculum (Molnar, 1989/90), but there are potential problems associated with such involvement in the public school system. Because children are among the most vulnerable in our society, susceptible to indoctrination of all kinds,
private sector involvement in the schools is a sensitive issue that merits serious attention. (Harty, 1979; 1989/90) Many educational organisations in British Columbia have developed policies and guidelines regarding sponsorships, partnerships, the provision of teaching resources, and the like. Missing from the literature, however, is a study of such policies and guidelines leading to an enhanced understanding of private sector involvement within public education in British Columbia.

**Purposes**

This study has three main purposes:

- To clarify what these policies define or imply as the purposes and benefits of private sector involvement in public education (Chapter Three);

- To identify what types of private sector involvements with public schools are addressed by the written policies of school boards and the Ministry in British Columbia during the 1998/99 school year (Chapter Four);
• To identify what problems or issues these organisations wish to preclude or issues they intend to address through the implementation of policy (Chapter Five).

Private sector refers to businesses, companies, corporations, community organisations, and their employees or agents; as distinct from individuals or groups operating from within the public education system, including agents or employees of the Ministry of Education, the school boards and employees or agents of representative organisations of said employees.

Procedures

This study was based upon the analysis of policy documents used by school districts and the Ministry of Education to guide their private sector relationships. This section describes how a sample of policy documents was obtained, and how the documents were analysed in order to provide a provincial picture.

Sample

The target population consisted of all relevant policy and/or guideline documents of the Ministry of Education and the fifty-nine school districts in British Columbia used during the 1998/99 school year. These
documents were sought through library and internet searches and via letters and phone calls. A list of the forty-four documents acquired appears in Appendix B.

Initial letters were sent to the Ministry and to all fifty-nine school districts in British Columbia in February 1999 requesting a copy of their policy documents related to partnerships, sponsorships and other private sector involvements in the public school system (Appendix A). For those districts that did not respond within five weeks, a follow-up letter was sent, followed by an email message or a phone call. The Ministry and forty districts replied (Appendix B). Fourteen of these forty districts stated that they had no policy in place to deal with the topics raised in my request (#23, #28, #34, #35, #38, #44, #46, #49, #54, #57, #58, #72, #74, #82). All but five (#44, #49, #58, #74, #82) of these districts stated or implied that this lack was a concern for them and that policy was in the process of being developed.¹

Relevant policies were acquired for twenty-six districts and the Ministry (Appendix B). Seventeen of the twenty-six had policies with titles including some version of the essential phrase, "corporate or business partnership or sponsorship"; of these seventeen, eleven districts² had additional policies which, while not necessarily intended to
address the narrow cluster of issues under scrutiny in this study, did deal
with some aspects of it. All forty-four documents received were
included for analysis because district officials claimed to use them to
guide their decision-making in matters of private sector involvement in
their schools.

Early in the collection process, it became apparent that there was
no single type of policy response common across the province. Fourteen
of the sample of forty districts had no policy; several were working to fill
the void. By contrast, districts in the urban and suburban areas of the
Lower Mainland and at the southern end of Vancouver Island generally
had detailed policies to deal with the private sector. Vancouver, for
instance, had two revisions of policy (1994, 1998) to deal with these
issues, each version more comprehensive and responsive than its
predecessor.

Development of local policy was not always done in isolation. For
example, districts #91, #23, and #28 checked to see how counterparts
had addressed similar concerns. That policy borrowing is common
practice was made clear by the many policies that contained the same
ordering of points with identical words and phrases.
Nineteen of fifty-nine districts did not respond to the initial letter or to follow-up inquiries. Included in those that did not respond was one large urban district, Coquitlam. All other non-respondents were small and rural districts and it can be assumed that they have not encountered the problem to the same extent as large and urban districts, and, therefore that many of them have not developed policies. The sample of forty is an adequate representation of the province, although a greater proportion of the larger urban districts than small rural districts replied. The point of this study is to understand the nature and range of the purposes, types and issues rather than to make claims about specific districts. This sample includes rural and urban areas, and the geographical regions of the province to provide a provincial picture of policy responses (Appendix G).

Analysis

The policy responses were analysed with respect to the three topics – types of involvement addressed; the goals and/or benefits of involvement; and, the problems and/or issues addressed – specified by the research questions.

No a priori analysis instrument was brought to the documents (apart from the a list of some purposes, types and issues that were
identified from the literature). The documents were analysed according to the following inductive procedure (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993):

- A review of the broader literature (Chapter Two) gave the author an awareness of a range of the purposes, types, and issues related to business/school relationships that were of concern across North America.

- All the documents were read a number of times to become acquainted with the language relevant to types, purposes and issues.

- Three photocopies were made of each document, the originals were set aside, and statements pertaining to "purposes" were marked on the first set of copies. The same was done for "types" on the second set, and "issues" on the third.

- Three large wall charts were constructed; the y-axis consisted of the headings "purposes," "types," and "issues" representing the three research questions. Within "purposes" seven categories were differentiated; within types, seven categories were differentiated; and within issues, four clusters of issues were
differentiated. The x-axis contained the Ministry and the names of the twenty-six districts whose policies were acquired. Distinct sub-categories were further developed within many of the above categories. These categories and sub-categories provided the organisation for reporting and discussing the findings in Chapters Three, Four, and Five.

- Key phrases or statements were translated from the documents to the relevant cells on the wall charts.

- These summary charts were used as the basis to discuss the research questions. Selected quotations from the documents were used to illustrate the categories and sub-categories. More specifically, the content analysis procedure for each of the three research questions can be illustrated by the treatment of Question One (What kinds of private sector involvements are recognised by school boards and the Ministry in British Columbia?). Every statement that explicitly referred to a “purpose” for school/business involvements was highlighted in the document and transferred to the wall chart, for a total of 135 activated cells. These statements were then clustered on
the basis of commonality; seven distinct categories of purposes were then examined in order to develop distinct sub-categories. Once these categories and sub-categories were established, the context of each statement was checked in its original policy document to ensure that meanings were not misinterpreted. The same procedure was used for the second and third research questions.

Limitations

This study is limited to the written policies of the Ministry and the school boards of British Columbia during the 1998/99 school year. I did not investigate how these policies were translated into practice within the province, the school districts or the classrooms. Nor did I investigate specific examples of private sector involvement, evaluate the merits of the goals of various partnerships encountered, or evaluate the policies individually. Rather, this study provides a province-wide overview of the kinds of purposes, types, and issues that are portrayed within policies.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter reviews the literature from three sources: Canadian popular media, American professional journals, and Canadian professional journals. The purpose here is threefold: to demonstrate that private sector involvement with public schools is a contemporary problem for educators and others, to identify a range of different types of involvement and to define some of the major issues arising therefrom.

Canadian popular media

The media provide evidence that private sector involvement in public schools is of interest to Canadians. For example, on October 12, 1997, CBC Radio’s Cross Country Checkup with host Rex Murphy ran a show on the question, “Who should control public education?”; on September 14, the question was, “How satisfied are you with our schools?” Both programs featured callers with questions and comments about the private sector’s role in education. (Munkley, 1998) In The Globe and Mail weekly column of September 29, 1997, on issues in education, Lewington (1997), citing an Environics poll, stated that “people are generally favourable to business having a greater role, but they are very wary of business exploiting students.” Seventy-five
percent support stronger business-education links for elementary and secondary schools. But smaller margins favour assigning to business an active role in curriculum development, advertising in the classroom, in the hallways and on computer programs. This column ends with a call by a Manitoba school trustee for talks to determine "how to work ties to business that will meet local needs." (Lewington, 1997)

Despite the public's ambivalence about what role the private sector should play, media reports show that their involvement is proceeding along four fronts. The first, and most controversial, is their direct involvement in shaping curriculum policy, materials, and classroom practice. Control over curriculum is no sacred cow, as the following examples illustrate:

- At a conference in Burnaby, British Columbia, that attracted about two hundred and fifty teachers and school administrators from around the province, an executive from Boeing stated in his keynote address, "School districts that believe corporations will hand over money with no strings attached are dreaming. We're saying we want to be full partners in the schools. We have a role to play in defining curriculum standards." (Balcom, 1996)
• Southam Newspapers report that "In a new twist, the [Ontario] government for the first time will allow private-sector publishers to bid on the contract to write new secondary curriculum, which some critics said opens up the system to inferior American-style education." (Brennan, 1998)

• In Vancouver this year, Home Depot provided volunteer labour and cash to help install a new playground apparatus in an inner city school yard because the school "was identified by the Vancouver School Board as being the most in need of a new playground. Playing a role in this conclusion was the economics of the community, that the school has inner-city kids in attendance, and the poor condition of the current structure." (Jones, 1998) No mention was made of why the school board did not foot the bill.

• In Howe Sound in 1987, "McDonald's Restaurants of Canada Ltd. offered students in one of the school's technical classes a chance to build a mobile display for the restaurant chain. As part of the deal, McDonald's wanted its logo on some of the board's stationery. But Howe Sound board members voted against the offer because it would promote a fast food product to a 'captive audience'." (Vieira, 1994)
The second type of involvement relates to the ownership of school buildings:

- In the spring of 1998, West Vancouver, Richmond, and New Westminster received [provincial] funds to look at the feasibility of partnerships in constructing schools. (Steffenhagen, 1998) Burnaby also considered building some schools that were to be owned by the contractor. (Balcom, 1995; 1996)

- Out-of-province, "a new grade school in Moncton [New Brunswick] is the first in the country owned and maintained by a private real-estate developer. It means provincial governments avoid the upfront construction cost of a new school and the developer is allowed to market the building for after-school use. Nova Scotia is building two schools along the same lines and has said all future school construction will be in partnership with private developers. Some critics fear a gradual erosion of the public school system. ... saying that private sector involvement may begin with laying bricks but ... it will end with choosing books." (Hamilton, 1996)
The third, and for many the most alarming, type of involvement is marked by in-school advertising in hallways, classrooms, textbooks and classroom materials, and on school buses:

- In November 1998, in Surrey, British Columbia, 1,000 students filed into the opening night at the Famous Players Silvercity movie complex. In exchange for participating in the publicity splash, the district's secondary schools were given the night's profits from ticket and concession sales. In return, the theatre got a trial run, some good publicity, and introduced future patrons to its new facilities. A school trustee was quoted, "We're looking for agreements that are win-win situations. We're looking, from our point of view, at the benefits for the school board, but we understand that companies have to get benefit as well. This is only the beginning." (Porter, 1998a)

- "Only this summer, the Calgary school board signed a $300,000 agreement with the Ontario company, Screen Ad Billboards Inc., which put screensaver advertisements on the computers of 10 local schools." (Porter, 1998a) On the debate of whether advertising in schools is desirable, the vice-president of educational services at the Business Council of British Columbia, said that advertising does not
affect children's learning. The president of the BCTF, however, says that advertising is contrary to the primary function schools serve: "I'm not sure we send our kids to schools to be inundated and persuaded by commercial messages. The only marketplace for schools is the marketplace of ideas, where teachers are there to cultivate capacities of critical thinking, and advertising is essentially there to cultivate uncritical thinking." (Porter, 1998a)

- In the spring of 1997, the Surrey School Board in British Columbia considered selling advertising space on gym walls and school fences as a way of raising funds needed to make up a provincial funding cut. (Balcom, 1997)

  The fourth type of involvement makes use of the school as a marketplace to sell products:

- In a deal worth 1.4 million dollars over 3 years, Pepsi-Cola™ has gained exclusive vending rights at Toronto's 155 schools for 87,000 students. "The company will be allowed to distribute Pepsi-sponsored videos, and hold 'student of the month awards' in which students win Pepsi hats and T-shirts and are featured on plaques donated by the company." (Vieira, 1994) Vieira quotes parents who fear the move
could signal the beginning of the privatisation of public education and who label the board "morally bankrupt", and a principal who says the deal makes economic sense and who foresees a time when "in return for money to pay for equipment and transportation costs, the schools might place a plaque in the gymnasium or ... have the sponsor's logo on the team uniforms."

- The cola wars have spread: in Seattle in 1995, Coca-Cola™ signed a $5.8 million 20-year deal with the Seattle School Board. In British Columbia this year, controversy erupted over Coca-Cola's™ interest in establishing an exclusive contract to supply cold beverages to all 600,000 students in the province. "In light of ever-tighter budgets, a handful of school boards across the Lower Mainland are planning to negotiate district-wide deals instead of having each school negotiate separate deals as most have done in the past." (Porter, 1998a)

- "Coca-Cola's vice-president of public affairs said the school-district sector is so important that Coca-Cola has added 60 people to its western division, "some of [whom] are experts in the education sector." Coca-Cola expressed misgivings about the Boards' negotiation tactics on the grounds that, "they don't want professional
negotiators taking a cut of deals meant to benefit students." This is in stark contrast to the goal of the Richmond school board chair who declared that the boards "are accountable to an electorate who are going to make darn sure we get the best deal we possibly can. We're only looking at the net bottom line." (Porter, 1998b) It is indeed 'refreshing' to see a multi-national soft drink corporation working so hard to benefit children in the face of a school board chair who raises the bottom line to the top of the flag pole.

The proliferation of similar articles in the popular media across Canada paints a picture of a demonstrably relevant, multi-faceted issue and raises questions about the costs and benefits of private sector involvement in public schooling.

**Canadian professional literature**

The issues identified by Canadian authors have changed over the past two decades. In the 1980s, with a new political vision evident in the politics of Thatcher, Reagan, and Mulroney, a greater emphasis emerged for the role of the private sector to influence curriculum and school programs and to help prepare students for the job market. Local school boards were slow to adapt their policies to this change; most continued
to rely on outdated fundraising policies to address issues of corporate involvement in schools. But the scale of this involvement was still small and boards could react on an ad hoc basis to proposals and problems as they arose.

1980s

As in the popular media coverage, much of the professional literature during this decade has a show-and-tell flavour as authors described the machinations of specific instances of private sector involvement in public education. Few focused on policy analysis or the attitudes and actions of those involved in the delivery of education in Canada. Rather, the articles had a common lament, as expressed by Olson:

"everyone knows schools never have all the resources they require ... it is not surprising that school boards cooperate with corporations in making materials available to schools. How can schools not use such materials? Taking a critical look at any corporate materials — whether from government agencies or commercial corporations — is really a subset of critical analysis of text materials. ... Intended as they are to rally people to a cause, materials produced with a public relations aim are prone to misrepresentation." (Olson, 1989-90)
Catherine Beattie was the first to raise concerns in her critique of Ontario Hydro's *Nuclear Science and Technology*, comprising four half-hour filmstrip/cassette programs. She found it to be

“propaganda masquerading as a public-spirited effort to promote understanding. ... Many of the claims made are not well confirmed or are actually bound up with value judgements which should be spelled out and examined. ... it is surely legitimate to criticise its producers for failing to give a hearing to a variety of viewpoints.” (Beattie, 1980)

This industry curriculum innovation clearly was not in the spirit of engendering in Canadian youth a critical understanding of the complexities of the nuclear power controversy. Importantly, Beattie adds her own twist to the discussion by calling into question the role that educational organisations play when they endorse such materials. She notes that the kit in question was produced by Ontario Hydro in cooperation with: the Ontario Ministry of Education, the Ontario Association of Educational Administrative Officers, the Ontario Association for Geographic and Environmental Education, the Ontario Teachers' Federation, and the Science Teachers' Association of Ontario. It disturbs her that such ostensibly high-minded and impartial groups would lend their names to such patently one-sided materials destined for the
classroom and she asks rhetorically, "Does this kit signal the emergence of a monolithic education establishment in Ontario?" (Beattie, 1980)

Cameron (1981) echoed Beattie's concern:

"People who put out free teaching aids are looking for one thing: support (or at least acceptance) for whatever they are doing, whether it's producing and selling a product, conducting medical research or convincing people not to drink and drive. As a result, anyone who puts out a free teaching aid may be presenting a distorted picture. ... Certainly, the fact that a product [or a service or a cause] has been endorsed by teachers or their organisations will make it less likely that users will look for a bias in the material." (Cameron, 1981)

Thus, Cameron directed attention to emerging concerns over the propriety of certain private sector involvements in the development and implementation of curriculum.

James Gaskell also wrote a clear denunciation of biased curriculum materials produced by the energy sector for classroom use. (Gaskell, 1981) He examined specific instances of bias in three energy curriculum kits to determine whether and to what extent such curricula offer opportunities for a critical understanding of the economic interests of the dominant energy providers. His concluding paragraph highlighted his fear that private sector curriculum innovations are so skewed as to be unfit for general use in the mainstream classroom.
"In sum then, the energy curricula examined do not present any coherent challenge to the economic interests of the major energy corporations. By not raising questions about the short term oil gluts and shortages, by concentrating on individualist conservation strategies, by not presenting soft energy paths as legitimate rivals to hard technologies and by neglecting any discussion of the structure of the energy industry, the curricula present a single ideological viewpoint - a way of analyzing energy problems rooted in the economic interests of the energy industry. The use of such curricula is one way in which schools help to create people who see no serious alternative to the economic and cultural system that now exists." (Gaskell, 1981)

In 1982, Gaskell presented at the annual conference of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies as part of the symposium "And Now a Word from Our Sponsor: Corporate Messages in the Classroom." In this paper, Gaskell provided background information about the controversy surrounding two BC Hydro mega-projects and then analysed the energy education teaching kit that BC Hydro sponsored. As a balanced presentation of opposing and dissenting views and as a springboard for informed discussion of the issues it purported to address, the kit was found wanting. Gaskell, like Beattie, was disturbed that because the kit was created by a committee of teachers and approved by the Ministry of Education, downstream users will be more likely to accept its presumptions and conclusions holus bolus:

"the problem with educational materials sponsored by corporations is that they are not presented as and not often
perceived as advertising. But why has all that money been spent if there is no payoff for the sponsor? The fact that teachers have a major hand in developing the materials means that they work well in the classroom and the worst features of hucksterism have been eliminated. However, most teachers are not familiar with the complexities of energy policy. When the teacher-developers must rely for most technical information on the corporate sponsor, it is not surprising that only information of a particular kind is forthcoming. The independence of the teacher-developers is circumscribed.” (Gaskell, 1982)

1990s

In the nineties came a renewed verve to be 'fiscally responsible', to 'pay down the deficit', and to reduce public spending. Cash-strapped school boards began to turn to the private sector for resources and for expertise. The private sector obliged with materials, funds, expertise, curricular aids, and advertising. The scale of the activities burgeoned, and local boards had difficulty keeping their policies in stride with changes happening around them.

In the early 1990s, in the wake of the inception of the Youth News Network (YNN), media debate surfaced in Canada about the role of the private sector in the classroom. YNN distributed via satellite to each classroom in participating schools, a ten-minute newscast specially cobbled together and edited for school children, and provided this service and all the necessary VCR's, televisions and satellite dishes free of
charge. The catch? Every day in class time, students were required to watch programming that included two and a half minutes of commercials. Duncan described the YNN initiative as "dubious" and called for a moral and ethical debate whether "the private sector should be able to wrap its commercial messages in the authority of the school and the classroom."

(Duncan, 1992) He had little time for arguments in support of commercial activities in school. Such arguments claim that a good corporate fix will help cure a public school system plagued by high dropout rates and unskilled graduates. Duncan applauded "successful, creative, mutually-agreed upon partnerships such as co-op education programs" (p. 21) but pointed out that selling niche advertising and packaged, pat newscasts is none of these things.

McConaughy (1993) and Olson (1989-90) expressed similar misgivings about advertising in schools and about corporate teaching aids: "the only way any materials written with a propaganda intention – corporate, activist, or errant mainstream – become educational is in the hands of teachers whose intention it is to engender critical awareness and independence of thought. This is the essential antidote to propaganda."

(Olson, 1989-90)
John McMurtry argued that the goals of education conflict so fundamentally with those of the marketplace that a division of powers must be developed to permit them to operate exclusively of one another. (McMurtry, 1991; 1992) He wrote compellingly about the inherent conflict between the driving principles of the marketplace à la Adam Smith and education à la just about everyone since Plato. McMurtry juxtaposed the goals, motivations, methods, and standards of excellence of the free marketplace and education. Although he concentrated his analysis on the university, the message is so clearly presented that the reader is at pains not to extrapolate and apply the ideas to grade schools. He argued that the purposes of education were being shifted toward the economic imperative of the accumulation of wealth in the international marketplace and described a four-part "anatomy of defining differences between the principles of the capitalist market and of education" (p. 211):

- Opposing goals --- The overriding goal of corporate agents in the marketplace is to maximise profits. The overriding goal of educational agents in schools, colleges and universities is to advance and disseminate shared knowledge.
• Opposing motivations --- The determining method of the market is to satisfy the wants of whoever has the money to purchase the goods that are wanted. The determining motivation of education is to develop sound understandings.

• Opposing methods --- The method of the market is to buy or sell the goods it has to offer to anyone for whatever price one can get. The method of education is never to buy or sell the item it has to offer, but to require of all who would have it that they fulfil its requirements autonomously.

• Opposing standards of excellence --- The measures of excellence in the market are: (i) how well a product-line is made to sell; and (ii) how problem-free the product is and remains for its buyers. The measures of excellence in education are: (i) how disinterested and impartial its representations are; and (ii) how deep and broad the problems it poses are to the one who has it.

He argued that these four conflicts are so fundamental that if education does come to be popularly defined within the capitalist framework, then corporate ownership of knowledge will "systematically reduce the historically hard-won social institution of education to a commodity for
private purchase and sale" so that education per se will cease to exist.
(p. 216)

But not all writers saw this dichotomy as insurmountable. Michael Bloom, writing for the Conference Board of Canada, was adamant that "successful collaboration can make a significant contribution to enhancing the quality of education in Canada" (Bloom, 1993), but he also warned that "companies cannot afford to invest in programs for a 'warm fuzzy feeling'. If it ever was, businesses' collaborative involvement in education cannot be regarded solely as a philanthropic or charitable activity."

Bloom attributed some of the confusion around the benefits of partnerships to "the historical reality that the extent of business involvement with schools, colleges and universities has been uneven. Because business long ago established working relationships with post-secondary education, most business people have a better sense of their potential role in post-secondary education than in the elementary and secondary level with whom their relations have been only occasional." (Bloom, 1991) To remedy this, Bloom developed a set of worksheets to combine methods commonly used in business decision making with social science techniques based on value expectancy theory. These worksheets
take the user through twenty steps designed to allow business and education partners to clarify and communicate their own interests in partnerships and to "assess and map the potential value of programs."

"Businesses can use the process to set organisation-wide business objectives for their involvement in education and relate them to their overall corporate strategy. Education institutions can use Value Assessment to set organisation-wide education objectives for their collaborative involvement with business, and relate them to their overall organizational strategy." (Bloom, 1993) With the process he outlined, the decision to engage in or continue with an arrangement is reduced to focused and measurable needs, objectives and outcomes. He recommended this as a valuable tool in the development of the mutual understanding that is essential to shared goal setting and the clarification of motives.

Other authors (Barlow & Robertson, 1994; Kuehn, 1992; Robertson, 1998; 1998a; Shaker, 1998b) were less sanguine, and imputed nefarious purposes to the involvement of the private sector in public education: right wing, reactionary and corporate interests were organising, if not conspiring, to take control of the school system. Such authors portrayed a confluence of interest among reformers, Christian
fundamentalists and multi-national corporations such that each group had its own reasons to implement change and restructure the school system.

Larry Kuehn (1992), as Director of Research and Technology for the BCTF, argued that elements of the private sector are working to radically alter the way the public school system is perceived and how it is operated. He described his interpretation of the corporate vision of "reshaping key elements of the society and economy to fit the needs of large corporations to participate in a global economy increasingly based on near-monopolies by a decreasing number of corporate players." (p. 5)

Three corporate strategies are used to attain that vision in the public education sector:

• National testing: setting goals for education that are congruent with those of the corporate sector and testing their degree of attainment through national standardised testing while subordinating or rejecting other goals of education.

• Climate setting: engendering public support for realignment of the goals of education by changing the premises of the debate through such tools as The Conference Board of Canada, The Fraser Institute,
The National Business and Education Centre and its Corporate Council on Education, etc.

- Business-school partnerships: which can and do influence curriculum development and implementation in the most direct way.

Lending weight to his theory, the CMEC began a series of meetings to discuss these three very points. [Council of Ministers of Education Canada, 1997 #36]

The fear that there is a 'hidden corporate agenda' out there which threatens the very foundations of democracy received some play in the popular media as a main plank in the campaign to oppose such trading blocs as the NAFTA, the EC, APEC and most notably, the MAI. This fear was picked up by Maude Barlow and Heather-jane Robertson in Class warfare: The assault on Canada’s schools (Barlow & Robertson, 1994) in which they claimed that private interests were working to change the nature and goals of public schooling in order to enhance a bottom line in the short term with little or no regard for the greater public good.

"North America's corporations have three fundamental goals for their preoccupation with and investment in North America's schools. The first is to secure the ideological allegiance of young people to a free-market worldview on issues of the environment, corporate rights and the role of government. The second is to gain
market access to the hearts and minds of young consumers and to lucrative contracts in the education industry. The third is to transform schools into training centres producing a workforce suited to the needs of transnational corporations." (p.79)

Whether this is true is moot but what is important is that educators be attuned to the possibility that schools may be suborned in this way and perhaps also that they ought to be prepared to prevent it.

Robertson (1998) further declared that "there is almost no debate over whether the word partnership could accurately describe the relationship between a fast-food giant and a school full of preteens, or whether a provincial ministry ought to sign an agreement with a brewing company to supply curriculum promoting safe drinking for underage students. Only the opponents of the privatization of education ever mention these concerns, so their fears are dismissed as delusional." (p.3-4) As Wideen (1996) reminded us in the forward to his book The struggle for curriculum: The state, the corporate sector, and the interests of the educational community, we need to debate the purposes of schooling. This is in response to calls by the private sector and such bodies as the Conference Board of Canada, the Corporate Higher Educational Forum, and the Prosperity Secretariat to define schooling in terms of job market skills and international labour market
competitiveness. This debate is central to any discussion of private sector involvement in public education.

Through the 1980s, few school boards reacted with updated policy responses to the private sector forays into public education. Board officials lacked a knowledge base and an expertise to adequately deal with the many types of partnerships, sponsorships and other involvements that materialised as special interest advocacy groups began to compete with corporate sponsors for the attention of students. In the face of these changes and inconsistent responses within school districts and from district to district, many groups began to clamour for guidance. Business groups turned to the Conference Board of Canada which came up with a set of ethical guidelines. When teachers turned to their unions and professional groups for clarification or guidance, the Canadian Teachers’ Federation and some of the Provincial Teachers’ Federations (including the British Columbia Teachers’ Federation) also developed guidelines to aid teachers and others in evaluating and implementing partnerships. Parents turned to teachers, school boards, and government to provide standards of conduct to protect their children from undue influence.
In early 1997, the Council of Education Ministers of Canada met to clarify the issues surrounding the involvement of the private sector in public education and managed only to begin to identify some of the issues at hand. They agreed to study the problems in their home provinces, and to initiate a series of meetings with business leaders to discuss "the strengths and weaknesses of the education system in Canada and major obstacles to better performance of the education and training systems. Discussion also focused on the extent to which the systems are competitive internationally, and whether they provide the background, training, and skills that private sector enterprises are seeking. Special emphasis was placed on ways that the private sector can contribute to furthering excellence." [Council of Ministers of Education Canada, 1997 #36] This dialogue has the potential to lead to a public school system conspicuously different from the one in place today. If the "better performance" alluded to above is limited to "global competitiveness" which is in turn dependent upon outcomes that "private sector enterprises are seeking," then the "ways the private sector can contribute to furthering excellence" in education may be serving a much-narrowed definition of education.
The Canadian experience as reported in the literature evolved through the years from alarm in the nineteen eighties that private interests were developing curriculum and working to introduce biased materials to the classrooms. The nineties saw a broader set of concerns ranging from advertising in the classroom to debate about the nature of public schooling and its role in a pluralist, capitalist society. Common to the literature of all these years are concerns that the public schools are not necessarily best served when private interests have direct access to the curriculum or to the classroom.

**American professional literature**

Shelagh Harty first defined the issue with her eye-opening book, *Hucksters in the Classroom*. (Harty, 1979) She surveyed teachers, parents, state departments of education, and industry to paint a picture of a naïve American public duped by an unrepentant industrial complex. A full ten years later (Harty, 1989/90), she was even more alarmed to see commodities replacing values in our schools (and in our society) and education falling even farther from its intellectual and social purposes. Harty delineated three kinds of advertising that were prevalent in schools: image advertising, product advertising, and issue advertising. She was
adamant that each has no proper place in schools without room for dissenting views, debate and informed understanding of the whole school community.

Larry Cuban (1992) succinctly exploded the myth that "America's position in the world economy stems from the eroding productivity of the American worker, which in turn, stems from the deterioration of schooling." He based his argument on an analysis of the determinants of worker productivity, an analysis of the standardised tests commonly used to back up this view, and a compelling list of plausible alternate contributing factors in the decline of the American economy. Cuban concluded that the corporate/private sector agenda (profit, productivity, competition) is not and ought not be the same as that of the public school (producing thoughtful citizens with a sense of individual rights and community responsibilities). He lamented that a few powerful CEO's could influence the media to such a degree that equating economic ills with poor schooling has gained widespread acceptance, and refuted the notion that schools ought to be run like efficient companies.

In "Making Schools Ad-Free Zones", Karpatkin and Holmes (1995) described the American youth market wherein children aged 3-12 years
spend $11 billion annually; teenagers spend $57 billion each year; and, children's direct influence on family spending accounts for an additional $160 billion dollars a year. Small wonder then that advertisers are scrambling to reach the schoolchild niche market right in its niche: school. Karpatkin and Holmes said that "most of the arguments in support of in-school commercialism rest on schools' financial needs and the assumption that administrators and teachers can counteract any adverse effects of the ads. No one contends that in-school commercialism per se is desirable; rather, it's regarded as a means to an end. Clearly, though, there would be no such debate if schools weren't seriously underfunded and forced to accept help from companies willing to give it." (p.73) These authors quoted two Consumers Union reports and described twenty different examples of educational materials and in-school advertisements (there were more than one hundred in the original studies) all of which are of dubious pedagogical value and promote a product aimed at children.

An extreme example of private sector involvement in the public school system is Channel One in the United States. This fifty-percent partnership of Time Inc and Whittle Corporation reached over 40% of American classrooms. Channel One provides participating schools with a
satellite dish, a television per room and VCRs. In return, students must watch ten-minute daily newscasts interspersed with two minutes of advertisements. Channel One ads cost twice as much as prime time network news ads. Roy Fox (1995) provided an anecdotal report of students' interpretations of the advertisements played to them on Channel One. His is an alarming account of the techniques (including the subtle interspersal of documentary-style advertisements in the news program) advertisers such as Pepsi and Nike use to disguise their vending intent from media-illiterate youth. He called for advertisements to be barred from the classroom and for media literacy to be taught from the early grades.

Alex Molnar has written several pieces on school/business relationships on his way to becoming the pre-eminent authority in the field. What sets him apart from the pack, apart from the sheer quantity of his writing, is that he works from the premise that business-education liaisons are an inevitable fact of life. This does not weaken his distrust of them nor lessen his disdain; rather, it seems to have galvanised his resolve to promote the widespread adoption of strong, workable policies to prevent the erosion of the "character of public education and, by extension, the nature of our civic culture." (Molnar, 1995) As Chair of
the ASCD Task Force, he co-authored an excellent set of guidelines for business involvement in the schools (Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development Task Force on Business Involvement in the School, 1989/90) intended to provide educators with advice to ensure that relationships with business "are based on sound educational values, serve clear educational purposes, and unambiguously promote the welfare of the students." (p.84) The committee set four "ground rules":

"a well-defined process should be put in place at the district level to ensure that the proposed involvement:

1. is consistent with the values, goals and objectives of the program;
2. responds to a clearly understood educational need;
3. supports and does not undermine either explicitly or implicitly an existing curriculum and instruction message;
4. has been considered and assessed by groups with different views.

In addition, the process should provide for an ongoing review of all school-business relationships." (p.84)

Molnar wrote, "if the co-operation of a business in support of public education carries with it a quid pro quo that advances that business' special interests, then what we have is not a civic-minded contribution to education but a commercial transaction in which children are, in effect, uninformed participants." (Molnar, 1989/90) This statement and his committee's report are compatible with his admonishment a half-decade later (Molnar, 1995) that apologists for the commercial cause in schools
(which includes advertising in schools and the replacement of public with private funds) have portrayed commercial forays as:

- legitimate contributions to the curriculum
- helpful teaching aids
- a good way to encourage school-business co-operation
- a way for schools to earn money that in previous years would have come from the public purse. (p. 71)

Molnar's *Giving Kids the Business* (1996) is the first book since Harty's *Hucksters in the Classroom* (1979) written directly on this topic of private sector incursions into schools. Beginning with a short history of changes in the political education climate in the United States, he argued that a neo-conservative movement arose in the 1980s during the Reagan administration and ushered in the 'A Nation at Risk' report on education commissioned by then Secretary of Education Terrel Bell. With well-documented examples, Molnar chronicled the proliferation of several kinds of private sector involvement in public schools. He included examples of legislation that was passed in various parts of the US and demonstrated the impact these changes have had on the ability of certain
groups to profit from school children. He quoted from promotional
literature distributed by those advertisers and marketers with access to
schools.

The kinds of private sector involvement in public education he most
feared include curriculum supplements which pitch products and image for
companies. He paid particular attention to the large American publishers
which produce and distribute materials to classrooms under contract from
movie studios, candy manufacturers and other corporate actors. He
concluded with a detailed litany of reasons why public education ought to
remain in public hands -- why the private sector is not capable of running
a system based on principles of equity of access intended to encourage
critical thinking and promote ideals of social responsibility.

Molnar's writings all maintained that, while the private sector ought
not be entrusted with the duty to educate society's children, the public
education system cannot continue to operate entirely apart from the
private sector, if it ever has. Furthermore, parties to liaisons must not be
permitted to subsume the goals of the public education system within
those of the free market system.
Conclusions

The literature on private sector involvement within public schools demonstrates that various types continue to be a current issue for educators across North America. Some of the recognised benefits are that it has the potential to improve schooling by:

- Applying private sector efficiencies to a sometimes wasteful public sector system,
- Exploiting the resources and expertise of the private sector,
- Providing students with opportunities for developing job skills.

On the other hand, such involvement also has the potential to harm education by:

- Eroding public funding by providing schools with money and materials that would otherwise come from government coffers.
- Eroding fairness in the public school system as wealthy districts and schools attract sponsors and partners eager for a presence only in those schools of higher socio-economic status and disposable income.
- Degrading curriculum:
  - Emphasising job skills over broader knowledge and social responsibility.
• Promoting curriculum that is ideologically biased towards a belief that the "free market is the means and purpose of participation in public life." (Barlow & Robertson, 1994) Such a curriculum lacks debate over the individual's role in public life, and lacks the compass of balanced presentation.

• Promoting the views of interest groups without proper attention to alternative or dissenting views.

• Leaving students exposed to commercial exploitation by profit-driven interests.

The literature, and in particular the eminent authors in school-business relationships (e.g., Bloom, McMurtry, Molnar, Robertson), call for guidelines to help educators make difficult decisions about the appropriateness of various kinds of involvement with the private sector. There are no reported studies, however, of the extent to which educational organisations in the Canadian context have developed policies on these particular issues. This study is intended to examine the relevant policies and guidelines of educational organisations around British Columbia to determine to what extent they address some of the purposes, types and issues noted in the literature.
Chapter Three: Purposes of Involvement

This chapter describes the seven purposes that are ascribed to legitimate private sector involvements by the sample of forty-four policy documents:

• to enrich student learning;
• to provide mutual benefits without allowing the commercial motive of the partner to exploit the student body;
• to augment but not replace public funding of schools;
• to encourage closer community-school relations and to cooperate on charitable endeavours;
• to provide goods or services to staff, students and families;
• to enable partners to meet their shared social responsibilities toward education;
• to provide job skills.

No district indicated only a single purpose, and most described three or four. All the purposes are listed from greatest to least mention.
Seven purposes of involvement

1. To enrich student learning.

   Whereas the Ministry declares in very general terms that "business-education interactions should meet an identified educational need," across the districts there is a more focussed consensus that the primary purpose of involvement should be to "enhance learning for students." (#45) Every district policy (except #5, #24, #32 and #91) highlights this purpose; where more than one purpose is promoted, four districts (#19, #33, #37, #85) state that student learning has explicit priority over all others. This belief is echoed repeatedly around the province with words to the effect that:

   • "quality education" for students "can be enhanced by cooperative relationships between the school and the business community." (#53)

   • "the primary objective must be enhancing educational programs for students" (#33); and,

   • "the primary purpose is such that it will complement the educational program." (#37)

   This enhancement is made possible because partnerships give students access to relevant resources: "every student has the right of
access to educational resources which will embellish their education... business and cultural organisations make available for public use much information which is useful in advancing student education. Much of this education is not available through other sources. ... The focus in each partnership is on enriching student learning." (#19)

This most important of purposes is not always unqualified. Benefit to learners may be downgraded in two ways: students may be lumped in with “other learners” and benefit to learners may be put on an equal footing with benefit to the partner. Vancouver, for instance “supports sponsorship agreements that... enhance the quality and relevance of education for all learners.” (#39) Rocky Mountain states that “Partnerships are mutually beneficial relationships between employers and educators that enhance learning for students and other learners.” (#6)

In this district, therefore, partnerships are defined as much by the generation of mutual benefit (i.e., benefit to the partner) as by benefit to students, which in turn is subsumed by benefit to anonymous “other learners.”

This primacy may also be diluted when characteristics or outcomes (intended or otherwise) of partnerships are not expected to necessarily enhance educational programs but rather they are expected to merely
not interfere with them. Although Delta holds that complementing the educational program is a "primary" purpose, there is ambivalence as advertising is tolerated only as long as it "does not conflict with educational objectives." (#37) On Vancouver Island, this slight prevarication extends from the single exception of advertising to the whole involvement: "The relationship must contribute to, or at the least not detract from, the educational goals of the district." (#63) Perhaps most remarkable is that the policy and the discussion paper from Burnaby (#41) only mention "mutual benefits." Neither of these documents mentions learning enrichment specifically except that the Board may agree to involvement with "some legitimate public organisations of a charitable nature, if the Board considers the activity to be educationally... worthwhile." These districts are clear that educational enhancement is a primary goal of partnerships but they equivocate when they explicitly embrace arrangements that merely do not conflict or detract.

In response to concerns that involvements could lead to a subjugation of the goals of the public school system to those of the private sector, educational organisations across the province have a virtually unanimous position. While the Ministry makes a rather restrained call for an "identified educational need" to underpin involvements, most
districts use considerably stronger language to safeguard the integrity of their educational goals and programs, and four set it above all others. When stated strongly enough, this type of propitiatory clause demonstrates a board’s commitment to serve and protect these goals; where the language is less than categorical, critics may justly raise concerns about the sanctity of student learning as the prime goal of public education.

2. To provide mutual benefits.

"Business involvement in education is generally viewed as beneficial for both the education... and the business and community partners." (Ministry, Draft Guidelines Discussion Paper, #CN97-00684) There is little debate over this claim, but particulars can be hard to come by. In thirteen districts, policies attach equal importance to the benefits that may accrue to the partner and to the district, but the benefits to the partner are not specified: A “mutually satisfying partnership” (#40) should "provide benefits to each partner." (#33) Vancouver says it twice in less than half a page: the “Board ... supports ... mutually beneficial relationships between the Board, schools, and the community, including business and non-business sectors,” and, “sponsorships that mutually benefit all parties.” (#39)
Only four districts (#19, #33, #63, #85) emphasise the primacy of educational goals when making explicit reference to this notion of mutual benefit. For example:

- “Partnerships ... [exist] in order to achieve desired outcomes for both the parties involved. ...It is understood that partnerships are established to provide benefits to each partner and that the primary objective must be to enhance educational programs for students.” (#33)

- “School/business partnerships will be planned and implemented in order to bring maximum benefit to the learning environment. At the same time, the needs of the business or community partners will be carefully addressed and their contributions recognised.” (#63)

Only one district (#37) makes no reference to addressing the goals of the partner; interestingly, this occurs in its policy on Advertising in Schools – one place where the goals of the partner would seem most transparent.

Beyond the altruism of an unacknowledged donation, all involvements generate some tangible benefit for the partner as well as for the school. It is not surprising, then, that so many policies are candid about this reciprocity, placing an onus on the board to develop partnerships that will benefit the partner. For many critics of private sector involvements this is the quick of the ulcer: beyond access to the student body, its minds, fashions, loyalties, and money, boards do not have much to give. Writing into policy the requirement that the board
work to benefit the partner may guarantee that students will be exposed to stratagems that are not necessarily in their own best interest, but rather, in the best interest of a fast food giant, or a media company. Writing reciprocity into policy begs the question, ‘At what cost?’

To answer this question, some policies specify certain costs the board will not pay, i.e., purposes to be eschewed. There is concern that the commercial benefits desired by the partner may be inconsistent with the goals and character of public education. Although involvements are to provide “mutual benefits”, sixteen policies are explicit that arrangements should not be primarily commercial or that advertising should not be "out of proportion" with the learning intent of the material, as the following four examples illustrate.

- In Chilliwack, “each partnership proposal must... serve an identifiable educational need that will enhance the quality and relevance of student programs rather than serve a commercial motive.” (#33)

- The Surrey board will support partnerships whose primary purpose is “to meet learners’ needs rather than to promote commercial motives or financial gain.” (#36)

- In New Westminster, “commercial agencies that wish to access teachers and students for independent commercial purposes will not normally be permitted access to schools.” (#40)

- “It is the [Burnaby] board’s desire to discourage the use of students and schools to promote or further any enterprise which results in profit to organisations of a private or public nature,
including those enterprises in which schools may share in monetary rewards... tempting as these rewards may be.” (#41)

(The language used to restrict reciprocity arrangements will be discussed in Chapter Five.)

3. To augment public funding of schools.

In the face of “increasing budgetary pressures and diminishing capacity to expand programs and services, government values assistance from business and community partners.” (Ministry) Fifteen districts hold this “assistance” to be an important purpose of any involvement with the private sector. The phrase “cash-strapped schools” permeates the literature in this area, and policies reflect this reality:

- In South East Kootenay, the policy on Corporate Ethics is solely concerned with “donations, gifts, grants, [and] bequests.” (#5)

- Similarly, Kamloops' policy on Charitable Donations and Corporate Sponsorship deals only with “the donation of funds or equipment for special school events, scholarships or projects.” (#24)

- In Vernon, “the Board supports appropriate fundraising activities ... designed to subscribe to the enhancement of educational programs and activities.” (#22)

- In Surrey, “the board directs [staff] to form partnerships that may be of educational and/or financial benefit to the school district” (#36), making clear its willingness to engage in partnerships that do not necessarily provide direct educational benefit, if financial benefit is to be had.
Understandably, boards are protective of provincial funding and concerned about any reductions. Nine district policies specify that funding arrangements with the province must not be compromised as a result of the resources that accompany involvements. (This question of what influence private sector involvements may have on provincial funding formulae will be examined more fully in Chapter Five.)

4. To encourage closer community-school relations and to cooperate on charitable endeavours.

Only seven policies (#19, #22, #39, #69, #70, #85, Ministry) cite a desire to "increase community understanding of public education" (#19, #69) or to establish a "positive, favourable relationship between business and/or labour and... schools." (#85) This level of priority is surprising because the literature refers to partnerships as a bridge over the understanding gap between the private sector and the education sector, and I would have expected this to receive more play in the policies from around the province.

One facet of community-school relations is the involvement of the school in charitable works. Eight policies (#22, #39, #40, #41, #75, #76, #78, #91) mention this as an acceptable form of involvement with business and local community organisations. In New Westminster (#40),
for instance, "students are encouraged to participate in at least one
major fund raising activity for charity each year." Well-known
involvements of this type are "worthwhile causes such as poppies... [or]
UNICEF" (#78), and "UNESCO" (#76). In every other type of
involvement, students are generally cast as recipients, whereas charity
involvements largely entail the active participation of students who
donate time and money. The opportunity thereby presents itself to have
students, through their school and the partner group, directly impact on
the larger community. This has the potential to be empowering for
students and beneficial for the community at large.

Vernon also stresses the importance of recognising ongoing
relationships with charitable organisations while putting restrictions on
newer involvements:

"Charities traditionally supported by the Board and the schools will
continue to have access to those schools with the approval of the
principal. New charities requesting access must be approved by the
Superintendent of Schools." (#22)

5. To provide goods or services to staff, students, and families.

For years, school photographs, student insurance, and yearbooks
have been supported by private enterprise. Some policies do recognise
this historical facet of the school-business relationship:
"Commercial agencies that historically have provided services that benefit the students and the school (e.g., school photographs, student insurance, milk and juice program, school store items, uniforms and tee-shirts) may continue to do so."  (#40)

Some policies open the door for partnerships to develop around the provision of a broader range of goods and services to students and their families. Six boards (#22, #36, #39, #40, #41, #75) treat the provision of goods and services as a benefit distinct from educational benefits. For example:

- "The Board [of Vancouver] supports ... sponsorships [for] the sale and distribution of products and services to staff and students."  (#39)

- "Commercial agencies that wish to establish a mutually satisfying partnership should approach [staff and parent representatives who] may approve such new commercial relationships/partnerships/joint ventures for periods of time not exceeding one year."  (#40)

In contrast to the open-door policy adopted by Vancouver, some policies (#22, #32, #33, #36, #40, #41, Ministry) aim to curtail commercial activities. District 22 prohibits profit-making enterprises in schools except "when the commercial agency provides a service which is of direct benefit to the school." Similarly, "as a general rule, no commercial enterprise may use school facilities for profit making activities" in Hope (#32). Burnaby "prohibits schools from participating in
activities which promote private enterprise and profit, but which do not extend a direct service to students... [unless] such service cannot be rendered other than by private enterprise... Any school may have a private concern take school photographs." (#41)

Certain partnerships may be developed around the provision of goods and services to the board and its schools. Boards may be able to purchase supplies and equipment at lower rates if they allow a reciprocal benefit such as an exclusive contract or advertising concessions to students. There is recognition in policy that the private sector provides many products and services for the enhancement of public education. Policies do not indicate that this has been a problem to date, and boards want to allow this provision to continue. But many are rightly concerned that there is potential for unwanted commercialism in the schools.

6. To enable partners to meet their shared social responsibilities toward education.

Six policies expect partnerships and other involvements to serve some mutually-held sense of social responsibility toward education (#6, #33, #36, #39, #45, Ministry). "Business education interaction is part of a broader government level initiative to involve business more actively in social or community responsibility." (Ministry) This sentiment is also
expressed by the Conference Board: partnerships should “provide opportunities for all partners to meet their shared social responsibilities toward education.” (#6) This identical phrase or a close version also appears in policies from Vancouver #39, and West Vancouver #45.

This phrase is important because it seems to be intended to allay fears that private involvement could be the thin end of the wedge for the privatisation of public education. However, because these “shared responsibilities” are never enumerated, they could just as easily be interpreted to promote or to preclude moves to increase ‘choice’ in education through vouchers, charter schools, school-based funding, or other models of change that are routinely proposed across North America. This general phrase is little more than a positive slogan.

7. To provide job skills.

The literature is clear that the educational system must provide students with relevant, globally competitive employment skills. (Bloom, 1991) The Ministry would seem to agree:

“Many educational programs, particularly career oriented programs at both K-12 and post-secondary levels, are made more relevant through combining classroom and “real-world” experience of various kinds: work experience, cooperative education, secondary school apprenticeship, practicum placements, mentorships, service education... Business and other employers provide a valuable service by providing placement for students.” (Ministry)
But the only district that mentions this purpose states that [its policy *Education Business Community Partnerships*] does not refer to "job plan or work experience arrangements between the board and the community" (#36); given that all other districts are mute on this issue, it seems that job skills are not a contested purpose of partnerships.

**Commentary**

Policies describe seven purposes of involvements. All districts identify more than one purpose, but not all districts list the same ones (Appendix E lists the purposes alluded to by each district). Partnerships exist primarily to improve education for students through augmenting but not replacing public funding while supporting the goals of the partner. Many districts also cite a desire to not exploit the students or support a commercial motive in the schools. While the literature makes much of the need for private sector involvements to help impart job skills to youth, employment skills receive little mention in policy, perhaps because they are perceived as being part of the enhanced student learning.

The purposes proclaimed in policy are often vague claims which can support a range of activities and interpretations. As such, they do not provide specific direction except when negative purposes are given; if the
purpose of an involvement is to not promote a commercial interest, this is often quite clear. Perhaps this ambiguity is for the best: allowing for interpretation of goals gives elected officials and responsible employees the opportunity to act judiciously in the best interests of students, and to reflect the wishes of their local communities. Prescriptive policy may hobble well-intentioned, capable community leaders in their efforts to enhance public education and cultivate well-rounded, informed, conscientious graduates.
Chapter Four: Types of Involvement

This chapter identifies the types of involvements with the private sector that are anticipated by the sample of forty-four documents, and clarifies these types by means of excerpts taken from the policies and by explanations of the benefits that partners may earn in each type. Despite differences in nomenclature used across districts, seven types of involvement are evident:

- Sponsorship involvements;
- Donor involvements;
- Charity involvements;
- Cooperative involvements;
- Retail channel/commercial involvements;
- Rental/lease involvements (including advertising space rentals);
- Joint capital project involvements.

The chapter ends with some commentary on issues raised by these types of involvement.

The policies from across the province do not use any standardised taxonomy or nomenclature for types of involvement. For example, a policy may label a particular involvement a sponsorship and then go on to describe it as a commercial relationship. The following discussion
distinguishes types by focusing on the mutual benefits involved.

Appendix C links prospective partners with the types of benefit they are likely to receive from the board.

**Seven types of involvement**

1. Sponsorship involvements

   In sponsorship involvements, a private person or group offers equipment or financial support directed at a specific program in return for public recognition in newsletters, assemblies, etc., and, often, advertisement on the donated materials and/or on walls and signs around the school.

   The Youth News Network (YNN) in Canada and Channel One in the United States are examples of sponsorship involvements: video equipment is donated in return for television ads inserted in dedicated newscasts aimed at the students in classrooms (Ross, 1999). Another example would be a company supporting the physical education and extra-curricular programs at a school with the installation of a time clock in the gym; the clock would have a logo on it. In Central Okanagan (#23), soft drink sponsors provide about $60,000 per year in advertising, game clocks and other products to support extra-curricular activities.
(Rubadeau, 1998) In short, sponsorship involvements are defined by support being given to a school program and the partner being recognised for its contribution in a tangible way.

Three policies emphasise the reciprocal benefits that should define sponsorships:

- "Sponsorship [is] defined as support offered by a community group or business to a school or district in consideration for public recognition and/or preferential treatment by the school or school district."

  "A sponsorship agreement... involves the sponsor providing a product or a service free of charge or at a reduced rate, or providing financial support, in exchange for public recognition, some form of advertisement or other benefit." (#36)

- "Agreements may be for goods and services at a preferential rate or at no cost to the school district in exchange for access to a school or the school district for referrals, advertising or sales."

  "The Board supports... sponsorship contracts for the sale and distribution of products and services to staff and students in return for benefits, including financial support as well as the provision of sign boards, support for tournaments, scholarships, and services-in-kind."

  "A sponsorship is a contractual agreement between a school(s) or the Board of School Trustees and a community-based organization designed to benefit both parties. A sponsorship agreement is built around a specific program or service."

  "Sponsorship: the provision of funds, price reductions, equipment, materials, or services in exchange for some form of exclusivity and/or recognition for a specified period of time." (#39)
• Partners “may from time to time choose to support financially and/or materially ...co-curricular and curricular... public school activities and thereby receive recognition in a public manner.”

“Sponsors may support school teams; bands, clubs, drama productions, curricular domains as well as district-wide events, programs and activities.”

“Commercial sponsorship may provide, but is not limited to, equipment, transportation, accommodation, materials, clothing, food, trophies, ribbons, prizes and cash.” (#70)

In West Vancouver, all involvements, including donations, seem to be defined in terms of sponsorship:

“Partnerships are relationships identified by the Board or school in which fiscal or human resources of an external organization and the Board or school's are combined, and through mutual agreement, directed to a specific project or series of projects. The School Board will permit corporate and other sponsorships and gifts-in-kind... . Any promotional or advertising element of the gift or sponsorship shall be in good taste, discreet and kept to an absolute minimum.” (#45)

On the other hand, Burnaby is categorically against sponsorships:

“The district's thinking distinguishes clearly between the concept of partnership and that of 'sponsorship', where rights are typically assigned to particular company in return for monetary or other tangible benefits. We actively pursue the former and do not participate in the latter.” (#41)

Even where policies do not differentiate among various types of involvements, they explicitly anticipate sponsorship involvements. Maple Ridge, for example, “is willing to consider... sponsorships,” but gives no
indication in policy as to what is entailed in a sponsorship relationship. Qualicum (#69) uses the word ‘sponsor’ or a derivative sixteen times in its one-page policy on Sponsorship but defines sponsorship only as financial and or material support for public school activities other than scholarships or bursaries. In Sooke (#62), policy refers generally to partnerships and there is but one reference to sponsorship in this phrase about recognition: “Sponsor recognition and corporate logos are for identification rather than commercial purposes, and therefore should be kept to a minimum.”

2. Donor involvements

In donor involvements, a benefactor donates cash, equipment, or other resources to the school or its board for no or minimal reciprocal action by the board or school. Some policies clearly anticipate outright benevolence:

- “There shall be no restrictions, expressed or implied, by the donor as a condition of providing the gift.” (#24) (#73)

- “donation/gift: a contribution or gift of services, cash, materials, or equipment to the school or Board for which there is no reciprocal consideration from the Board; a donation is given voluntarily.” (#39)

Only four school boards refer to their charity status with Revenue Canada and offer tax receipts for donations. For example:
• "A tax deduction receipt shall be issued for all donations in excess of twenty-five dollars." (#24)

• "A donor relationship is a voluntary contribution of cash, materials or equipment by an individual, group or company. Official receipts for tax purposes may be issued. The donor receives no additional benefit from their gift." (#36)

Ten districts allude to donations in their partnership policies, and state in general terms that donors should be recognised. For Southeast Kootenay, this is the only type of involvement discussed in the **Corporate Ethics** policy: "All donations, gifts, grants, bequests are: ...to be duly recognized and publicly acknowledged." (#5) Policies may, however, provide greater clarity about the forms that recognition may take:

• "Major donations shall be acknowledged by a certificate of appreciation." (#24)

• "equipment donations may be acknowledged with a name plate affixed to the donated item." (#39)

The line between donation and sponsorship is blurry: donations differ from sponsorships mainly in terms of the kinds and degree of benefits which accrue to the external partner. One of the distinguishing features of a sponsorship is that benefits beyond simple recognition accrue to the partner: conditions such as exclusive contract agreements, and allowances for commercial advertising indicate a sponsorship involvement. As in the case of donations, recognition for sponsorships may take the
form of a public expression of gratitude (at an assembly or in a newsletter), and the discreet presence of company logos. Boards may also allow the sponsor additional commercial incentives such as an exclusive contract, or the right to advertise on school property. Some donations are acknowledged by a name plate affixed to the item, or recognised publicly through announcements and newsletters. These actions may come close to advertising (Jones, 1998). Whether the presence of a logo is discreet or not and whether it constitutes a commercial element is often the essence of the sponsor/donor distinction.

Making a distinction between donor and sponsor is not always a priority for policy makers. Certain polices use the terms interchangeably:

- "Corporate sponsorship refers to the provision of certain resources, whether financial or "in-kind" by business or community organizations, often in exchange for some recognition of their contribution." (Ministry)

- "The School Board will permit corporate and other sponsorships and gifts-in-kind.... Any promotional or advertising element of the gift or sponsorship shall be in good taste, discreet and kept to an absolute minimum." (#45)

- "The Board... has registered charity status with Revenue Canada [and], therefore, encourages the donation of funds or equipment and/or corporate sponsorship." (#73)

Although Kamloops-Thompson makes separate mention of donations and sponsorships, it treats sponsorships like donations ("there shall be no
restrictions expressed or implied by the donor as a condition of accepting the gift, sponsorship, or donation”) and it treats donations like sponsorships (“Acknowledgement of sponsorship or gift may be given by means of a public statement and/or a plaque attached to the gift”).

(#73) Even in a district that draws a distinction between these two types of involvement, some ambiguity exists.

3. Charity involvements

Charity involvements are the flipside of donor involvements as schools and students fundraise for such programs as The Poppy Fund, UNICEF boxes, Food Bank drives, The Terry Fox Run. The partner typically provides curriculum aids, posters, pledge sheets, and prizes or tokens to schools, while schools provide collection workers and assure the public of the legitimacy of the charity organisation. Ideally, charity involvements constitute an educational opportunity for staff and students to gain understanding of the societal problems that these programs address.

Although charity involvements have a long tradition in British Columbia, only nine districts (#22, #32, #39, #40, #41, #75, #76, #78, #91) explicitly encourage them. The language used is closely aligned:

• “Charities traditionally supported by the Board and the schools will continue to have access.... New charities requesting access must be approved.” (#22, #40)
• Vancouver condones schools “raising money for [a] public charitable purpose.” (#39)
• “Students are encouraged to participate in at least one major fund-raising activity for charity each year.” (#40)
• “Fundraising for worthwhile causes such as poppies or UNICEF... are supported by the Board.” (#78)

4. Cooperative involvements

Cooperative involvements are most deserving of the term “partnership.” They are defined by an ongoing exchange of human and other resources for mutual benefit. Benefits that most often accrue to the partner may be goodwill from any public recognition, or the satisfaction that comes from having done a good deed. Boards receive opportunities to enhance learning for students along curricular and extracurricular lines. Cable in the Classroom is an example of this type of partnership – cable companies provide free cable hook-ups and offer advertising-free programming free of charge to schools. In Vancouver, the NBA’s Grizzlies’ Team Up Program involved 75 schools and awarded eight students who developed and delivered an anti-litter community service project. (Drabble, 1999)

Cooperative involvements receive much play in the literature and in policy. In Okanagan-Similkameen, the policy on School District and Corporate Partnerships is concerned solely with “cooperative relationships
between the school and the community" (#53) and makes no mention of other involvement types.

Cooperative involvements are similar to donations in that altruism is a prime motivator but they differ in substantial ways. Donations are one-way events with minimal reciprocity and time commitments, while cooperative involvements are ongoing relationships that are meant to be mutually beneficial. Cooperative involvements may also blend into other types of involvements, if for instance, the partnership with the Grizzlies mentioned above happened to involve discount tickets to a game or student discounts on NBA merchandise.

Distinctions between cooperative partnerships and other types of involvements are most obvious in Vancouver where a program dedicated specifically to cooperative involvements is described in policy:

"Partners in Education: this Board program is founded on the concept of mutual benefit wherein an enduring relationship evolves to provide advantages for other partners; the basis of a partnership is not financial -- rather, it is primarily an exchange of human and physical resources involving opportunities for student learning." (#39)

This policy defines cooperative partnerships by three characteristics: they are mutually beneficial; they emphasise time, talent and expertise rather than finances; and, they are ongoing relationships which attend to the shared values and goals of the participants. Most policies are less
explicit than Vancouver about the differences between this type and others and how they may interrelate and overlap, but they do provide general criteria which make it clear that they are not intending sponsorships or commercial relationships:

- "Most business-education partnerships are co-operative relationships in which partners share values, objectives human, material or financial resources, roles and responsibilities." (#6)

- "The Board... recognizes the business community's interest in and support of the schools in the District and encourages viable and mutually satisfying partnerships between schools and business." (#22)

- "A partnership is a cooperative relationship between schools and/or the school district and businesses, community agencies, service clubs and/or other community organizations in which partners share values, objectives, human, material or financial resources and roles and responsibilities."

  "Each partnership proposal must... emphasize contributions of time, talent and expertise." (#33)

- "Partnership agreements "may be for shared resources and expertises at no direct (monetary) cost to either partner."

  "A cooperative relationship is founded on the concept of mutual benefit. The basis of a cooperative arrangement is not financial. Rather it is an exchange of human and physical resources involving opportunities for learning." (#36)

- "Partnerships are cooperative because partners share values; objectives; human, material or financial resources; and roles and responsibilities."
"Partnerships are relationships... in which the... human resources of an external organization and the Board or school's are combined... through mutual agreement." (#45)

- "The Board supports business/education partnerships that... emphasize contributions of time, talent and expertise [and] are based on shared objectives and expectations." (#78)

While policies may highlight what benefits ideally comprise cooperative involvements, they are less clear how those benefits are to be realised or measured. Nowhere are generalities more obvious than in Burnaby:

- "The District believes that effective and rewarding partnerships... are built on the assumption that the collective endeavour will result in increased gain to all parties involved, rather than trade-offs of relative benefits among parties... [and] they will be mutually satisfactory and productive to the extent that there is a serious and lasting commitment to attending to the integrity of the relationship itself." (#41)

5. Retail channel/commercial involvements

These involvements see the schools serving as the marketplace for private companies to sell goods and services to the board, its staff, students, families and communities. Examples of the commercial channel involvement would include an agreement by the board to engage a company as its exclusive supplier in exchange for rebates or other financial benefits to the board, and the contracting out of educational services such as speech pathology or psychological educational testing.
Retail channel involvements would cover arrangements whereby companies finance and deliver services to students and their families. School photographs and annuals, chocolate sales for school fundraisers, and Scholastic Books book fairs (in which teachers and parents volunteer to coordinate a book fair in the school for credits on merchandise while Scholastic supplies a truckload of books, advertising flyers, catalogues, and all the inventory and transaction forms) are all commonplace examples of retail channel involvements.

Retail channel/commercial involvements are the most pervasive of the seven involvement types. The selling of goods and services for profit provides the clearest distinction from the six other types. This type of involvement may sometimes be referred to as a sponsorship because partners may charge lower rates for products or services in return for advertising space or exclusive contracts, but because these partners act as vendors, they are not, strictly speaking, sponsors.

Because of the plethora of mutual benefits on the table, the policy language across the province is fairly global but there can be little confusion with the cooperative type discussed above. Here, the motivation is primarily, if not entirely, financial:

- "Educational institutions engage in a wide range of activities which are not related to education: they may provide meal services in
cafeterias, arrange for buildings to be maintained and cleaned... Unless there is some "spill over" impact on education, these arrangements should be governed simply by the balance of costs/revenues the institution can derive." (Ministry)

- "corporate or community partners may be the exclusive providers of goods and/or services to a school or the school district."

"A commercial relationship between the Board and a company involves the promotion or sale of a product or service in exchange for financial compensation or other benefits. A commercial relationship may have an educational benefit." (#36)

- "The Board supports rebates and contributions-in-kind from vendors as part of the tendering process, as well as using the Board's purchasing power as leverage to gain financial benefits for the district."

"The Board supports business logos and company names on school property and equipment in return for financial or support-in-kind, including the presence of business logos on materials and resources available/distributed to staff/schools." (#39)

6. Rental/lease involvements

Rental/lease involvements see the board acting as marketers to the private sector. The board has something to sell or rent and the partner is the paying customer. The board may:

- rent facilities to the partner;
- rent or sell the rights to its name for endorsement or referral status;
- rent advertising space in publications or on board property.
These three types of rental/lease involvement receive varying degrees of treatment in policy. In their most familiar incarnation, the board rents out its facilities to private schools and church groups. Sometimes this may result in a certain amount of legitimacy being imparted to the renter since it may seem to the public at large that night school courses offered in a school would be run, or at the least approved, by that school or its board. But, in the main, it is a simple rental agreement in which the board receives money in return for renting buildings, rooms, and playing fields which would otherwise be empty during evenings, weekends and holidays. This is uncontentious and, as with donations, is often missed in partnership policies because it pre-dates the need for such policies. Only one district (#40) gives it implicit coverage with a mention of media and film companies seeking access to schools and students.

The other two are more contentious and receive more treatment in policy. Overt affiliation and endorsement involvements have yet to emerge in British Columbia, but recent policy revisions (#36, #39, #42) include language that would allow a private company to use the board's name, logo, and reputation in advertising its own products and services:

• “corporate or community partners may have exclusive marketing rights to promote their involvement with the Board's facilities or activities.” (#36)
• one of the objectives that the Vancouver School Board attributes to sponsorship recognition is “to provide donors/sponsors with opportunities for recognition and to create opportunities for individuals and businesses to affiliate publicly with the Board.” (#39)

Conceivably, Sylvan Learning Centres could develop and market a series of tutoring workshops or workbooks, or Microsoft could develop a new reading-with-phonics game, and these could be marketed with the school board’s name, logo and ‘seal of approval’. In return, the board would receive financial compensation or other consideration. (It is difficult to speculate, since it has not yet happened in British Columbia.)

The third type of rental/lease involvement is paid advertising. This occurs when a board rents out billboards, wall space and space in district publications in return for a fee. These involvements allow marketing campaigns directed at staff, students and families across the school setting. This may involve print ads distributed to students and their families in texts or other curricular materials, or in signage and billboards on school property similar to the advertisements around the ice rinks in the National Hockey League.

Although paid advertisement is supported in some policies, and it exists across the United States and in other provinces, it has yet to emerge in practice in British Columbia. There is caution because of the
concern, as expressed by the Ministry, that "leasing space on elementary
or secondary school walls for advertising could be considered
inappropriate since the students are young and impressionable and are a
captive audience." (Ministry)

Paid advertising is quite unlike other types of involvements (most
notably sponsorships, rental/lease involvements, cooperative
involvements, and retail channel/commercial involvements) which may
see advertising space offered to the private sector as a form of
recompense. For example, it is common for sponsors to place an
advertisement in a school's yearbook. Such an arrangement involves
advertising as a benefit of sponsorship; it does not constitute a paid
advertising involvement. Similarly, donor recognition may have an
advertising resonance but, ideally, it is absolutely not a paid advertising
involvement.

7. Joint capital project involvements

Joint capital project involvements occur when a private interest leases
land from a board, builds new facilities on it, and then rents out building
space to the board and other tenants. This type of public private
partnership (commonly referred to with the acronym PPP) is attracting
attention as governments look to the private sector for ways to reduce
spending on capital projects. These involvements are a very new
development in British Columbia: to date, two education buildings have
been built with this kind of financing including the Vancouver School
Board office. In September 1999, Abbotsford opened the first school in
British Columbia to be financed in this way. (Steffenhagen, 1999) But
judging by the policies, more are on the way:

- "Public/private partnerships: the private sector designing, building,
  and financing Board facilities."

"Strategic/private sector alliances: the range of techniques used by
the Board to involve the private sector in the financing and delivery
of services, including franchise and concession arrangements, joint
ventures, and innovative financing." (#39)

- "The Superintendent may approve... new commercial
  relationships/partnerships/joint ventures for periods of time not
  exceeding one year." (#40)

- "the Board is willing to consider District for-profit initiatives, public-
  private partnerships, and joint ventures... and other types of
  business relationships." (#42)

Public-private partnerships are an important development in education
financing. Many school buildings built in the early part of this century no
longer meet educational needs. To meet handicap access and earthquake
standards, it may be more efficient to build anew rather than upgrade old,
brick-and-mortar behemoths. "Government has begun to explore the
feasibility of public-private partnerships to finance, design, build and
manage major capital projects." (Ministry) Boards need to find cost-
effective ways to finance these capital costs – looking to private sector partnerships for front money is one possible solution.

Commentary

Only Vancouver’s policy deals with all seven involvement types. Three districts (#36, #40, #42) mention five types of involvement and only one (#78) deals with four types. All these policies are less than two years old, and all of them are in the Lower Mainland close to the population centre. The rest deal with three or fewer types. Appendix F lists the types of involvement associated with each district’s policy. That so few policies are comprehensive stems from the fact that partnerships are a relatively new concern in British Columbia educational policy. The first mention of sponsorship in a policy title came in 1989, one more came in 1991 and another in 1996, followed by a rash of partnership and sponsorship policies since 1997.

Most policies focus on cooperative partnerships, in which no money changes hands, the benefits are mutual, and the primary exchange is of time, talent and expertise. There is for most districts a dearth of guidance to deal with retail channel/commercial partnerships which can be complex and which are routinely worth thousands of dollars.
Two types of involvements are treated in policy even though they do not yet exist in practice: affiliation/endorsement involvements are mentioned in two districts; and, paid advertising involvements are permitted by three policies (#36, #37, #39). Of all the documents, only the Ministry's draft guidelines and district #69 expressly prohibit advertising in schools.

There is no common language used across policies when referring to involvement types. For instance, "partnership" connotes different relationships in different districts. In the spring of 1998, a series of meetings planned by the Ministry of Education was cancelled after the first meeting because of a lack of agreement about what constituted a "partnership" with the private sector. Some districts considered biddable contracts for snow removal to be partnerships, while others thought exclusively of sponsorships, and still others were considering both of these as well as field trip arrangements. When it became apparent that there was little common ground for discussion, the Ministry asked for written descriptions of all the partnerships and other involvements that were ongoing in each district. A draft document, categorising them into types, is still undergoing revision.
Definitions of two words more than any others are inconsistent across
the province: "sponsor" and "partner." Some policies (#33, #36, #39, Ministry) attempt to be more precise by including a glossary for terms such as partner, sponsor, donor, and acknowledgement; for example, district #39 stipulates a difference between "Partners in Education (a board program involving mutually beneficial non-financial exchanges of human and physical resources)" and "Public/Private Partnerships (in which the private sector designs, builds and finances board facilities)." If partner is taken to be the more general term and sponsor is taken to mean simply one kind of partner, much of the confusion evaporates.

Recognition in policy of a given type of involvement is not a prerequisite for practice. Burnaby's superintendent is clear that his district "does not rely heavily on a policy document approach to guide its participation in its partnerships program" (#41), yet as early as 1995 this district put the construction of a new high school out to tender and seriously entertained a public-private partnership bid. Abbotsford states "there are a number of discussions going on around public/private partnerships. Unfortunately we do not at this time, have any policies, guidelines, etc. for this, although there is perceived need to do so." (#34) Yet, this district has built the first PPP school in the province. And
the superintendent of Richmond, whose office sent me a similar letter, is organising a conference for educators to investigate the potential for all these kinds of arrangements. This district recently received a fifty thousand dollar grant from the province to investigate partnership possibilities for the construction of a new high school. In short, policy often follows practice.

The literature is primarily concerned with types of involvement that have the potential to affect universality, or to twist the curriculum — to affect its balance or emphasis, to indoctrinate or desensitise students. Again and again, commentators ask about the potential for private interests to subvert the public system through advertising and curriculum bias. But in policy, this is just one concern among many; the focus is primarily on management and accountability issues, detailing the benefits and responsibilities which accrue to the parties involved. In policy, it is this flow of benefits that distinguishes the various types of partnership.

Although nearly every jurisdiction states that the primary purpose of involvements is to enhance learning for students, most policies do not categorise relationships with the private sector in terms of how educational programs are affected. (The implications of a partnership's impact on the educational program and on the evolution of the public
education system are more often dealt with in clauses dealing with purposes, issues, or ethics.) Rather, descriptions of various involvement types emphasise their reciprocal nature and the benefits which may accrue to each of the parties. Appendices C and D summarise to whom benefits may accrue in each partnership type.

All types of involvement entail some degree of reciprocity in that the external partner will somehow deliver information, materials, expertise, time, or money to the school or district in return for favourable contracts, advertising space, public recognition, goodwill, or a sale. Reciprocity is at the crux of much of the controversy and misunderstanding over private involvements in public education. While boards struggle to maintain the integrity of the public school system, they open their doors to external support and influences. Certain considerations given the partner may be controversial because of their potential to impinge upon the students' perceived right to be free of commercial and other types of exploitation. Reciprocity issues are addressed in the next chapter.
Chapter Five: Involvement Issues

This chapter responds to the third research purpose: to identify what problems these educational organisations wish to preclude, or issues they intend to address through the implementation of policy. Four major categories of issues are discussed: management and accountability issues, universality issues, curricular issues, and reciprocity issues.

1. Management and accountability issues

Policies speak to who should initiate, accept or reject, monitor, and evaluate partnerships. There is concern that cosy backroom deals may not be properly open to public scrutiny. Because boards desire to hold their partners to "community standards" or "public trust," mechanisms are put in place to guide the initiation, administration, evaluation, and termination of partnerships.

Community standards

In the face of partnerships with national, international and multinational entities, many boards state that community standards must be recognised and adhered to. Revelstoke's one-sentence partnership policy is accompanied by a policy called The Community and Our School District which highlights the importance of community standards:
“The Board has the dual responsibility for implementing statutory requirements... and responding to the community's expectations and values as they pertain to the education of children. ...The Board confirms its intent to fulfil this mandate and its responsibilities to determine and assess the attitudes, opinions and values of the community.” (#19)

The most general example of this sentiment comes from the phrase that partnerships should “adhere to a standard of public trust.” (#62, #78)

Board are categorical that certain types of partners are unacceptable; community standards will not permit the flow of benefits to groups whose activities are inappropriate for children. Certain partners need not apply:

- “Sponsor... messages or products that relate to alcohol, tobacco and most personal hygiene products will not be accepted.” (#70)

- “All initiatives must be conducted according to the highest ethical standards and be respectful of community standards... A partnership will not be considered with a business substantially involved in the sale of alcohol, tobacco or material inappropriate for children.” (#36, #42)

- The superintendent will not approve for distribution “inflammatory material which may create unfavourable community reaction.” (#37)

Two districts do not explicitly isolate the alcohol and tobacco industries. Instead, “prior to establishing a sponsorship agreement,” Vancouver requires a curriculum vitae to “detail the commitment of the sponsors, ... the nature and product or service of the sponsor... [and]
information about the sponsor's history and ownership." (#39) Port Hardy has a parallel clause: "Persons or organizations whose purposes or general images are not congruent with the public schools' mission will not be eligible to participate in partnerships." (#85) Such policies could be used to reject sponsorships from firearms manufacturers, escort services, and even environmentally unfriendly companies. In Surrey, there is an interesting addendum with a real nineties flavour: "All corporate and community partnerships must observe and comply with environmental regulations relating to their form of business." (#36)

The Conference Board document used by Rocky Mountain (#6) shows the least concern for local community standards: "[Partnerships] may involve such other education stakeholders as partners, including students, employees, parents, communities, labour and government organizations." What constitutes acceptable 'involvement' is open to interpretation. While this policy recognizes that many groups have a stake in how business education involvements play out, it does not address possibilities that local community standards may be flouted.

Clauses which emphasise an adherence to community standards are important; they respond to critics' concerns about the potential for
"important social goals and values" (Ministry) to be ignored, and for inappropriate partners to benefit from association with schools.

**Conflict of interest**

Conflict of interest is prohibited in eight policies (#33, #36, #53, #62, #69, #70, #73, #78):

- "[Partnerships} must be free of any real or perceived conflict of interest on the part of the Board, its employees, employees' families or friends." (#33)

- "All corporate gifts or donations to the school district or schools must be received according to the Board's policies on Conflict of Interest." (#36)

- "The Board supports education/business partnerships that... do not provide financial gain to a district employee or direct or indirect benefit to employees' families." (#53, #62)

- "No employee of the School District shall accept a personal gift in cash or kind, or benefit from the sponsor or donor." (#73)

- "The Board supports business/education partnerships that... do not provide financial gain to a district employee or direct or indirect benefit to employees' families or friends." (#78)

Two districts (#69, #70) extend this prohibition to students as well as staff:

"No student or employee may be directly remunerated. No sponsorship funding may be used in any way to entice, reward or recruit students or employees." (#69)
Port Alberni is specifically concerned the corporate sponsorship may lead to a conflict of interest among student athletes:

"No cash may be directly paid to any player or employee. No such funding may be used in any way to entice or reward students or employees or to recruit players." (#70)

Conflict of interest is a well-understood issue; both the literature and the policies are equally clear that it is unacceptable.

**Initiation and administration**

"Explicit terms and conditions for a partnership will ensure that all parties will be aware of what is expected of them. Formal agreements provide the best method to achieve this. Nevertheless, there may be cases where more informal arrangements are more appropriate." (Ministry)

The Ministry calls for “clear and explicit terms and conditions” but falls short of specifying the need for a written contract. Only three districts (#33, #39, #53) specify that written contracts should detail the intricacies of each agreement.

- "Partnerships may be district wide or school based defined by a formal contract or as an informal agreement on a relatively modest scale." (#33)

- "Partnerships between a school and an organization may take several forms. It is expected that the majority of these partnerships will take the form of a written contract between the two parties." (#53)

As agreements get more complex and more lucrative, it makes sense to require written agreements between partners. More districts need to
emphasise this in their policies. Districts would do well to develop a standard partnership involvement contract for each type of involvement they anticipate.

"It is important for partnerships to be exposed to full public scrutiny and discussion, especially ones that are based on formal agreements. Education is a public good which both internal and external stakeholders in the community should be satisfied is not being compromised by private interest. On the other hand, business operations are an integral part of our economic system and to isolate students from this is neither desirable nor realistic. Understanding the details of a partnership and benefits accruing to all parties can allay any concerns the community may have. Educational institutions may wish to:

- Establish a partnership planning committee;
- Seek input from partners, especially those who will be affected by the partnership;
- Involve the public in discussions; and,
- Consider community needs and requirements." (Ministry)

Where initiation and administration specifics are mentioned at the district level, one or more of these three procedures appear:

- application to the board, superintendent, or principal;
- consultation with all stakeholders;
- procedures responding to characteristics of a proposal.

Application to the board, superintendent, or principal

In nine districts (#19, #33, #32, #37, #62, #63, #75, #76, #85), authority to initiate and implement partnerships is highly centralised:
either the superintendent and/or the board authorizes advertising, canvassing and commercial solicitation involvements.

Although the principal holds direct authority over partnership arrangements, decisions need the approval of the superintendent and the blessing of the board:

• "All partnerships must be organized with the knowledge and approval of the school principal.... The school principal is responsible for providing the written particulars of the proposed partnership to the attention of the Superintendent of Schools [for approval].... The Superintendent of Schools shall inform the Board... of the proposed partnership." (#85)

• "pupil money-raising activities may be considered by the Board... if they are recommended by the principal." (#32)

• "partnerships may be initiated at the school or district level. All proposals must be submitted... to the Superintendent or designate for initial approval prior to submission to the Board.... Submissions should provide sufficient details to support the Board's decision on whether or not to support the proposed partnership. (#33)

• "Formal partnerships may be initiated at the school or district level but, in all cases, will be submitted to the office of the Superintendent for evaluation prior to going before the Board... for ratification." (#62)

• "materials soliciting money may not be distributed without the approval of the Superintendent. Other decisions may be made by the principal or the Superintendent; appeals will be heard by the Board." (#76)

Some boards seem very cautious as they only accept partnership proposals initiated from within the district:
• “Partnerships may be initiated at the school or District level, but in all cases will be submitted to the office of the Superintendent of Schools for approval prior to any contact with potential partners.”

“Presentations to potential partners will be coordinated through the office of the Superintendent of Schools, and will, at the discretion of the Superintendent, include school district personnel.” (#63)

• “a local business, community organization, school, or... school district administrative unit may apply to the Superintendent.” (#19)

Consultation with all partners and stakeholders.

The inception and development of business-education partnerships does depend upon "consultation with all partners." (#6) So important is such discussion that it is not taken for granted by Surrey's policy which calls for the striking of a twelve-member advisory committee "responsible for reviewing partnership proposals... and making recommendations to the Board on which partnerships should proceed." (#36) This committee includes "one representative from each of the following:

• trustees
• executive committee (chair)
• management committee
• Associate Director, Business and Community Development
• Surrey Administrators' Association
• Surrey Teachers' Association
• Canadian Union of Public Employees
• District Parents' Advisory Council
• secondary school students (two)
Following recommendations by this committee, "all corporate and community partnerships... must be approved at a regular board meeting.... and any proposal will be discussed with the stakeholder groups affected and sufficient time will be allowed for their response to be considered by the Board." (#36) This inclusion of all affected stakeholders is important and stands in contrast to those policies which only consider input from the partner groups. Although not as detailed in their procedures for consultation, three other districts also make it a requirement:

- "Prior to submission for ratification, the Superintendent or his designate will ensure that all stakeholder groups are made aware of the terms of the proposed partnership agreement and will have an opportunity to advise." (#62)

- "School District constituents who may be affected by a specific proposal are to be consulted before the proposal is approved by the Board." (#42)

- "Principals shall establish a consultative process to review the school's plans for corporate sponsorship and donations. The process shall include staff, parents and where appropriate, students." (#73)

After partnerships are initiated, two districts require an advisory committee of stakeholders to facilitate ongoing administration:
• "wherever possible and appropriate, school-based committees should be formed to coordinate the activities with the business or community organization. ...[Sponsorship agreements] involve the Board, the principal, school staff, and parent advisory committee... where appropriate, in the development of an agreement prior to implementation." (#39)

• "the Partnerships in Education program is administered by the Superintendent of Schools or designate with guidance from an advisory committee composed of representatives from the Board,... staff... and the community at large." (#19)

Procedures responding to characteristics of a proposal

In some districts, administrative procedures hinge on the nature of the involvement at issue and/or the number of schools affected.

• "Agencies and individuals who have had previous access to schools may approach the Principal for further... access. Agencies and individuals who have not had access must first be granted permission by the Superintendent or the Board." (#40)

In Vernon, for example, procedures differ depending upon the type of involvement:

1.) Regarding charities: "charities traditionally supported by the Board and the schools will continue to have access to those schools with the approval of the Principal. ...New charities requesting access must be approved by the Superintendent of Schools."

2.) Regarding sponsored information: "Non-profit groups must get the Principal's approval to distribute sponsored information in the schools. ...The principal is encouraged to consult with the established Parents' group in the school before distribution of information to students."
3.) Regarding commercial groups: “Commercial groups must apply to the Board through the Superintendent.” (#22)

In Fraser-Cascade, decisions about involvement with charity groups and requests for publicity by community organisations are delegated to the principal, whereas all other partnership arrangements “will be submitted to the office of the Superintendent for evaluation prior to going before the Board... for ratification.” (#78)

Okanagan-Similkameen leaves partnership approval entirely in the hands of the principal, who is “responsible for providing written particulars of the partnership to the Superintendent of Schools, who will inform the Board of School Trustees of the partnership.” But there is a limitation on the principal’s autonomy: “partnerships involving $5,000 or more must be referred to the Board... for consideration.” (#53) Similarly, other districts require central office approval only when more than one school is involved:

- “approval for district partnerships comes from the board, whereas in the case of partnerships with a single school, the principal must approve, although consultation is expected: [Where] the educational value of a gift or sponsorship [is in question], it shall be determined by the principal who may consult with one or more teachers in the school. In cases of doubt, consultation with the Secretary-Treasurer shall occur.” (#45)

- “district-wide sponsorships involving two or more schools require the approval of the Superintendent of Schools or
designate. For individual schools, an Administration Officer in consultation with school staff and PAC will be involved in the process of approving and monitoring each corporate sponsor."

(#69)

- "For individual schools, an Administrative Officer and teachers will be formally involved in approving and monitoring each corporate sponsor. The school Parent Advisory Committee will be consulted."

"District-wide sponsorships involving two or more schools will be approved by the Superintendent of Schools or designate."

(#70)

- "acceptance of, or specific requests for, corporate sponsorships or donations shall require the approval of the principal or, for district-wide matters, the approval of the Superintendent."

"Arrangements for the sale of goods or services to students or their families shall be made through, and require the approval of, the principal, or for district-wide matters, the Superintendent."

(#73)

- "All sponsorship agreements in specific schools and/or areas will be discussed with the applicable associate superintendent... to determine if formal approval by the superintendent... is required."

"All sponsorship agreements affecting the district as a whole, or that have district implications, will be discussed with and approved by the Superintendent of schools who will also determine if approval by the Board of Trustees is required."

(#39)

These concerns about the number of schools affected by an agreement are not merely administrative window dressing. There is abundant concern raised in the literature that private sector involvement in the
public schools will gravitate to more affluent areas, leaving poorer
neighbourhoods without benefit of private sector involvement and
creating a vicious cycle in which the benefits of an enriched education
accrue to the wealthy, while poorer students rely on ever-shrinking
provincial budgets. Strong policy language will maintain local control of
the distribution of partnership opportunities and benefits. (Issues of
equity will be addressed in greater depth further on in this chapter.)

Evaluation

Evaluation of involvements is also a concern in policy as well as in
the literature. Eleven policies provide advice on evaluating partnerships,
although in most the language is general: Partnerships should

- self-evaluate and “share [the] evaluation results regularly with all
  partners and stakeholders... in order to make informed decisions
  that ensure continuous improvement.” (#6)
- provide “an appropriate evaluation/feedback mechanism.” (#63)
- expect “that each School District partner will file an annual
  evaluation with the Superintendent.” (#19)
- “include a process for regular review. (#33)
- “support sponsorship agreements that... mutually evaluate the
  relationship.” (#39)
- be subject to “periodic review.” (#62, #53, #78).
Only two policies are explicit as to why evaluation is undertaken. In West Vancouver, evaluation is done for one of two reasons:

"[Partnerships] measure and evaluate partnership performance at least annually to make informed decisions that ensure continuous improvement or necessitate discontinuation of the partnership(s)." (#45)

Surrey's policy is much more explicit. (It is interesting to note that the board has taken it upon itself to monitor impact on operations while the evaluation of educational benefits is delegated):

- "The Board will monitor the impact on operations of any... partnerships.

All... partnership agreements must contain terms for evaluation of the educational benefits to the school district.

[Partnerships will] identify, study and where appropriate, replicate successful practices as the basis for improvement.

[Partnerships will] measure and evaluate performance to make informed decisions that ensure continuous improvement.

[Partnerships will] prepare regular evaluations and share with all partners and stakeholders." (#36)

Clauses to describe partnership evaluation are an important way to heighten accountability and efficiency. They may also serve to ensure that partnerships continue to address their educational goals.
Duration/termination

The Ministry's call for "a workplan with timelines" is rather vague, whereas eleven district policies include more definitive guidance about duration and/or cancellation of involvements. Most of these fall into two general categories: either the formal agreement is for a specified term (#36, #42, #53, #62, #78); or, there is provision for the superintendent to cancel an involvement for cause (#39, #69, #70). Two district policies expect both a cancellation clause and a finite term for each partnership. (#33, #39)

Two districts support open-ended timelines in certain cases. In New Westminster, commercial relationships/partnerships/joint ventures with individual schools are approved by the principal and are limited to one year, whereas the same sorts of district-wide involvements are approved by the board and no time limit is mentioned in policy. In Agassiz-Harrison, charity involvements such as UNESCO and the Poppy Fund are granted ongoing approval which "is considered to be continuing and not for one year only." (#76)

In perhaps the unique case of a board policy assigning termination rights to a partner, "the [Vancouver] Board, the school, or the sponsor reserves the right to, for example, terminate an existing sponsorship
agreement on reasonable notice or immediately if the termination is for
breach of the agreement or for other 'just cause'." (#39)

In all cases where a timeline is mentioned, the board has the
authority to commit to a long term arrangement, whereas the
superintendent or the principal does not. Clearly-worded policy in this
regard is important, especially in districts where authority to initiate
partnerships is decentralised and individual principals have the
responsibility to sign agreements.

2. Threats to the universality of education

Critics raise concern that private sector involvement in public
education may constitute a threat to some basic ideals of public
education. In addition to the management and accountability concerns
discussed above, policies are written to safeguard universal access and
public funding.

"There are important social goals and values which should be
embedded in the educational environment and experience, such as
gender equality, sensitivity to equity consideration, inclusiveness of
all ethnic and social groups and valuing of diversity. Potential
business education interaction should, as a minimumum, not conflict
with these values." (Ministry)
Equity: Universal access to educational opportunity

Inequities may arise because schools in more affluent areas may receive better partnership opportunities than others. In addition to the Ministry's statement that "the benefits of [business-education interaction] should be distributed as equitably as possible" (Ministry), fourteen district policies acknowledge this potential for inequity.

Concerns about equity of access are generally addressed in one or more of four ways:

- Central governance
- Registry
- Allocation of partnership revenues
- Affirmative action allocation

1. Central governance of partnerships

This is a requirement that partnership proposals that involve a plurality of schools should be approved by some central actor such as the superintendent or designate, a committee, or the board itself. For example: "the superintendent or designate will be responsible for all district level sponsorship so that unacceptable degrees of inequality do not develop between schools." (#69, 70) Surrey's policy goes further
by using a committee of stakeholders to assure that partnerships and their benefits are spread evenly over the district:

- "The Associate Director, Business and Community Development is responsible for coordinating the identification and development of partnership opportunities."

"An Education Business Community Partnership Advisory Committee will be formed to review all partnership proposals. The Committee will comprise representatives from all stakeholder groups." The committee "will be involved in proposals which have a significant impact at one school or have district-wide implications." It will be "responsible for... making recommendations to the Board on which partnerships should proceed." (#36)

A number of districts are content to leave single-school partnerships to the guidance of the school administrator and only see a role for district personnel in partnerships that involve more than one school.

- "Requests... involving a number of schools or the entire district should be referred to the Superintendent of Schools." (#37)

- "All sponsorship agreements affecting the district as a whole, or that have district implications, will be discussed with and approved by the Superintendent of schools who will also determine if approval by the Board of Trustees is required." (#39)

- "District-wide sponsorships involving two or more schools will be approved by the Superintendent of Schools or designate." (#70)
• "Corporate sponsorships or donations shall require the approval of the principal, or, for district-wide matters, the approval of the Superintendent." (#73)

2. Registry

A registry may be used to keep track of which partnerships affect which schools.

• "The Board will strive to maintain a registry of partnerships to ensure equity of partnership opportunities across the district." (#33)

• "A written statement of all sponsor donations of kind or cash will be available to all district partner groups upon request." (#69)

• "A written statement of all sponsor donations will be available to the Superintendent, Secretary-Treasurer and/or the Board." (#70)

3. Allocation of partnership revenues

A policy may be explicit that monies will go into a central pot, to be divvied up equally among all schools in the district. Two districts address equity concerns by allocating revenues although neither anticipates losses.

"Where possible, all financial proceeds or benefits will be equitably allocated to all schools in the district unless one school, or a group of schools, has special reasons... to differ the split. The nature of the partnership may dictate how financial proceeds or benefits are distributed. In some instances, a sponsorship agreement may target a specific school or activity." (#36)
Maple Ridge has a more prescriptive approach to ensuring equity across the district:

"Revenues generated by District-wide initiatives that directly involve the schools will be shared between the District and the school on a 50-50 basis, net of expenses. If an existing school-based revenue generation initiative becomes part of a District-wide initiative, the school is guaranteed to receive at least as much revenue as it was earning on its own, and 50 percent of any net increase in revenue that results from the District initiative.

In view of the fact that some schools have greater capacity to raise money than others, revenue sharing arrangements should strive for equity.

Multi-year agreements which include future schools should take into account the interests of those schools." (#42)

4. Affirmative action

Another way to deal with equity is to stipulate that partnerships serve as many students as possible or that they serve students from across the district.

"The Board will make every effort to ensure equity of partnership opportunities across the district." (#39, #53, #78)

"Partnerships... must not cause lasting inequity to students in the schools not involved in the partnership; (NOTE: A partnership may pilot a project at one school or a group of schools provided there is a goal to extend general benefit to all district students.)" (#62)

"Opportunities must be offered equitably to as many potential partners as possible, of any particular type of goods and services." (#36)

"Consideration shall be given to equitable opportunities for students." (#73)
Equity: Partners’ access to the schools

Three districts show concern that partnerships with the schools may lead to inequities outside the school system. Surrey states as principle that “opportunities must be offered equitably to as many potential partners as possible.” (#36) “With the exception of initial pilot projects, opportunities must be offered equitably to as many potential partners as possible. A pilot project must not be longer than 12 months.” (#42) Also, Burnaby rejects sponsorships in part because “the Board feels that it should not permit profit for one organization to the exclusion of others.” (Miller, 1999)

Although many districts have policy language to increase accountability through representation of the various stakeholder groups in the assessment, administration and evaluation of involvements, three districts also recognise the private sector’s interest in keeping business particulars out of the public domain for competitive market reasons. In Surrey, “all meetings [of the partnership committee] will be considered closed, except on the invitation of the Chair to the interested partner or to resource person(s) to assist the committee with its deliberations.” (#36) Qualicum goes further by requiring that “staff will sign a non-disclosure agreement before beginning an activity.” Abbotsford has no
policy regarding partnerships and cites confidentiality as one obstacle to policy development: "private companies are unwilling to allow much transparency on potential partnership because they see it as a part of a competitive marketplace." (#34)

Critics raise concern that any lack of transparency reduces accountability in the public sector. (Churchill, 1999) Clauses to enshrine confidentiality serve the interests of the partner, but they do not always serve the public interest. There can be no more effective strategy to ensure proper accountability in the public school system than to preserve transparency in all contractual arrangements. Effective policy must ensure that involvements with the private sector are "open to full public scrutiny and discussion... [because] understanding the details of a partnership and benefits accruing to all partners can allay any concerns the community may have." (Ministry)

**Universal public funding issues**

"The primary responsibility for funding a public school system is that of the Provincial Government." (#69) Boards are concerned that the province may reduce funding to those districts where partnerships have the effect of reducing net operating costs. They are wary of being told, "You do not need X dollars from the province because you got a
similar amount through your agreement with Acme." This also reflects one of the greatest concerns voiced in the literature, that the universal nature of public education is threatened by private sector involvements, leading to the emergence of a two-tiered education system where affluent districts primarily reap the benefits of partnership agreements. (Barlow, 1994)

Revelstoke's policy is clear "that schools are public institutions fully supported by taxes" (#19), but makes no mention of concern that this funding may be affected by partnerships. Maple Ridge is less complacent about current funding practices and expresses doubts about future provincial funding for education. This policy preamble is set inside a black border:

The Board of School Trustees recognises that in the foreseeable future Provincial Government funding will likely be insufficient to meet all of the educational needs of our students. While the board will continue to pressure the Provincial Government to provide adequate funding and to amend the education finance formula to treat all Districts fairly, it will also pursue revenue generation opportunities to supplement government funding. The Board is willing to consider District for-profit initiatives, public-private partnerships and joint-ventures, endorsements, sponsorships and other types of business relationships that provide extra funding for the District. (#42)

At times, districts intend to benefit financially from involvement with the private sector; in Surrey, "any corporate or community
involvement must generate a financial benefit to the school district."

(#36) But not at any cost: nine policies (#6, #33, #36, #39, #41, #42, 
#45, #63, #69) make it clear that funding arrangements with the 
province must not be compromised as a result of the resources that 
accompany involvements. They are suspicious that the province may 
claw back some of its grants to districts if lucrative involvements 
develop:

“The relationship must provide revenues to the district in addition 
to any grants provided by the Provincial government, and must not 
result in a reduction of provincial grants.” (#63)

Clear language also comes from Chilliwack: “Each partnership proposal 
must ... support activities that complement and not replace public 
funding for education” (#33), from Surrey where they “allocate 
resources to complement and not replace public funding for education” 
(#36), and from Vancouver where “the Board supports sponsorship 
agreements that ... provide resources to complement and not replace 
public funding for education.” (#39, #45)

Burnaby again takes a unique position that reflects not only the 
widespread desire to gain extra funding, but also an unmistakable belief 
that commercial entrepreneurship is anathema to public schooling:

“It is the Board’s desire to discourage the use of students and 
schools to promote or further any enterprise which results in profit
to organizations of a private or public nature, including those enterprises in which schools may share monetary rewards. ...Furthermore, it feels that the school is not the proper arena for such activities." (41)

Plain language emphasises concerns that provincial funding may be reduced, and that students may receive unequal treatment if partnership involvements are not closely scrutinised. Across the province, policies validate critics' concerns for the continued universal funding of the public school system. Policies which lack attention to these points may not serve the best interests of their communities.

3. Curricular issues

The literature expresses concern that, in the face of large, wealthy corporate partners, the autonomy of districts and teachers to implement curriculum may be eroded, and that the curriculum itself may be tainted by bias, untruth, or omission. Control of curriculum is discussed in policy in terms of the respective roles of educators and their partners, and in terms of the goals that involvements support. The implications for the quality of the curriculum itself are discussed under clauses to deal with bias, accuracy and inclusivity; instructional time; and proselytism.
Control of curriculum/erosion of educators' or board's authority

School and partner roles within partnerships

Policies champion partnerships as a legitimate way for interested
groups to influence learning positively, but they also demonstrate
concern that private involvements may inevitably lead to an erosion of
the authority of teachers and other educators to control the curriculum
and, ultimately, the classroom. The Ministry is aware of this threat to
“educational integrity” and asserts that

“partnerships should respect the expertise and resources that each
partner contributes while recognizing that educational officials are
responsible for decision making over curriculum and other
educational matters.” (Ministry)

While thirteen policies include language to safeguard curriculum
control, none of them treats this issue as crisply as these three:

- “school officials will retain control of educational programs.”
  (#85)

- “activities within a classroom shall be coordinated with and
  under the direction of the classroom teacher.” (#19)

- “there shall be no negative effect on the authority or
  jurisdiction of the Board.” (#36)

Eight districts have much softer phrasing phrasing which mirrors
the Conference Board documents:
• "business education partnerships... recognize and respect each partner's expertise" (#6, #33, #36, #39, #45, #53, #78, Ministry),

• "identify clearly defined roles and responsibilities for all partners" (#6, #33, #36, #39, #45, #78), "express expected behaviours and outcomes to all participants" (#36), and

• "understand their respective responsibilities and benefits." (#70)

These seven policies merely "recognize," "respect" and "identify" roles, responsibilities, and expertise; they are not as forcefully worded as they may need to be to reflect the concerns raised in the literature. Generally, though, they are clear that, while schools should be open to external influences, they ought not be run by them.

Compliance with other goals, policies or mission statements

Concern arises repeatedly in the literature over the ways that the goals of the private and the public sectors are not aligned. Even if, as above, districts do not relinquish any control over "educational matters," critics are concerned that the interests of the public school and the entrepreneur are so divergent that partnerships cannot succeed unless the goals or mission of the public school are altered. This issue is relatively uncontroversial in policy: most language requires that involvements comply with the mission statement, goals, or other policies
Southeast Kootenay (#5), in its policy on Corporate Ethics, stipulates that "all donations, gifts, grants, bequests are to be consistent with [the] Mission Statement." Rocky Mountain (#6) "supports partnerships that ... are consistent with the core values of all partners,... [and] are based on shared or aligned objectives that support the goals of the partner organisations." District 33 refers to compliance five times:

[Chilliwack] supports relations in which partners “share values [and] objectives” and it requires that applications “ensure consistency with the ethics and core values of all partners”, “support existing curriculum and be consistent with district and school mission statements... objectives... [and] policy,” and “be based on shared objectives, expectations and social responsibilities towards education.” (#33)

Such policies are congruent with the Ministry position that “business-education interaction should... be consistent with the philosophy, values and goals of the system and the particular educational system.” Policy makers agree that there is a potential for private motives to conflict with the objectives of the education community and that involvement with the private sector ought not to compromise the educational goals, policies, and mission statements of the education sector.
Content of curriculum

Erosion of curriculum standards of accuracy, bias, inclusivity, and compatibility

In the literature and in policy there is concern that the curriculum may be corrupted by additions from the private sector. But there is also agreement that a healthy curriculum is open to external influences: “Some requests by individuals or agencies for access to students are reasonable and contribute to, and are an integral part of, the teaching-learning programs in the school.” (#40) The curriculum ought to be insulated but it ought not be isolated; eight policies aim overtly at striking this balance.

The Ministry is most outspoken:

“Educational institutions should ensure that curriculum or learning resource materials contributed by a partner meet the same high standards, and be subject to the same degree of scrutiny regarding balance and objectivity, as any other learning materials. Materials used in the Kindergarten to Grade 12 system must conform to the criteria outlined in the Ministry document, Evaluating, Selecting, and Managing Learning Resources. Aspects to consider include:

- presentations, materials and resources should be complete, balanced, accurate and impartial;
- sponsor supplied materials and resources should be subject to the same curriculum and learning resources review process that all other resources go through; and, materials should recognize the diverse perspectives of students.” (Ministry)

By contrast, district #73 leaves standards open to considerable interpretation: “The sponsored program or donation must meet
educational standards." Others refer to existing standards already in use in the district: "all sponsored products, materials, and services must meet specifications and standards used by the school district in the purchase of similar goods and services." (#33, #36, #39, #42) In addition, "all materials to be distributed to students, staff and parents must be pre-approved within the partnership agreement" (#36), or "all materials distributed to the students, staff and parents must be approved by the Superintendent and Secretary Treasurer." (#42) Only Vernon seems content to rely on the judgement of the school administrator where vetting sponsored materials is concerned, saying only that "non-profit groups... are permitted to distribute information to the schools with the approval of the Principal and at no cost to the Board." (#22)

Where policies are explicit, involvements with the private sector need not lead to a biased or imbalanced curriculum. Those that address this issue show a clear bent toward protecting the curriculum from untoward influences without shunning input indiscriminately. However, the bulk of the province does not express concern about this issue in their partnership policies. It may be that policy makers see no need to provide guidance here, or that that they are not aware of the issues or
need. Either way, the literature, the Ministry and seven school districts have taken care to address it in partnership policy.

Disruption/displacement of instructional time

Concerns about degradation of curriculum standards and erosion of educators' authority over all things educational, also include a worry that activities supporting partnerships may displace instructional activities. Critics of involvement say that time is a precious commodity students bring to the classroom; every moment of it should be spent on activities geared toward learning. Time spent supporting a partnership or a partner may not be defensible.

This displacement was evident in the YNN proposals that saw the light in New Brunswick in the early nineties and in British Columbia in 1999. To review, YNN would supply VCRs, televisions and a satellite dish to each school in return for the commitment to air ten minutes of newscast interspersed with two and a half minutes of commercials. The only way schools could guarantee the 90% viewer rate stipulated by YNN was to dedicate twelve and a half minutes of instructional time each day to the partnership. (Duncan, 1992) Quite apart from the time spent watching advertising, which will be discussed in the next section, was the time spent watching the newscast itself. Whether the newscast was a
useful, appropriate addition to the curriculum is fodder for the clauses discussed in the previous two sections; whether watching it for a block of time each day supported the partnership or constituted an instructional activity is another question.

Three policies make explicit reference to protecting instructional time:

- "Distribution of materials... may be authorized by the Superintendent of Schools or the Superintendent's delegate, provided that they do not demand undue disruption of school time or routine." (#37)

- "[Sponsorship] activities under this policy should require minimal intrusion into instructional time." (#69)

- "Students and staff are to be protected from intrusions on their time by announcements, posters or bulletins from individuals and organizations not directly connected with the schools." (#76)

Although this issue is prevalent in the literature, few policies address it, probably because it is so difficult to sort out just what goes on in the complex set of interactions that fill a school day. If educators determine that an activity meets curriculum standards, enhances student learning, and supports the goals and mission statement of the school or the district, then it is judged appropriate even if it does support a partner or a partnership. This is inevitable even when mutual benefits are touted as a purpose of involvement. Cautions are useful, however, because they remind educators and partners alike that mutual benefits (i.e., benefits to
the partner) should be held subordinate to the primary educational intention, that is to enhance learning.

Religious proselytising/corporate political stances

Political and religious exploitation are treated apart from commercial exploitation. Seven policies have similar language to fend off political or religious recruiters:

- “Distribution of materials... may be authorized ...provided that they do not contain religiously oriented... material.” (#37)

- “During election campaigns, political candidates may be invited to address students provided that such invitations are extended to all candidates on a fair and equal basis. At other times, politicians, with the approval of the principal, may address students on current issues and topics in a non-partisan fashion.

Sectarian religious proselytism is strictly forbidden. Sectarian clubs or organizations of students may operate within the school only with the approval of the Board.” (#73)

- “Individuals representing religious organizations will be granted access to teachers and students when requested to contribute to the study of religion. This access is with the approval of the Principal of the school.” (#40)

- “The Board supports education/business partnerships that... do not exploit students in any sexual, racial, or religious way.” (#53)

- “No organization whose program indoctrinates or abuses its relationship with the schools to further its secular and/or religious or any other interest will be eligible to participate in partnerships.” (#85)
Strident language is somewhat problematic: "Religious dogma, political advertisements and corporate political stances are prohibited." (#69, #70) Such phrases may reflect the influence writers such as Maude Barlow (Barlow & Robertson, 1994) have had over the years. Even if one could define a "corporate political stance," however, it is not clear just how one would go about prohibiting it.

In summary, across the province, policies which mention any potential for the curriculum to be hijacked by private interests may refer to these points:

- educators must retain control over classroom decisions;
- curriculum standards of scope, sequence, balance, accuracy, and inclusivity must not be compromised;
- time spent engaged in supporting the partnership must not be excessive; and,
- the goals of education must be served by any partnership activities.

If any problem is evident here, it is that many policies are mute on some or all of these points. This dearth of guidance for some boards and their employees leaves the impression, and perhaps also the potential, for curricula to be compromised by involvements with the private sector.
4. Reciprocity issues

It is clear that school boards anticipate enhanced learning and financial or material gain from partnerships. It is equally clear that they anticipate some flow of benefit to the partner. Much of the controversy in the literature and in the public at large focuses on this return flow as a legitimate purpose of any partnership. Policies focus on four types of benefit to the partner: exclusivity, recognition, endorsement, and commercial advertising.

Exclusive contracts

Exclusive contracts are not mentioned in the literature. The policies, too, shed little light on what is controversial about exclusivity. Of the four districts that mention exclusivity in policy, three support granting exclusive rights to sell a product or service:

- Vancouver supports “using the Board’s purchasing power as leverage to gain financial benefits for the district,” and defines sponsorship as “the provision of funds, price reductions, equipment, materials, or services in exchange for some form of exclusivity and/or recognition for a specified period of time.” And further defines exclusivity as “a preferential arrangement with a sponsor for a specified period of time.” (#39)

- “The Board agrees that approved... partners may be the exclusive providers of goods and/or services to a school or the school district.” (#36)
• "The Board is willing to give business partners exclusive rights to market and sell their products and services to various District constituents." (#42)

The fourth district has quite a different view of this benefit to the partner: "Exclusivity cannot be bargained for nor implied." (#73)

This benefit does not receive much play in the literature because it is not generally viewed as an issue that impacts directly on students. This may be a faulty assumption. The policy language noted above does not relegate exclusive contracts only to the domain of commercial involvements (which tend to operate at arms' length from the students, as when boards and schools engage suppliers and sign exclusive contracts in return for lower rates). One policy allows partners the exclusive right to sell products or services to "various District constituents." (#42) If this is taken to mean students or their families, then cafeteria sales, school store stocks, and pop machine placements are all affected. Exclusive contracts for text books, soft drinks, gym equipment, or computers leave students exposed to only one company's product line and logo/product recognition strategies. Students are affected by exclusive contracts, and the question becomes, "Is this an encroachment we can justify?" The answer should be informed by policy.
Recognition versus advertising

In any type of involvement, but especially in cases of donation and cooperative partnerships, "corporations, businesses and service organizations may... choose to support... public school activities and thereby receive recognition in a public manner." (#70) In these types of relationships, the minimal flow of benefit from the schools to the partner, which consists mainly of recognition of a gift, is not meant to mutate into endorsement or commercial advertising.

But recognition may at times be difficult to differentiate from some forms of advertising. For instance, if McDonald's donates drinks and snacks for a school's sports day, this may seem to be a straightforward donation. But, the golden arches on the kegs, cups, and wrappers constitute advertising – even a McDonald's hamburger is iconographic. So simple acknowledgement of the donation is virtually impossible. Any statement of recognition often involves image advertising.

Recognition is widely held as a legitimate benefit to offer partners. The Ministry says, "the goodwill that a business gains as a result of a partnership is a legitimate benefit, but recognition limited to a corporate logo rather than explicit advertising or marketing is the appropriate means for this recognition."
Fifteen policies allude to advertising for commercial gain and/or recognition for partnership involvement. Policies which mention a distinction between the two, try to allow expressions of acknowledgement, recognition, gratitude, and indebtedness, and the presence of company logos without permitting wanton hucksterism in the halls. In the following policies, the difference between recognition and advertisements is pronounced:

- “Each Partnership... must... ensure sponsor recognition and corporate logos are for identification rather than commercial purposes.” (#33)

- “sponsor recognition and corporate logos are for identification rather than commercial purposes, and therefore should be kept to a minimum.” (#53, #62, #69, #78)

Surrey also draws attention to the difference between advertising and recognition in a statement of willingness to provide “public recognition, some form of advertisement or other benefit.” (#36)

Given this distinction between recognition and advertising™, Vancouver is the most explicit about what constitutes appropriate forms of recognition:

- “advertisement [is] the provision of advertising space on behalf of a commercial concern in exchange for revenue or goods-in-kind; this should not be confused with the display of corporate logos as sponsorship recognition.”

- “All donations and sponsorships should be acknowledged with a thank-you letter.”
• Donations and sponsorships may be acknowledged at school assemblies, awards nights, graduation exercises, and in school newsletters.
• Students may contribute towards acknowledging donors and sponsors.
• Equipment donations may be acknowledged with a name plate affixed to the donated item.
• Principals may wish to provide information to the communications co-ordinator for release to the community.
• Staff committees should be involved in acknowledging and recognizing donations and sponsorships.” (#39)

Policies do not always provide adequate distinction between acknowledgement and commercialism. Mute or vague policies which fail to describe what constitutes legitimate recognition, or fail to draw a distinction between acknowledgement and advertising, do not provide adequate guidance.

Endorsement

Observers of partnership involvements often refer to the legitimacy that derives from association with the public school system. Incidental legitimacy or sanction may be a by-product of the goodwill that comes of any involvement with the schools. Endorsement and referrals may also be explicitly bargained-for objectives in certain specific involvements.

This issue is a high priority in the literature, but only five districts give it mention. Endorsement involves publicly attaching the name, logo, and reputation of a school board to a product or a service offered by the
partner, and may come about as part of a retail channel/commercial involvement, or it may be a stand-alone agreement of the rental-lease type. Endorsement is not yet a reality in British Columbia; perhaps this explains both the dearth of discussion in policy and the lack of consensus.

Two districts embrace endorsement:

"The Board agrees that approved... partners may have exclusive marketing rights to promote their involvement with the Board’s facilities or activities. Partnership... agreements... may be for goods and services at a preferential rate... in exchange for referrals.” (#36)

An objective of sponsorship recognition is “to create opportunities for individuals and businesses to affiliate publicly with the Board.” (#39)

Two districts reserve judgement for a case by case response:

"Any reference to or use of the District’s name, logo, slogan, mission statement or reputation must be approved by the Superintendent and the Secretary Treasurer.” (#42)

"The use of the title, Board of School Trustees, shall not be used on any materials, notices, or advertising without specific consent of the Board.” (#91)

And one district rules it out completely:

"School premises shall not be used to display, distribute, or otherwise advertise a product, service, or function... unless... it does not imply endorsement by the school.” (#37)

It is only a matter of time until a district signs an agreement with a company to supply products at a reduced price in return for an exclusive
contract and the right to tout itself as the "official supplier to your local
school board." The majority of policies do not address this type of
sponsorship involvement or the issues that surround it.

Commercial advertising

Commercial motives

School board policies recognize "that sometimes teachers are
requested to act as agents for commercial ventures which have no direct
bearing on the education of children." (#78) Nineteen policies have
language to allay concerns about the commercial exploitation of students.
Some ban "exploitation" explicitly, others proclaim that partnerships must
not serve a motive which is "primarily commercial." In either case,
defining and recognizing a commercial motive is not always a simple
matter:

"In some cases, what is ostensibly a purely commercial relationship
with business – for example licensing a company to be the sole
supplier of a product or service for financial contribution – may
have a "spill over" effect by giving that business privileged access
to a student market in such a way as to compromise the integrity
or welfare of the students. For example, in the elementary and
secondary schools promotion of sales or explicit advertising is not
appropriate." (Ministry)

Seven districts reject the use of schools for commerce. Boards
recognize the responsibility "for ensuring that the "captive audience"
represented by [the] students is not violated." (Miller, 1999) The sole objective of Burnaby's policy, for instance, is "to avoid any economic exploitation of students in or through the school." (#41) Similar sentiments are echoed frequently across the province in slightly different tones:

- "It is the policy of the Board to discourage the use of the schools and the pupils to further or promote any enterprise which results in profit to any organization of a private or public nature." (#75, #76)

- "The Board... shall strive to safeguard the students and their parents from money raising plans of outside organizations, commercial enterprises and individuals." (#91)

- "It is the Board's responsibility to provide as safe and secure an environment as possible for all students, and to recognize the privacy of parents and so, in general, the sales, promotion of sales or the support to sales... on the part of any commercial person or organization is unacceptable to the Board." (#22)

- "As a general rule, no commercial enterprise may use school facilities for profit making activities." (#32)

- "The primary purpose of all partnerships must be "to meet learners' needs rather than to promote commercial motives or financial gain." (#36)

- "The Board... recognizes that the schools and students of the district may be viewed as potential clients by particular "for profit" groups, non-profit groups and charities. It is the Board's responsibility to provide as safe and secure an environment as possible for all students, and to respect the privacy of parents and students with respect to the promotion of sales or support to sales by canvassing, advertising or by other means on the part of any commercial person or organization." (#40)
Rather than outright bans on commerce, seven districts place the emphasis on the use of "pressure" and/or "exploitation."

- "[Partnerships should] not directly or indirectly exploit students or exert pressure on students, parents or school community to support any commercial enterprise." (#33)

- "Do not exploit students in any sexual, racial, or religious way, and do not pressure students, parents, or the school community to support any commercial enterprise." (#53)

- "Do not directly or indirectly exploit students or exert pressure to compel students, parents, or the school community to support any commercial enterprise." (#62)

- "There will be no pressure to compel the students or the school community to support sponsors." (#69, #70)

- "It is clearly a duty to protect students and their families from exploitation by private interests." (#19)

- "Schools, as educational institutions with a "captive" clientele, must not become vehicles for the circulation of materials intended primarily for commercial gain, nor for exploitation of students and their families by commercial... interests. School premises shall not be used to display, distribute, or otherwise advertise a product, service, or function... unless [it] will not lead to the exploitation of the students." (#37)

The West Vancouver school district is in step with the Ministry's call to "assess the potential impact... on the welfare of the students," but these clauses pale in comparison to those above:

"The West Vancouver School district supports... partnerships that... protect the welfare of the students." (#45)
Clearly, there is widespread concurrence that economic exploitation of students as a captive audience is unacceptable. Partnerships must not have commerce or profit making as a prime objective unless of course they are retail channel involvements and commercial involvements which see the partner offering goods and services and lower rates in return for certain benefits from the board. No one is expecting these partners to sell at cost.

Restrictions on advertising

Policies are not generally specific about the advertising they anticipate. Fifteen policies allude to a difference between advertising and acknowledgement, but only twelve actually give advertising any explicit treatment. Two policies reject outright advertising in the schools:

“One of the benefits business sees is acknowledgement of their partnership. Educational institutions need to maintain a balance between retaining educational integrity and permitting partners to receive public acknowledgement for their contributions. Promotion of sales, advertising to a “captive” audience, or exerting pressure on parents or students to purchase a product or service is not an appropriate form of acknowledgement.” (Ministry)

And, in Qualicum, “sponsorship does not require students to observe, listen to or read advertising.” (#69)
More policies frown upon advertising but seem to allow it in some cases or in some media. Vernon, for instance, denies advertising “in general”:

“In general, the sales, the promotion of sales or the support of sales by canvassing, advertising or by other means on the part of any commercial person or organization is unacceptable.” (#22)

Other districts allow advertising in schools if it “benefits” students:

“Schools... will not be used in manner to advertise or promote commercial, cultural, organizational or other non-school interests unless there is an educational benefit for the students, or unless the content is reasonable and benefits the students.” (#19)

Delta places is more specific yet, specifying four criteria for acceptable advertising in its schools:

“school premises shall not be used to display, distribute, or otherwise advertise a product, service, or function on behalf of any person, business, or organization unless...

• The display of such material will not lead to the exploitation of the students;
• It does not imply endorsement by the school;
• The primary purpose is such that it will complement the educational program;
• The claims in such materials are not false or misleading.” (#37)

A few districts even embrace advertising as a legitimate revenue generator:

• “Partnership... agreements... may be for goods and services at a preferential rate... in exchange for advertising.
Any use of corporate or community signage on school district property or any form of advertising must be within the terms of the partnership agreement.

No employee will be required to wear clothing with corporate or community logos or advertising.” (#36)

- “Vancouver supports “the provision of advertising space on behalf of a commercial concern in exchange for revenue or goods-in-kind. (#39)

- West Vancouver permits advertising that is “in good taste, discreet, and kept to an absolute minimum.” (#45)

Advertising in learning materials

Advertising messages placed in learning materials merits three different treatments in three different districts. Vancouver treats all advertising as a potential source of income:

“The Board supports... sponsorship contracts for... the provision of sign boards... and [the placement of] business logos and company names on school property and equipment... [and] on materials and resources available / distributed to staff / schools.” (#39)

Delta’s policy, which allows advertising in instructional materials under certain conditions, does not provide much guidance since it could be interpreted favourably by both detractors and supporters of a YNN-type proposal:

“Instructional materials furnished by private sources may be utilized when they are appropriate to the curriculum and when the advertising content is reasonable relative to the primary purpose of the materials.” (#37)

Finally, one district has no tolerance for advertising in learning materials:
"Materials distributed via the schools should not contain advertising of a commercial nature." (#76)

Involving participants voluntarily

Four of the six districts which mention this concern have identical phrasing: partnerships shall "involve individual participants on a voluntary basis." (#6, #33, #36, #39, #53, #69) At first blush, this seems a straightforward statement of the right to attend school without being herded into partnership activities against one's will. The onus to opt out is a heavy burden to place on the student, but in these six policies at least, the right is there. So, if a partnership involvement supports a school play or a class photograph, students may choose to not participate.

However, participation is not always a choice. Where advertising occurs in the school setting, students and staff are presented with a commercialized environment. This is a classic example of the medium being the message: the advertisement may be a simple advertising billboard, but its message is an amalgam of the ad, the environment in which it is displayed, and the way the environment is affected by the presence of the advertisement. Placing the onus on staff and students to
withdraw their participation creates a negative option requiring a proactive move to avoid participation.

Where advertising is permitted in schools, or in learning materials, no staff member or student is entirely free to withdraw. The Ministry draws attention to this by emphasising each partner’s duty to “protect the welfare of students, particularly in the K-12 system where age and compulsory attendance impose ethical obligations on schools.” (Ministry)

Commentary

Policies are clear that mutual benefits are a legitimate feature of any business education involvement, and involvements should attend to the goals of both parties to an agreement. Policy makers, therefore, are at pains to guide educators as they work to achieve the primary goals of enhancing student learning and augmenting public funding while attending to the partner’s aims.

Where the partner’s aims are recognition, enhancing student learning and augmenting public funding, alignment with the school’s aims is such that there is little conflict. Where the partner’s aim is less congruent with the aims of public education, controversy may erupt. It is clear that the private sector is looking to the schools and the students as a source of revenue and as a place to spread ideas and garner goodwill.
The issues raised in the policies are not exactly the same ones raised in the literature, but there is considerable overlap. The literature does not mention any problem with exclusive contracts, yet in policy there is significant variation in the way exclusivity is treated. Although the literature treats endorsement as an unwanted by-product of any partnership involvement with the schools, all but five policies are mute on the topic and there is no consensus among those five. Overt endorsement does not yet exist in practice anywhere in the province, but if policies are to provide adequate guidance in the area, more attention must be paid to the incidental sort of endorsement that comes of association and affiliation.

Accountability receives considerable coverage both in the literature and in policy. Boards are accountable to the public, to the Ministry, and to their district staff and therefore encourage transparency and input from stakeholders and partners at various stages of partnership development.

The issues raised in policy and in the literature are not merely housekeeping issues, but strike at the very heart of public education. Whether a contract is given for X or Y dollars is important, certainly, but it is not of the same magnitude as advertising in the classroom, universal
access to education services, curriculum standards, or attention to the
goals of public education. Policies with strong language in these areas will be able to foster legitimate involvements with the private sector without jeopardising core values.

There are districts that only address some of the pertinent issues, and other districts without relevant policy to guide ongoing practice. This condition may need to be addressed if boards are to be seen to be doing a credible job and if involvements with the private sector are to fulfil their intended purposes.
Chapter Six: Summary and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to provide a portrait of the current (1999) school district policies in British Columbia around three questions:

- What are the purposes and perceived benefits of private sector involvement in public schools?
- What types of involvements are anticipated?
- What problems and issues do school board policies address?

Policy and guideline materials or notification that none existed were acquired from forty of the fifty-nine districts (see Appendix B). This sample included a range of districts from the largest to the smallest, urban and rural, and all geographical areas of the province.

This chapter summarizes the recent evolution of policy in British Columbia, and closes with some comments on the central values to be enhanced through these policy responses.

Summary

Policies have evolved in British Columbia in three waves or generations:

- First wave policies characterised by simplicity were the norm until the late eighties. They dealt with one or two purposes and
types of involvements and briefly treated management or accountability issues.

- Second wave policies emerged in the early nineties and continued until 1998. These policies recognised an expanded set of purposes and types of involvement, a variety of stakeholder groups, and issues beyond accountability – issues surrounding funding, universality, exploitation, commerce in the classroom, and advertising.

- The third wave of policies emerged from within Surrey (1997) and Vancouver (1999), and reflect a broader understanding of the range of purposes, types, and issues related to involvement with the private sector. These policies were the first to mention endorsement/referral involvements and paid advertising, and are more likely to include stakeholder input at all stages of the involvement cycle.

The first wave

The earliest policies were simple documents, aimed at one or two specific partnership purposes or types. These policies did not demonstrate awareness of the variety of types of involvements or of any
broad spectrum of issues. Benefits to the partner were usually limited to simple recognition.

Six examples still exist today, largely in small and rural districts (#5, #19, #24, #32, #41, #75). They generally were written in the 1980s and they do not show awareness of the complexity that was to evolve in this area regarding the panoply of types of partnerships, the smorgasbord of benefits, and the quagmire of issues to be confronted. Southeast Kootenay, for instance, sent this undated policy with the promising, albeit specious, title Corporate Ethics:

"All donations, gifts grants, bequests are:
• To be consistent with... [the] Mission Statement.
• To be appropriately administered by the School District.
• To be duly recognized and publicly acknowledged by the School District as deemed appropriate." (#5)

For this district, decisions can still be handled by simply adhering to the mission statement and doing what seems appropriate. No complications are anticipated. The policy from Hope, Commercial Business in Schools Revised 1987, treats a single issue, and simply states, "As a general rule, no commercial enterprise may use school facilities for profit making activities." (#32) Similarly, Kamloops' 1989 policy entitled, Charitable Donations and Corporate Sponsorship is entirely concerned with donations, although, as a nod to “sponsorship," there is room for donors
to channel donations to specific "special school events, scholarships, or projects." (#24)

Many districts are in the process of, or intending to, update these early policies. One example is the superintendent of a large urban district who candidly admits that his 1975 policy which ensures "that the 'captive audience' represented by our students is not violated," is inadequate to the task today. (Miller, 1999)

The second wave

Policies developed through the 1990s (#5, #6, #33, #37, #40, #42, #45, #53, #62, #63, #70, #73, #76, #78, #85, #91) showed more awareness of involvement issues, but none of them discussed the full range of types, purposes and issues. For the first time, we saw words like "sponsorship," "partnership," and "exploitation," the first mention of mutual benefits and advertising, and differentiation between advertising and acknowledgement. As second generation policies evolved through the decade, they dealt with more types of partnerships, more benefits, and more issues, including public funding, conflict of interest and other accountability issues, and the tension between the goals of the public and private sectors.
The first of the second generation policies emerged from a large urban district in 1989. This policy allowed for central screening of partnership proposals through the superintendent's office, and specified the need for "an appropriate evaluation/feedback mechanism." (#63) Issues were dealt with through careful attention to the development and implementation of proposals:

"The process for proposing and securing partnerships will include...
  • Research into... the reasons for pursuing alternate sources of support
  • Development of a thorough implementation plan which considers such issues as facility and personnel requirements
  • Development of a thorough budget for implementation and ongoing support (including costs in subsequent years)."

As well, this policy required "maximum benefit to the learning environment... [and made important concessions to] carefully address the partner's needs" and to recognize the partner's contributions. (#63)

This early second generation policy was followed by more specific policies such as West Vancouver's Sponsorships and Gifts-in-Kind, whose first line recognized that there are different kinds of sponsorships (although it fails to enumerate them), tensions between the goals of public education and entrepreneurship, and a distinction between
advertising and acknowledgement. In 1998, it was augmented by Ethical Guidelines for Partnerships to bring these issues into clearer focus.

Further distinctions developed in 1994 when Vernon passed a policy which, while intending primarily to discourage retail involvements on school grounds, also recognized differences between charity groups, non-profit groups and commercial agencies and some of the various motives each of these kinds of groups may have. Accountability issues were also addressed as this policy assigned roles to the superintendent, the principal and, in cases of sponsored information, the “established Parents’ group in the school.” (#22) Other large lower mainland districts of New Westminster, Maple Ridge, Chilliwack and Fraser-Cascade (Hope) followed suit with policies that treated a range of involvement types and issues that exceeded other policies of their day.

The third wave

The third wave came in 1997, and as yet only the Ministry and two districts have this type of “third generation” policy: Vancouver (#39) and Surrey (#36). This wave is distinguished by its complexity; more types and reciprocal benefits are mentioned, accountability is addressed in sophisticated ways, and advertising receives nuanced treatment. These policies also begin to use a standardised vocabulary to label sponsorships,
donations, and cooperative relationships, and are the first to mention endorsement/affiliation involvements and paid advertising involvements. Because the guidelines the Ministry is developing for use around the province are based on a catalogue of ongoing involvements in the province, these guidelines do not address paid advertising involvements or endorsement/referral involvements (which do not yet exist outside of policy in three districts); yet they do address a wide range of partnership types, the flow of different benefits, and some pronouncements regarding issues.

This third wave is growing. Many districts, including fourteen that wrote to me, will soon execute a leap from first or early second generation policies to third generation polices based on the provincial guidelines and the newer policies out of Vancouver and Surrey. In keeping with the current discussion that is ongoing in the literature and in the popular press, these policies will include:

- more standardised vocabulary;
- greater selection of involvement types and legitimate benefits;
- fuller recognition of involvement issues;
- procedures to deal with stakeholder input and accountability at all stages of the partnership cycle;
• affirmation of the primacy of educators' control over all
  things curricular;
• clauses to emphasise the sanctity of provincial funding and
  universality of access;
• treatment of issues related to commercial activity and
  exploitation of students; and,
• guidance on whether or not to allow advertisements in
  schools, in learning materials, and in district publications, and
  if so, their accepted placements.

Such considerations are already addressed to some degree or another in
some policies but none to date attends to them all. However, districts
will not likely approach each issue the same way. Differences will abide,
for instance, in the ways that policies accept or reject advertising in the
classroom or public affiliation with private interests.

Several districts cited a desire to collect board policies from around
the province as a prelude to developing their own. The leaders in policy
development have tended to be districts in the urban and suburban areas
of the lower mainland and at the southern end of Vancouver Island.

Vancouver's policy is the newest in the province; Surrey, Chilliwack, Maple
Ridge and Fraser-Cascade also have reasonably up-to-date policies that will be a useful resource for other districts looking to develop their own.

However, the group showing the strongest leadership to date is not an education group at all. The Conference Board of Canada has had influence with phrases from its Ethical Guidelines and Operating Principles liberally peppered throughout district policies; in fact, one school district (Rocky Mountain) and the British Columbia School Trustees Association have adopted the Conference Board guidelines in full. This influence is likely to diminish; districts looking to form policy now will look beyond second generation policies for inspiration. The Ministry has recently taken this strong leadership role; several districts indicated that they were waiting for its guidelines to be published before they wrote their own policy.

In summary, second wave policies best represent the state of current policy development in British Columbia. Those districts that still have first wave policies are small and rural and do not have diverse business constituencies. Third wave policies are in large, urban districts that do have diverse business constituents and rapid growth in school populations. This growth puts pressure on resources and makes business-education involvements attractive. The Vancouver district has
the most comprehensive policy in the province dealing with the greatest number of types, purposes and issues, and is actively soliciting a greater number and range of involvements.

Policy implementation/irrelevance

The issue of the relevance of policy to inform practice has been raised. Four large urban districts were moving quickly on partnerships, yet had not developed policies to guide these activities:

- The superintendent's office of a large urban district wrote to tell me that they have no relevant policy at this time, "but there is a perceived need to do so." (#34) This would seem a valid perception because this district is the first outside New Brunswick to open a school built and owned by a private interest and leased by the board. This district is a cutting-edge performer in the field of business-education partnerships, yet it does not have a policy to guide its practice.

- Another large urban district just received a $50,000 grant from the province to investigate partnership possibilities for the construction of a new secondary school; the study is expected by "mid-fall" of 1999. (Morton, 1999) The district is also a
leader in seeking various types of partnerships, yet has no policy dedicated to the issues.

- District #35 has no partnership policy per se and yet has a directory of partnership agreements, each of which follows a template which outlines purposes, duties, rights, responsibilities expectations, and even includes a contract signed by the participants. This district has developed explicit, comprehensive protocols to guide decision making that would seem to serve the function of policy.

- One superintendent of a large urban district stated that:

  "Our district does not rely heavily on a policy document approach to guide its participation in its partnerships programs....The only relevant policy document... recognizes the responsibility of the Board for ensuring that the trust placed in it for ensuring that the 'captive audience' represented by our students is not violated.... We have been quite active in establishing partnerships with various organizations and institutions, over a period of many years. The district's thinking distinguishes clearly between the concept of partnership and that of sponsorship, where rights are typically assigned to a particular company in return for monetary or other tangible benefits.... We actively pursue the former and do not participate in the latter." (Miller 1999)

This statement shows some highly developed treatment of the issues at hand through a clear distinction between cooperative partnership and sponsorship, an understanding of the ethical issues entailed by these
involvements, and of the reciprocity arrangements which are acceptable. It also shows that written policy is not a prerequisite for action.

Even in the district that has the most sophisticated policies, one secondary school principal said, "I don't care what the policy is. I don't even know if there is one. I will do what I think is best for my kids and my school. If I have to get my knuckles rapped afterward -- so be it." (#39)

Nevertheless, policy is intended to guide action. It exists to standardise the way a district deals with the private sector and lays a foundation for expected employee behaviours. The fact that certain districts have complex policy work while others have none at all speaks to a range of experience across the province. The variety of policy responses, including the lack thereof, indicates the sensitivity of local authorities to the needs and expectations of the communities they serve.

**Discussion**

The third-generation policies emerging during the past two years and those that will undoubtedly follow the publication of the Ministry guidelines will likely provide boards with extensive guidance regarding the legitimate purposes of partnership involvement. To be effective in the future, though, policies may need to indicate which types of involvement are acceptable and under what conditions, set clear management and
accountability expectations, stipulate that the goals of any involvement should be primarily educational, safeguard the principles of universal funding and universal access, and be clear about the (in)appropriateness of commerce, particularly commercial advertising, in schools. Alone, each of these issues provokes concern; taken together they may constitute a threat to the integrity of British Columbia’s public school system as it exists today. Partnership involvements of all types exist first and foremost to serve the school system; any service of the partners’ goals must be secondary. Private companies exist to make profits, NGO’s exist to further their own specific causes, charities each serve their own needy clientele, but schools exist to serve students so that they may grow to serve themselves and their society. (Olson, 1989-90) Partnership involvements must not be permitted to divert attention from the goals of public education.

Recent policies have extensive language to allow input from a variety of stakeholders at all stages of an involvement’s development. In order that partnerships can be assured to be serving the educational needs of the district, partnership policies must require full transparency.

If schools are to continue to serve the interests of all students, and not unduly favour the interests of one sector of society over another,
then it is my view that the following two concerns need to be enhanced in policy development.

Equity

Universal public funding and equity of access are hallmarks of the public education system. Any tendency to make schools reliant on private sources for funding, or to dislodge control of the distribution of educational opportunities from public institutions may represent a challenge to universality.

The literature and the policies indicate that certain groups want to augment shrinking public funds for schools. These groups could do so at the provincial rather than the district level, and let elected officials allocate funds through publicly accountable procedures. It is hypocritical of businesses to complain that they are over-taxed and then to support schools they choose, in the manner they choose, with strings attached. If partnerships are not to corrupt the ideals of equity upon which public education is predicated, policy mechanisms must ensure that partnership opportunities and benefits accrue to students with a defined educational need. Similarly, certain groups wish to influence curriculum, and policies must ensure that involvements do not circumvent public curriculum standards.
Reciprocal benefits

Most involvements are not purely altruistic donations: they involve reciprocity and mutual benefits. Groups seeking partnerships with schools want to help in ways that help themselves too. Policies and guidelines are in place to protect the basic value system of the public schools while still according partners the opportunity to enhance their images, spread their ideas, or make their sales. But this is a slippery slope – already a "slight majority of Canadians say advertisers should be allowed access to captive young audiences in classrooms in exchange for corporate donations to schools" (Galt, 1999), and in the United States, product references occur in school textbooks. (Improper Fractions, 1999) One generation of students is all it takes until the teachers are then the ones who grew up with ads in their classrooms and in their textbooks.

Certain types of partnership ventures ought not to be a major concern for educators. If school buildings are leased back to boards for fifty years and then torn down and new ones built to meet emerging needs, this makes fiscal sense; the nature of the public institution is not at risk. Similarly, a properly developed commercial involvement need not impact student learning negatively. Effective policies recognise that partnerships legitimise the flow of benefits to partners. Certain of these
benefits, such as contractual commitments for duration, exclusivity, and returns on investment, may be sensible business arrangements between equal partners. A board ought to be able to use its considerable buying power to get lower prices through such contractual incentives.

But other benefits to the partner may be inconsistent with the goals of universal public education. Commercial contracts that carry with them arrangements that propagandise and exploit students are not acceptable. When a school board signs a contract to satisfy photocopying needs for a certain period for a certain price, this is fine, unless the contract also involves an advertising logo on each piece of paper or billboards in the hallways.

A distinction between acknowledgement and advertising is fundamental to sponsorships, donorships, and cooperative partnerships. Policies which allow commercial advertising are out of step with the leadership position taken by the Ministry; they do not adequately protect students from exploitation. Curricula in schools are meant to teach students to think; advertising in schools is meant to lead students to believe. Advertising, by its very nature, promotes uncritical thinking. Schools cannot unpack the complexities of multimedia advertising campaigns in media literacy classes, and concurrently be the purveyors of
advertising messages without some loss of credibility. To legitimise advertising in our schools is to embrace overt indoctrination contrary to the goals of public education.

It is not enough that policies are clear that partnerships must be in keeping with the goals, mission statements, and other policies of the educational institution. Policies must also be clear that advertising – even if it is only a minor purpose of a partnership – may be exploitative of students' innocence. Strong policies must be enforced to ensure transparency and accountability and to prohibit the commercialisation of the school environment. If schools become a mouthpiece for corporate sales or special interest groups, no one can trust schools any more than they can trust Monsanto, Sears, McDonalds, Disney, Nike, Greenpeace, or Bob's New and Used Muffler Emporium.xv

In short, policies should recognise that all partnerships must enhance learning for students, and that certain benefits to the partner may legitimately result from arrangements between equal partners. Effective policies must promote accountability, prohibit advertising and curricular imbalances which may be exploitative of students, and ensure consistency with the goals of universal public education.
Recommendations for further research

This study provided a picture of business-school relationships as presented by the policies of twenty-six school districts and the Ministry of Education. This policy picture does not tell us about the extent of business-school relationships occurring in the province. Further research would be useful to define the state of practice, especially in districts with third wave policies.
References

(1999, March 6). Nanaimo school board opposes boxing matches for students: Trustees won't let a promoter put posters in the schools to advertise his competition. The Vancouver Sun, p. B4.


Crest. (no date). *CrestCare [Dental Information Kit and Child Incentive Package]*. Ottawa: Crest, Canadian Dental Hygienists Association.


Dairyland. (no date). *Receipts for Schools*. 


McDonald's, British Columbia Ministry of Forests, Fire Prevention Officers Association of British Columbia, & Canada, (no date). Learn Not to Burn [Brochure]: McDonald's.


Rogers Communications Inc. (no date). *Rogers Pumpkin Patrol* [student kit]: Rogers Communications Inc.


Wicks, B. (1998). *Born to read... and to cook*. Toronto: Ben Wicks.

Will, G. (1999, February 7). Critics don’t want advertising in parks:

Board eyes sweet deal with Nestlé. The Vancouver Sun, p. 6.
## Appendix B: Policy Roster

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Appendix C: Benefits to Partners.

Policies from across the province do not assume a standardised taxonomy of types of involvement. For example, a policy may label a particular involvement a sponsorship and then go on to describe it as a commercial relationship. This chart links prospective partners with the types of benefit they are most likely to receive from the Board.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Recipient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognition / goodwill / brand recognition / brand loyalty</td>
<td>All partners may receive these benefits. Staff, students, and their families are a captive audience.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tax receipt</td>
<td>Only donors may receive this benefit for donations over twenty-five dollars.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Referrals / endorsement / affiliation</td>
<td>Paid for by certain rental/lease partners. May be a by-product of some charity involvements when students and families are recommended to the charity partner as a good place to spend a donation dollar.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rental of facilities</td>
<td>Paid for by certain rental/lease partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lease of land</td>
<td>Joint capital project partners may receive this benefit in return for an agreement to lease all or part of the built facility to the board. Incidentally, partners may also derive revenue from other rental or lease arrangements they manage on the same site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>Charities may receive this benefit from students and families. retail channel/commercial partners will receive this benefit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefit</td>
<td>Recipient</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time, talent, expertise</td>
<td>Partners will receive this benefit when teachers and other board staff deliver a sponsored curriculum to the children in the classroom, or manage and direct children involved in sponsored activities or working for charity. The time, talent, and expertise of the teachers are dedicated to the students, and teachers are legally responsible for students even when they are reading advertising or buying goods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusive contracts</td>
<td>May be offered to retail channel/commercial partners in return for reduced rates, or to sponsorship partners who support a program through donations or gifts-in-kind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising space</td>
<td>May be offered to certain rental/lease partners who pay to use space on a wall, on a billboard, in learning materials, or district publications. May be offered to certain sponsorship partners who sponsor a yearbook and place an advertisement in it, donate a timeclock with a logo on it, or otherwise advertise their image, product, or service in return for a contribution of any sort to a program, service, or event. May be offered to retail/commercial partners in return for reduced rates. May unintentionally accrue to cooperative partners or donor partners who receive recognition that has a commercial resonance.</td>
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## Appendix D: Reciprocity Chart

Types of involvement, and benefits offered by each party.

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<tr>
<th>TYPE OF INVOLVEMENT</th>
<th>PARTNER OFFERS</th>
<th>BOARD OFFERS</th>
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<td>Sponsorship involvements</td>
<td>Cash, gifts-in-kind.</td>
<td>Recognition, advertising, exclusive contracts.</td>
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<td>Charity involvements</td>
<td>Fundraising aids, recognition tokens, opportunities for social awareness, goodwill.</td>
<td>Time, contributions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail channel/commercial involvements</td>
<td>Product / services to board, schools, staff, students, family at reduced rate.</td>
<td>Recognition, advertising space and audience, exclusive contracts, a market for short term sales, brand loyalty.</td>
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<td>Rental/lease Involvements</td>
<td>Cash, royalties, reduced rates.</td>
<td>Use of board name, logo, reputation. Rental of facilities. Rental of advertising space. Goodwill, legitimacy.</td>
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<td>Cooperative involvements</td>
<td>Shared values, objectives, human / material / financial resources, roles, responsibilities, time, talent, expertise, recognition.</td>
<td>Shared values, objectives, human / material / financial resources, roles, responsibilities, time, talent, expertise, recognition.</td>
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<td>Capital project involvements</td>
<td>Facilities.</td>
<td>Multi-year lease of the land.</td>
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Appendix E: Purposes by District

Use of this chart for analysis or comparison of individual policies is not recommended because it does not reflect the relative importance of purposes or other aspects of their treatment within each policy.

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<th>To enhance learning</th>
<th>To provide mutual benefit</th>
<th>To augment public funding</th>
<th>To improve community-school-relations and charities</th>
<th>To provide goods or services</th>
<th>To share social responsibility</th>
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Appendix F: Types by District

Use of this chart for analysis or comparison of individual policies is not recommended because it does not reflect variations in nomenclature used, the relative importance of types, or other aspects of their treatment within each policy.

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Appendix G: Responses by Geographic Region

The regions listed in the left column are used by the Ministry of Education to cluster the districts geographically for administrative purposes. They are useful here to illustrate the distribution of the sample across the province. Forty of fifty-nine districts are represented (68%).

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District #44 while stating that it has no relevant policies, guidelines, regulations or
discussion papers, uses its policy about advertising in the schools to guide its
partnership and sponsorship involvements. One district (#6) uses Conference Board
documents.

The titles of these policies from these eleven districts were:
"Corporate Ethics" (#5),
"Use of Community Resources in the Instructional Setting" (#19),
"Services in our Schools by Other Agencies and Volunteers" (#19),
"Public Access to the School System" (#19),
"Advertising, Canvassing and Commercial Solicitation" (#37),
"Access to Schools by Outside Agencies" (#40),
"Commercialism in the Schools" (#41, #75),
"District Wide Revenue Generation Activities" (#42),
"Entrepreneurship and Innovation" (#69),
"Commercial, Political, Religious Access to Students" (#73),
"Commercial Materials in the Schools" (#78)
"Solicitations in the Schools" (#91).

In seven of these eleven cases, these policies were sent because the district had no
policy specifically intended to guide the district in matters pertaining to partnerships,
sponsorships and the like. In the remaining four cases, the district sent policy work that
was aimed directly at these issues along with some more peripheral policy work.

Central Okanagan (#23) was still in the process of developing a policy after a recent
discussion paper and proposed policy were rejected by the Board. Abbotsford (#34)
perceived a need for policy and guidelines is this area but went on to say that policy
drafts are made more difficult by the fact that "private companies are unwilling to allow
much transparency on potential partnership because they see it as part of a competitive
marketplace." Richmond (#38) "is in the process of developing policies / regulations /
guidelines to address business/education partnerships [and has] also struck a Revenue
Generation Committee to address those types of partnerships with business as well."
Prince George (#57) is in the process of developing a white paper on the matter and
Campbell River (#72) is planning to implement an "entrepreneurship" policy to address
its involvements with the private sector. Nechako Lakes (#91) is currently collecting
policy documents from around the province with an eye to forming its own policy by
September 1999. Some districts were aware of the need for developing policy. For
example, Gold Trail (#74), as a newly amalgamated district, was only "beginning to forge
new relationships with business." This district did not have "discussion papers,
guidelines, regulations or policies [because] the nature of [the] communities makes any
relationship very different from" those in urban areas.

The superintendent of Central Okanagan (#23) recently submitted to his board a white
paper which consisted largely of excerpts and interpretations of policies, regulations and
guidelines from other British Columbia districts and from actors across Canada; the board rejected that white paper and the proposed policy and ordered a new policy draft for the fall of 1999. Quesnel (#28) is waiting for the results of the Ministry of Education's Provincial Education Committee work in this regard before beginning policy work of its own.

vi B.C. Hydro's *Energy Educational Materials for Intermediate Students*
The energy unit from the ASE-sponsored *Science in Society*.

vi Because districts develop policies in response to local issues and events, there is no lexicon common to them all. Several terms are used to encompass the concept of purpose: goal (#36, 39, 85); purpose (#36, 40, 69); rationale (#19); benefit (#19, 36, 39, 45, 53, 62, 63, 78, 85); objective (#33, 36, 37, 39, 45); desired outcomes (#33); intent (#36); expectations (#39). Districts use a statement such as "The District supports agreements which...", followed by desired characteristics, outcomes, or purposes. For example,

"The Board of School trustees supports the establishment of formal partnerships between schools and business/community organisations. Such agreements are established to provide benefits to each partner and to appropriately enhance the educational programs of the students." (#62)

It is clear that this board sees formal business/education partnerships as being established for two purposes.

vii Definitions of types of involvement are open to some interpretation and inference. Thus, where specific types are not enumerated or where definitions are unclear, types of involvement are inferred through the following information: the various purposes imputed to involvements; the benefits and problems anticipated; the duties and responsibilities outlined; the descriptions of involvements; the involvements that are prohibited, and; the potential partners.

ix Some districts do not mention donations in the policies under scrutiny here. The reason for this is that most districts submitted policies dealing specifically with partnerships and sponsorships, the earliest of which emerged in the 1980s. Donations have been a constant in the public school system since its inception, so a need for donation policies predates any perceived need for partnership or sponsorship policy. Although donations are an important way that schools interact with the community, donation policy may not appear in these policies because donations are one-way transactions which provide minimal benefit for the donor, whereas sponsorships have the potential to provide substantial tangible reciprocal benefits (as befits the accepted definition of a partnership in education). Nevertheless, some of the more comprehensive partnership policies do treat donations.

x Commercial involvements differ from retail channel involvements in terms of target market. A commercial involvement sees private companies sell goods and services to the board or its schools; a retail channel involvement exists when schools and private groups agree to sell goods and services to staff, students, and families.
Small differences in wording, such as explicit language to monitor treatment of non-participants, may raise or lower the bar in favour of universal access across the district. For instance, there is a difference between Surrey’s policy to “treat fairly and equitably all those served by the partnership” (#36), and the more inclusive policy from West Vancouver, to “treat all those served and affected by the partnership(s) fairly and equally.” (#45)

British Columbia’s second-largest district, Surrey, expects that

“any corporate and community participation must complement the goals and objectives of the Board.” The board will support partnerships that “promote its goals, objectives, and adhere to its policies and regulations,” and “that are consistent with the ethics and core values of all partners.” (#36)

Vancouver “supports… relationships… that are consistent with Board policies and regulations… [and] based on shared objectives and expectations.” (#39)

“[Partnership] initiatives must be compatible with the district’s mandate to provide a quality education for the K-12 students in our jurisdiction.” (#42)

“The West Vancouver School Board… supports and encourages partnerships that… are consistent with the ethics and core values of the District, are based on clearly defined expectations of the District and partners, [and] on shared or aligned objectives that support education.” (#45)

“The Board supports education/business partnerships that are consistent with the district’s mission statement, priorities, and existing policy.” (#53)

“Partnerships… must… [be] consistent with the values, goals and objectives of the educational program… [and be] consistent with existing policy.” (#62)

“All sponsorships must maintain/enhance the integrity of the programs, school, staff and students.” (#69)

“The Board supports business/education partnerships that… are consistent with the educational goals of the program… are consistent with existing policy… [and] are based on shared objectives and expectations.” (#78)

In others, the difference is not noted or is merely implied:

“successful business-education partnerships… recognize and celebrate the partnership’s successes.” (#6, #36)

involvements “are to be duly recognized and publicly acknowledged by the School District as deemed appropriate.” (#5)
"Major donations shall be acknowledged by a certificate of appreciation from the Board."  (#24)

"The West Vancouver School Board supports and encourages partnerships that... acknowledge and recognize each partner's contributions appropriately."

"Any promotion or advertising element of the gift or sponsorship shall be in good taste, discreet, and kept to an absolute minimum."  (#45)

"sponsors may be recognized in a dignified appropriate manner in programs, press releases, newsletters, assemblies and posters."  (#69)

"sponsors may be recognized in a dignified, appropriate manner in programs, press releases, newsletters, assemblies and posters. Corporate logos and slogans must not be overused."  (#70)

"Acknowledgement of sponsorship or gift may be given by means of a public statement and/or a plaque attached to the gift."  (#73)

"Each partnership... must... acknowledge and celebrate each partner's contributions through appropriate forms of recognition."  (#33, 36)

"The Board supports... partnerships and will recognize the contribution of all partners through public awareness. Any announcements and press releases must be jointly administered by the Board and the partners without commercialization."  (#36)

"appropriate and discreet acknowledgement may be given to firms or organizations which are involved in a formal school-business partnership."  (#37)

"all forms of support offered by the community shall be acknowledged appropriately and equitably."

"The Board supports sponsorship agreements that... acknowledge and celebrate each party's contribution through appropriate, non-commercial forms of recognition."

"All donors and sponsors, regardless of size of donation or sponsorship, are made aware that their participation is appreciated and recognized in a fitting manner."

"donors and sponsors will be provided "opportunities for recognition."  (#39)

xv The Conference Board of Canada, in consultation with the Corporate Council on Education and more than two hundred representatives from business, education institutions, teachers' organisations, student groups and government organisations across Canada, produced one of the first sets of guidelines for school-business relationships. It is for this reason that this national group has had such influence.
An interesting aside: of all the organisations mentioned in the last sentence, the only one that the Microsoft spellcheck did not recognise was Greenpeace.