



Quality Assurance and Large Scale Reform: Lessons for Chile*

**Synthesis report from the International seminar on
'Regulatory Models and Quality Assurance Systems'
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Introduction and Overview

On the 4th and 5th of December 2006 the Ministry of Education of the Government of Chile held an international seminar in Santiago to discuss 'Regulatory Models and Quality Assurance Systems'. The seminar was sponsored by the Inter-American Development Bank and the OECD and focussed on best practices in OECD Countries. Presentations were made by senior officials from British Columbia, Canada, England, UK, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Scotland, UK. The purposes of the seminar were to:

- Become acquainted with a range of accountability and inspection models for school age education in decentralised educational systems within the OECD.
- Develop an understanding of the organisational arrangements for accountability and inspection in a selection of OECD countries and learn about the processes and instruments required for successful implementation.
- Compare quality standards in different countries in terms of expectation of performance at different levels of the educational system.
- Identify guidelines and produce recommendations for Chile in establishing a quality assurance organisation and reflect on the impact of such an organisation on large scale educational reform in Chile.

As each of the presentations were essentially analytic descriptions of national or provincial practice they tended to address the first two of the objectives of the seminar rather than the latter two. The purpose of this synthesis paper therefore is not just to distil the collective experience of the five cases, but to use them as a basis for developing advice to the Ministry of Education on the establishing of a national organisation for quality assurance within the context of the continuing large scale reform of the educational system in Chile.

The synthesis paper consequently has a strong narrative structure:

- It begins with a brief overview of the education system in Chile and the expressed need for a national system of quality assurance.

- A summary of the evidence on accountability systems is presented as a means of setting the scene for the case studies.
- A brief presentation is then made of each of the five national or provincial cases from British Columbia, Canada, England, UK, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Scotland, UK.
- The common features of the five cases are then summarised in the form of 'twelve commandments' for effective quality assurance.
- These common features are then developed into a series of more practical recommendations for the establishing of a 'superintendency', the name given to the proposed national quality assurance agency in Chile.
- The argument is then made and illustrated that such a 'superintendency' is only one part of a national system for school evaluation and accountability.
- By the same token it is further argued that the 'superintendency' is only one piece in the large scale reform jigsaw or in the phrase used later in the paper an integral but not exclusive feature of an 'operating system for educational reform.
- Then some comments are made on how a 'superintendency' will fit into the overall architecture of the educational system in Chile and what structural re-arrangements may need to be made in order to accommodate and to ensure that the objectives of the large scale reform of the educational system in Chile is realised.
- Finally, the key arguments for a national quality assurance agency are rehearsed and summarised in the concluding section.

The context of school reform in Chile

This is not the place for a detailed review of the evolution of educational policy in Chile; neither am I competent to undertake such a task. Suffice it to say that in the 1980s, Chile's military government guided by a market driven philosophy intervened strongly in the educational system introduced choice and decentralized school administration. In 1990, as the OECD background

report³ made clear after a decade of neo-liberal economic policies, a democratic government led by a centre-left political alliance began to apply a new agenda to education policies, focused on the objectives of quality and equity in terms of contexts and the school system's learning outputs. The success of these reforms is reflected in the subsequent OECD report⁴ that points out that, "More than any other nation in Latin America, Chile has systematically tried to improve educational access and quality." Similarly, the UNESCO EFA report⁵ states that Chile is one of the seven developing countries that deserve mention for the great effort they have deployed to enhance the quality of their education system as measured by long term learning achievement.

Some of the innovations that have led to this success include a mix of:

- Market approaches such as the voucher, incentives to private provision, joint public/private financing, or whole school performance awards (the "SNED").
- Government-led pioneering initiatives such as school computer networks, competitive development of school-based projects, a move from double to single shift day, a modernization of the curriculum, introduction of a more competitive, differentiated career, support for networking among innovative schools attending to disadvantaged populations, a tightening of competitiveness / accountability and a raising of standards for Heads.
- The SIMCE, in the 80s, pioneered the monitoring of results as a tool in support of parental choice. Since 1990, it has been used for targeting purposes and is being continuously refined, with a plan to pilot value added measurement and to release individual data in pursuit of personalized learning improvements.

³ Chile's Ministry of Education prepared a Background Report for the OECD Mission, which in 2003 examined the country's educational policies from 1990-2002, as well as trends in its school system and the challenges outstanding at the beginning of the first decade of a new century.

⁴ OECD (2005) Education Trends in Perspective Analysis of the World Education Indicators - 2005 Edition, OECD.

⁵ UNESCO (2005) Education for All Global Monitoring Report - The Quality Imperative, UNESCO.

- Standards, labelled “Progress maps” are being introduced this year to bring about greater clarity as to learning expectations by age group.

But despite this progress significant concerns remain:

- All the available indicators suggest that learning outcomes have not progressed in line with curriculum and structural changes.
- The highly segmented nature of the education system in which inequities in basic conditions are perpetuated academically and socially.
- The structural problems in the Municipal schools include human and financial resource constraints, politicization, rigidities in the Teachers’ Statute and blurred governance with the MINEDUC (for example the Municipality deals with administration and the Ministry with pedagogy).
- There are a number of other constraints identified in the OECD report. In particular the loose coupling between curriculum reform and teacher preparation which is exacerbated by weak school leadership. As a result, teachers are often overwhelmed by the demands of the new curriculum and because they receive little instructional guidance, there is little subsequent impact on classroom practice.

More recently of course, the student movement and the subsequent Commission report has focussed public attention on education quality and social justice. Whilst the young people - the “Penguins” – may have difficulty in analyzing their malaise beyond Marxist slogans, it is clear that they are unhappy with teacher-centred education, boring teaching, low quality of learning and the gap in outcomes, at least based on SIMCE’s raw scores. It is clear that the “Penguins” have caught the *zeitgeist* and the reaction of the Bachelet government to the student movement and the Commission report will define Chile’s education agenda in the short to medium term.

The **Presidential Advisory Commission’s Report**⁶ is a wide ranging and comprehensive document that is bold in so far as it focuses in a fairly radical

⁶ Presidential Advisory Council (2006) Education Standards - final report.

way on the unresolved structural issues that have characterised the Chilean education system for so long. The following bullet points give a flavour of the proposals.

- *A new Quality Assurance system* with a ‘SuperIntendency’ to evaluate compliance with quality standards through inspection, international benchmarking, more information on schooling outcomes and intervening systematically in underperforming schools.
- *Restructuring of public education* with a move towards decentralized regional educational services and federations of communes and the creation of a Public Education National Service.
- *Restructuring of schooling cycles* to a model of pre-school, six years of primary education, four years of middle school and two years of differentiated secondary education, with the curriculum being revised at least every 10 years.
- *Reform of teaching as a professional career* based on merit recognition and strengthening of teacher preparation and CPD.
- *Restructuring of schools and school leadership* with improving Principal quality and extending their responsibilities, more hours allocated to class preparation, SIMCE used to improve student learning, addressing behavioural problems and re-organization of technical education.

Within this broader systemic structural response lies a deeper concern over quality i.e. ensuring that standards continue to rise across the board, are sustained into the medium term and that the conditions are put in place that enable every student has the opportunity to reach their potential. In this regard, the Ministry of Education sees itself facing the interrelated challenges of:

- Building a concrete and operational notion of quality that is transparent, can be observed and measured, and in so doing strengthens accountability;
- Better defining and reinforcing its quality assurance role, which may include the need to create new institutional arrangements for carrying out quality assurance functions in an effective manner; and

- Enhancing the management capacity of public and private administrators of education, so that they can become effective counterparts of the new accountability and quality assurance policies and practices.

The task of this paper is to address the issue of quality – the building of a high quality educational system with a particular focus on the role of a quality assurance process to ensure that this is the case. In so doing the more contemporary structural issues will also be commented on and put into context. In line with the narrative of this paper before one can begin to engage with the immediate issues of Chilean education, evidence from international experience needs to be examined.

The evidence base on accountability and quality assurance

Much of the current discussion of the policy and practice of accountability in school systems finds its basis in the evidence from research and practice on organisation development (OD) that developed in the second half of the last century. It was not until the late nineteen sixties that the evidence from corporate organisation began being translated into education and that the dynamic between the organisational condition of schools and the quality of education they provide began to be articulated. Besides identifying the dimensions of organisational health, evidence began to accumulate on the effectiveness of the various OD strategies designed to increase organisational health. It was survey or data feedback that was ‘the only treatment associated with substantial improvement’⁷. When used in the educational context, most OD advocates suggested the use of a survey feedback, problem solving and collective decision making design. It was this experience that led to institutional self-review (whether externally or internally conducted) being almost universally regarded as the first step in an improvement process.

⁷ Bowers, D. (1973) OD techniques and their results in 23 organisations: the Michigan ICL study. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*. 9 (1), p. 21.

There was a marked change in the character of school renewal efforts in the nineteen eighties. Four influences accounted for this change in emphasis⁸:

- First there were again almost universal demands for an increase in school accountability.
- Second was the increased emphasis on the importance school leader development.
- Third fundamental changes occurred in the way schools were managed and governed. Although this went by different names in different countries - self managing schools, site based management, development planning, local management of schools, restructuring - the key idea of giving schools more responsibility for their own management remained similar.
- Fourth was the beginning of the international trend towards whole scale national educational reform.

So it is clear that by the mid-eighties the amount of change expected of schools internationally was increasing dramatically. The OECD International School Improvement Project (ISIP), in particular, took a leading role in conceptualising and disseminating examples of various strategies for school reform. This included an analysis of strategies for school based review⁹. The key point is that it was increasingly regarded as one of the few improvement strategies that could not only strengthen the capacity of the school to develop or renew itself, but it also provided evidence for accountability purposes, a structure for managing the change process and the first step in large scale reform efforts..

So there is a coherent back story to contemporary approaches to inspection and school review that explains much of the similarity in the national cases presented at the seminar. Despite contextual differences, each of the

⁸ Hopkins, D. (1994) Institutional Self-Evaluation and Renewal. In Husen, T and Postlethwaite, N. (eds.) *The International Encyclopaedia of Education*. New York: Pergamon Press.

⁹ See Bollen, R. and Hopkins, D. (1987) *School Based Review: Towards a Praxis*. Leuven, Belgium: ACCO; Hopkins, D. (ed.) (1987) *Improving the Quality of Schooling*. Lewes: Falmer Press; Hopkins, D. (ed.) (1988) *Doing School Based Review*. Leuven: ACCO.

following cases regards their accountability system not only as a means of increasing the internal quality of schooling but also as a way of ensuring accountability in an increasingly devolved system. The logic of school review as a strategy for accountability and development goes like this:

- The quality of a school's learning outcomes for students is directly related to its degree organisational health.
- The proven strategy for enhancing organisational health is an institutional review of the dimensions of organisational health which is then linked to an internal improvement process.
- The focus on enhancing the internal quality of schooling resulted from the international interest in large scale educational change which has put great emphasis on both decentralisation and increased standards.
- The reciprocity between decentralisation and local management of schools led to increased demands for accountability
- This in turn led to the widespread adoption of external review and /or inspection as the first steps in a national system for school improvement.
- Subsequent experience suggests that review / inspection may well be necessary first step in an improvement cycle but by itself it is not sufficient. There need to be processes in place to ensure that the outcomes of the review impact on the internal conditions and organisational culture of the school if there is to be a sustained and positive impact on quality and standards.

It is interesting to see in the following section that despite the inevitable cultural and contextual differences that each of the cases described reflect this logic. This logic will inevitably also provide the underpinnings of which ever accountability model that Chile chooses to develop.

Five system wide examples of institutional review and inspection

As has already been made clear, the purpose of the International seminar was to inform key players in Chile about best practices in school accountability and supervision systems for education quality assurance in a range of OECD countries. The five national representatives were invited to

give a presentation on their own approach to inspection and quality assurance identifying challenges and lessons learned from their own country experiences. As each of the presentations was essentially descriptive accounts of national practice they neither contained a comparative dimension nor did they draw explicit lessons for Chile. It may be helpful therefore to give a brief account of each approach in order to understand the system context before presenting a cross case analysis and identifying lessons for the establishing of a 'superintendency' in Chile.

British Columbia, Canada¹⁰

Canada is a federation of ten provinces and three territories. Under its construction, provinces have responsibility for education. British Columbia is one of the ten provinces, and it is its accountability framework that is described below.

In 2002, a more formal accountability structure, that is revised every year, was developed in British Columbia and it included four components:

- District accountability contracts: school boards are required to submit an Accountability Contract to the Minister of Education. The contract deals with improvement and matters ordered by the Minister and are intended to focus their attention on student achievement
- Aboriginal Enhancement Agreements: Enhancement Agreements are made between school boards, their Aboriginal communities and the Ministry of Education. These Agreements set out a local plan for improvement that is developed through strong, sustained dialogue and partnership.
- School Plans: each school is required to have a School Planning Council that annually draws plans to improve the achievement of students in their school. Classroom, school, district and provincial evidence feed into the plans that are shared with the school community. Every year, results are compared to the previous year's plans so strategies can be evaluated. School boards must approve

¹⁰ Source - paper presented in the OECD International Seminar on Regulatory Models and Quality Assurance Systems by Emery Dossdall.

School Plans and consult with School Planning Councils about matters identified in legislation

- District Reviews: District Reviews are conducted by expert teams. Each District Review Team provides a report to the board, the Minister of Education and the public with specific recommendations related to the improvement of student achievement in the district. Districts are expected to respond to the recommendations in the letter to the Deputy Minister of Education. Recommendations are also reflected in both School Plans and Accountability Contracts.

Furthermore, the framework is enhanced by parental choice in schooling, a simplified funding process and the collection of different kinds of information (as demographics, socio-economic status of districts and schools).

England¹¹

In 2004, the publication of the government document 'New Relationship with Schools' in England shifted the focus from external to internal accountability and asked schools to take responsibility for their own improvement. Schools in England are required to engage in an ongoing self evaluation with monitoring individual students' progress and target setting at its heart. Schools complete the Self Evaluation Form (SEF) where evidence on their performance are provided and their strengths and weakness and key priorities for improvement are identified. These feed into the School improvement Plan (SIP), where steps on how improvement is to be achieved are specified.

In terms of external accountability, all state and private schools in England are inspected by the Office on Standards in Education (OFSTED), a non-ministerial government department. Inspections take place every three years by small inspection teams and last one to two days with a two to five days notice. This is a 'light touch' approach having at its focus achievement and standards, personal developments and well-being of all pupils, the quality of provision and the school's leadership and management. Evidence include test

¹¹ Source - a presentation made at the OECD International Seminar on Regulatory Models and Quality Assurance Systems by Maggi Hollingsworth.

and examination results -including contextual value added data-, the SEF, discussions with school leaders, staff, pupils and parents and first hand observations. Feedback on individual schools' performance is provided through public reports for each school.

While most schools emerge with credit from inspections, some schools do not provide the expected standard of education. These schools may be identified as underachieving, in serious weaknesses, and in extreme cases put into special measures. As a result of their underperformance they are frequently inspected and, if they still do not demonstrate the expected improvement, they are subject to closure and restructuring.

Schools are also held accountable through The School Profile, an annual report that intends to provide information to parents about the school's successes, extra-curricular activities, health and safety information and its response to the latest Ofsted report.

Other forms of external accountability include:

- Students' national assessments against performance standards at the ages of 7, 11 and 14 (England has a compulsory national curriculum, which includes a framework of important knowledge and skills in the core areas as well as performance standards).
- The mapping of achievement of specific targets for student achievement by several national initiatives.

The Netherlands¹²

In the Netherlands all schools, both public and private, are equally funded and treated for the purposes of reporting on performance by the state. Monitoring standards is based on a strong emphasis on school self evaluation. Self evaluations include judgments on student exam results, the curriculum, the quality of teaching and learning, student counselling and school climate.

¹² Source - a paper and a presentation presented in the OECD International Seminar on Regulatory Models and Quality Assurance Systems by Liesbeth van Welie.

These feed into the annual school plan, which sets out the specific steps that are to bring about improvement.

Schools are also inspected by an independent body that serves the following three functions¹³:

- To assess the quality of each school and its compliance to the law
- To stimulate continuous quality improvement
- To report yearly to the government about the state of education in the Netherlands

Inspections are based on a four year cycle visits and are carried out by a special taskforce of trained professionals. Inspections involve analysis of the schools' documents, teaching observations and interviews with parents, pupils, staff and management. After the inspection, reports on the quality of the education provided for each school are published on the internet. Schools that perform satisfactory are inspected less in contrast to underachieving schools that are subject to extra supervision and possibly to extra financial support, if they show commitment to improvement.

At the secondary school level, the inspectorate issues school report cards. These are documents that hold quantitative specifications about the school, whereby they take into account the student and the school's characteristics and are compared with schools in similar circumstances. Both the inspection reports and the school report cards are intended to provide an incentive for schools to improve, but also to inform parental choice in schooling.

*New Zealand*¹⁴

The accountability framework in New Zealand pays considerable emphasis on internal quality assurance processes and local decision, with the purpose of

¹³ The inspectorate in Netherlands has a history of more than 200 years' role and its role and function has been modified over the years. However, its function and role that it holds today was a result of legislation that came to force in 2002.

¹⁴ Source - a paper presented in the OECD International Seminar on Regulatory Models and Quality Assurance Systems by Martin Connelly.

empowering teachers and head teachers. Schools are expected to regularly self-review their teaching and learning programmes that are based on frequent assessment of student achievement and judgments on individual students and groups of students. Also, schools are responsible for their local management, which includes formulating their mission statements, aims and objectives, elect their governing body, appoint their own staff, undertake teacher appraisal and manage their own budgets.

Both state and private schools in New Zealand are subject to inspection by the *Education Review Office (ERO)*, made up of experienced ex-teachers and head teachers. Inspectors visit all schools every three years and evaluate the quality of the school's management and the teaching and learning systems. At the end, inspectors issue reports on each of the schools that are freely available to the public.

In 2000, the ERO's role was redefined in order to encourage more partnership between the external review and the school's internal processes. The relationship is intended to be one of co-operation, where inspectors and the school's board and the principal determine the scope and priority of each review. Judgments are made through examining the school's self-reviews and other of its documents, discussions with the school's board and staff as well as observing the school in action. In the case of underperforming schools, the ERO would revisit them within the next 6 months and if still no progress is noted, the Minister of Education has the power to intervene. In serious cases the school's board would be replaced by a Ministry appointee called a commissioner.

Last but not least, parental choice in schooling, based upon public information on each school's performance and its reputation within the community, not only holds schools accountable to their customers, but is also a powerful incentive for improvement.

*Scotland*¹⁵

The Scottish accountability framework is based on the principles that:

- The most effective way of improving the quality of education for individual pupils is to expect schools to take the responsibility for their quality assurance
- Quality should be built into a school's day to day work and not bolted on
- Pupils and parents have a right to know how well their school is performing

Evidently, schools' self evaluating themselves is the predominant feature of the Scottish accountability framework. Schools are to produce an annual self evaluation report the results of which feed into the school's improvement plan that in turn, sets the specific targets that will bring improvement about. Judgments on the quality of the education are based on a national quality indicators framework, embodied in the "how good is your school" booklet. Performance indicators are used to examine the curriculum, attainment, learning and teaching, support for pupils, ethos, resources, management, leadership and quality assurance. The booklet also includes advice on the methodology of self evaluation and a tool kit of audit guide booklets for self evaluation of specific subjects.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE), the Scottish inspectorate, uses the same performance indicators as the ones provided to schools. Data collection includes analysis of the schools' outcome data, interviews, discussions and surveys with staff, parents and pupils, direct observation of teaching and learning and scrutiny of pupils work. HMEI reports on the quality of education at a school level through reports that are available to the public. Subsequent to the reports' publication, schools adjust their targets in accordance with the HMEI's findings. Underperforming schools, as in the case of England, are subject to further inspection.

¹⁵ Source - a presentation presented in the OECD International Seminar on Regulatory Models and Quality Assurance Systems by Annette Bruton.

As has already been intimated there was despite contextual differences a high degree of similarity between each of the cases. So much so that it was possible to express the commonalities as a set of 'twelve commandments' about the practice of school inspection and quality assurance. They are:

- *Take a broad view of student achievement* – student achievement is not exclusively defined by exam results but also by evidence on students' personal development and well-being
- *Focus on learning and the individual student* – central to inspection and quality assurance is the teaching and learning processes and how these are customised in order to personalise learning and help each individual student reach their potential
- *Let data fuel the improvement process* – robust data on the school's performance should be used to identify those areas that the school needs to develop in order to inform the improvement process
- *Report 'raw' results and value added* – judgements on a school's performance are not solely based on 'raw' results but also on the school and individual students' progress over time. Increase in value added should too be acknowledged, appreciated and reported to all stakeholders
- *Balance internal and external accountability* – externally driven accountability can result in 'superficial actions and mistrust'¹⁶. Robust self-evaluation and teacher assessment should also be at the heart of the accountability framework
- *Realise the power of assessment for learning* – assessment for learning is the most powerful lever for a personalised provision based on consistently high quality, where variation is controlled and actively tailored to individual pupils' needs and aspirations
- *Respect the parents and students need to know* – parents and students, as two of the main stakeholders in education, have the right to know about how their and other schools are performing. Reporting

¹⁶ Hargreaves and Fink in Fullan, M. (2006) *Beyond Turnaround Leadership*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, p.48.

on schools' performance to parents and pupils is also an important element in informing their choice in schooling

- *Intervene in inverse proportion to success* – for schools that provide the expected standard of education, self evaluation should be the driver for their improvement and external monitoring should be relaxed. In contrast, where the expected standard of education is not provided, frequent monitoring and support, and in serious cases intervention, should be used to bring improvement about.
- *Understand the principle of reciprocity* – a culture where responsibility for a school's performance is shared between the school, parents, pupils, the community, the inspectors and the government and co-operation between all the above stakeholders is valued and exercised effectively, then quality will be enhanced
- *Tighten the links between self evaluation, inspection and improvement* – the results of schools' self-evaluation correlated with the results of their inspection should directly feed into and drive the schools' improvement plan
- *Beware of premature proportionality* – short term targets can result to quick and positive results in student achievement but can also prevent sustainable and long term improvement
- *Utilise the wisdom in the system* – creating the conditions that allow the participation of a diverse group of people and agencies that can build wisdom in the system is important in safeguarding quality.

Although the 'twelve commandments' provide a economic way of analysing the similarities between the five national cases they are phrased at too high a level of abstraction to be of much practical help to the Chilean authorities as they work towards developing their own quality assurance system. These twelve lessons may provide a useful framework but they lack contextual specificity. In order to use the experience of the cases to aid the development of the 'superintendency' model it may be helpful to first briefly review the approach proposed by Pedro Montt (Coordinator of the Unit of Curriculum and Evaluation of the Chilean Ministry of Education) and then to develop some more specific guideline or recommendations from the cases to provide some

assistance with the further development of the approach. This is done in the following section.

The ‘superintendency’ model and an international critique

During the seminar and following the five national cases, Pedro Montt gave a presentation that outlined the Ministry’s thinking around the ‘superintendency’ model that the Chilean Government are proposing to establish. Space precludes a full description of the presentation but it is important to rehearse here the key ideas.

The decision to proceed with the ‘superintendency’ model is based on the belief that it is the State’s responsibility to honour the trust that families have in the primary and secondary education. In order to enhance the quality of education in Chile, the role of the State as guarantor of educational quality has to be strengthened and consequently an Inspectorate of Education needs to be created. The Ministry suggests that a decentralized system such as Chile’s requires a strong Ministry of Education and proposes a general framework for the design of a quality assurance system in which it retains its role and responsibility in:

- The definition of legal norms;
- Policy-making and implementation;
- Financial, technical and material support to schools legally authorized (to operate).

It is also proposed that the quality assurance agency should follow the basic principles of action as outlined below:

- Consider the school’s educational Project without interfering in its managerial autonomy.
- Build on the results of self-evaluation processes implemented by the schools themselves.
- Conduct the inspections and reviews/controls entrusted to the Agency by law.
- Follow a regular cycle of school evaluations (ex: every 3-4 years) with less frequent visits for schools with higher quality.

- Respect the rule that where results are of higher quality, the intensity of the inspection and supervision visits will be reduced.
- The evaluation process must lean on model of effective school which provides explicit indicators and facilitates school observation.
- The opinions of the evaluators must be based on evidence.

Encouragingly, the above principles are very similar to the “12 commandments” that reflect the commonalities in the QA systems in the five OECD case studies.

Pedro Montt then described the key characteristics of four possible ‘superintendency’ models. These are:

- Assume that the market and competition are sufficient to resolve quality problems. (Chile to-day).
- Emphasize school results but limits intervention in the educational processes to schools with severe deficiencies (SEP Proposal-Chile).
- Strong role for the State in the monitoring of both processes and outcomes of the schools without concern for basic conditions.
- Combines a strong role for the State in ensuring that basic conditions are present to ensure basic conditions and to monitor and ensure quality.

Following the description of the various alternatives Montt presents a detailed analysis of the distribution of quality assurance functions between the Ministry of Education and the ‘Superintendency’. He then summarised the main tasks of a quality assurance agency. It is worth reflecting on these tasks in some detail particularly in light of the national case studies, the “twelve commandments” and the relevant research evidence.

Inspection of schools with a view to checking their compliance with operating pre-requisites and operating conditions

There is clear support for school inspection as an integral part of a national quality assurance system. The brief review of international evidence

discussed earlier and the national case studies supports this principle but also draws attention to the critical relationship between self review and inspection. There are strong arguments for any inspection model to also incorporate a school's own self evaluation which should form a formal part of the inspection process. The key idea is that the links between self evaluation, inspection and improvement need to be tightened and well aligned. There are a number of aspects to this. First, a clear process for self evaluation should be established based upon a detailed inspection framework that describes the criteria for 'organisational health' referred to earlier. Second, these criteria would be published and by themselves provide an agenda for school improvement. Third a full range of data should underpin the self evaluation and this should lead to the more general principle that data should fuel the improvement. Finally, it should also be the case that the school's self evaluation report is monitored annually irrespective of how good the schools last inspection report. These latter points are also picked up in the discussion of the second key task.

Performance review visits of schools, based on expected standards of school management and students learning

It is clear from research and the national cases that the monitoring of school performance is an essential component of a quality assurance system. Because it is not clear at this stage what is meant in practice by this key task and its relationship with inspection, a number of the following comments are in parallel with those above. These are – i) that the school's self evaluation report is monitored annually; and ii) the performance review should be designed to ensure a tighter linkage than is usual between self evaluation and improvement. In addition the following three issues need to be considered. First, although the performance review should be a trigger for improvement, it is a moot point as to whether the QA agency itself should undertake the improvement process. Although the evidence is a little ambivalent on this point the majority of opinion would favour a separation between the functions of inspection and review and those of intervention and improvement. If this is to be the case in Chile this would mean very clear improvement notices for individual institutions and direct linkage to improvement agencies (which could

be licensed and receive regular feedback from the 'superintendency'). Second, the principle of intervention in inverse proportion to success should be established but as the case studies made clear 'premature proportionality' should be avoided. Third, some form of accreditation system could be introduced so that the length of the inspection cycle could be extended or shortened depending upon how successful inspection was. In addition those more effective schools could be incentivised to support those schools in need of improvement.

External evaluation of students learning outcomes in relation with standards developed by the ministry and sanctioned by the education council.

There is a clear need for the external evaluation of student learning outcomes. The SIMCE has been an undoubted success but currently has a limited applicability. There is however the opportunity to extend it to include value added measures and disaggregated data rather than just relying on school average scores.¹⁷ There are some further implications here. The first is that if data is truly to drive the education system then there is a need to establish a data base of performance for each individual child in the Chilean system. Although this is potentially daunting from a technical, political and professional perspective, the rewards it brings in designing an educational system focussed on improving student performance is immeasurable and would give far more sharpness to the outcomes of SIMCE. Second, a broad consensus needs to be established as to what constitutes effective student learning. In many of the case study systems, examination data or standardised test results were taken as a proxy for a wider range of student learning outcomes. There was however, a general feeling of dissatisfaction with this approach and a wish for another metric to capture a broader range of learning outcomes. This is particularly the case given the increasing currency of personalised learning that emphasises the acquisition of a range of personal, learning and employability skills as well as a richer curricula experience. Third and also related to personalised learning is the importance of assessment for learning.

¹⁷ iNet Chile commissioned a report from Dr Mike Treadaway from the Fisher Family Trust in the UK who are the market leaders in developing added value measures of school improvement. Report available from iNet offices in Santiago.

To really enhance quality, we need to move from standardised provision with uncontrolled variation in quality, to personalised provision based on consistently high quality, where variation is controlled and actively tailored to individual pupils' needs and aspirations. This is to ensure that the achievement of full potential becomes universal. The most powerful lever we can pull at the moment to achieve personalised learning is assessment for learning. This may be organised differently in different schools, but the rationale must always be the same:

- clear evidence about how to drive up individual attainment
- clear feedback for and from pupils so there is clarity on what they need to improve and how best they can do so,
- clarity for students on what grades / levels they are working at, with transparent criteria to enable peer coaching, and
- a clear link between student learning and lesson planning.

Evaluation of the degree of satisfaction of parents, students and of their participation in the school community.

Another of the 'twelve commandments' emerging from the case studies was the importance of the parents, students and communities need to know. This *desiderata* that stakeholder information should be built into the overall inspection framework at a number of different levels is the focus of this fourth key task. We have already seen that in the New Zealand case, parental choice in schooling, based upon public information on each school's performance and its reputation within the community, not only holds schools accountable to their customers, but is also a powerful incentive for improvement. Because this is an issue highly relevant to the Chilean situation it is worth exploring this aspect of the New Zealand case in a little more detail.¹⁸ A summary is found in the table on the following page that describes the 'Framework for Assessing Quality in New Zealand Schools'. There is no doubt that the New Zealand school system seeks to empower its teachers and principals and to recognise them as highly competent professionals. As a result they place a considerable amount of emphasis on internal quality-

¹⁸ Source - a paper presented in the OECD International Seminar on Regulatory Models and Quality Assurance Systems by Martin Connelly.

assurance processes and local decision-making. Parents also have a considerable say in what types of schooling they want for their children. Parents get their information from public sources such as Education Review Office reports as well as from the experiences of their friends and neighbours. Schools that do not take care to consider parental and community preferences may find enrolments declining and, in the past, some schools have ended up having to be closed as a result of such processes. It is therefore important to note in Table 1 that the role of Teachers and Parents are given high priority as two of the three sources of information for quality assurance (the third being external). Also the other axis of the matrix relates to input, process and output. When put together ones can see the range of parental judgement involved in the QA process. The Chilean authorities may wish to consider adopting a similar approach.

Table 1: A Framework for Assessing Quality Assurance in New Zealand Schools				
Who undertakes the Quality Assurance process	Customer/Client Judgement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Parental choice of schools; o Democratic processes such as school-board elections, and national elections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Parental involvement in school. 	
	External Quality Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Curriculum o Teacher registration o Resourcing of schools; o Paying teacher salaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Education Review Office; o Office of the Auditor General o National Education Monitoring Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o School Leaver Qualifications o International studies such as PISA
	Internal (to the school) Quality Assurance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Teacher appointments; o School budgeting o School learning programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o School self-review and as TTLe o Teacher appraisal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o School decision making as a result of
		Input	Process	Output
When is it Undertaken				

Generation and delivery of information on the performance and results of schools and of the system

Despite a variation in the range of national practices, the message came through loud and clear from the seminar participants that the QA agency should assume responsibility for collecting and reporting on all educational data in Chile. It should also move, as noted above, towards collecting progress data on individual students that should then be aggregated in order to provide monitoring information on the progress of schools, municipalities and regions and at the school / classroom level in a formative way for individual students. The focus on student, teacher and school performance is well captured in the 'five key tasks' as outlined in Pedro Montt's presentation. What was not emphasised as much was the focus on quality assurance at the level of the Municipality. This however was an issue stressed in a number of the national case studies. The feeling was that 'no school is an island', and as the context in which they operate is critical to their level of performance the Municipal level should also be subject to the quality assurance process. The interrelationship between school and District / Municipal level evaluation is best seen in the British Columbia case as noted above. Using slightly different terms we can see that i) School Plans are reviewed annually, and that these are related ii) to Municipal Reviews conducted by expert teams with specific recommendations related to the improvement of student achievement in the municipality. There are also iii) Enhancement Agreements made for particular disadvantaged groups. These are all underpinned iv) by a Municipal accountability contract that focuses attention on school improvement and student achievement. The important point here is that not only are the levels of quality assurance well integrated, they are also informed by the principles of reciprocity and urgency. The first reflects the implicit social contract between government and professional educators in so far as demands for higher standards are matched by an appropriate allocation of resource. The second principle of urgency is underpinned by the high level of transparency in the quality assurance process and reflects a commitment to ensuring that 'no child is left behind' i.e. if slow progress is noted then

intervention and improvement should be both swift and professionally responsible.

In this section of the paper we have explored the concept of the 'superintendency' in light of best practice in OECD countries. In the following section it is argued that the Ministry of Education needs to realise that school (and municipal) inspection is only one aspect of an overall national accountability framework. As Chile develops its 'superintendency' model this should be seen within the context of the broader accountability agenda.

On the importance of acknowledging that quality assurance is only one component of a national accountability system

Most developed educational systems have evolved an accountability based on the six components listed below. Under each component are some of the issues that most educational consider when implementing each pillar of the accountability framework. These questions should be regarded as heuristic rather than comprehensive to promote thinking about the development of a comprehensive accountability framework.

These six components are:

- **Inspection**
 - The inspection framework sets the standard of excellence and provides the basis for self evaluation
 - Principle of differentiation in proportion to effectiveness
 - Lateral accountability through inspection of municipalities.
- **Standards**
 - High standards set out in a National Curriculum
 - National Tests at regular intervals
 - Develop metric for broader range of student learning.
- **Targets**
 - Moral case for national targets
 - Schools set their own trajectories to meet national target within a particular time frame

- Peer support and pressure through local networks.
- **Testing**
 - Limited number of national tests at the most at ages 7, 11, 14, 16 and 18
 - Increased emphasis on moderated teacher assessment and authentic testing
 - Assessment for Learning more fully implemented.
- **Performance Tables**
 - Increase use of (contextual) value added and benchmark data
 - Inclusion of collective/network measures
 - Introduction of school profile or charter.
- **Performance Management**
 - Clear focus on teaching and learning
 - Use of student performance data and link to within school variation
 - Emphasis on peer support and coaching.

There is one further and crucial issue to be addressed when thinking about a national accountability system – that is the balance between internal and external accountability or what in England has been termed ‘intelligent accountability’¹⁹. Experience shows that too great an emphasis on external accountability may lead to short term gains in test scores but this will be at the expense of sustained quality in the medium term. Too great an emphasis on internal accountability may be popular with teacher unions but it usually leads to uneven performance across the system. It is when there is a dynamic balance between internal and external accountability that the link between inspection and improvement will be optimal and the use of inspection to promote educational quality will be best achieved.

The figure below illustrates how internal and external accountability can be balanced in order to achieve maximum quality within an educational system. Four of the six components of an accountability system are described in terms

¹⁹ See Chapter 5 – Intelligent Accountability in Hopkins, D. (2007) Every School a Great School, Maidenhead: Open University Press.

of both its potential internal and external forms. It represents a reasonable if not ideal balance between internal and external accountability and provides a platform for building capacity and professional accountability within an educational system. This is not intended to be a prescriptive suggestion for the Chilean educational system. The diagram is intended to be more of a heuristic; it provides a framework for considering a range of options when considering the establishing of a comprehensive accountability system.

Building Intelligent Accountability		
	Internal	External
Tests	Assessment for learning at all ages as part of curriculum experience	External tests at regular intervals e.g. 7, 11, 14, 16 18
Targets	Schools have targets for every child in every subject based on assessment for learning and schools own self evaluation	Schools are set targets at ages 7, 11, 14 and 16 by national authorities
Tables	Value added analysis and published school profile give more information to parents	'Raw' results published at all ages in league tables
Inspection	Rigorous self-evaluation throughout school required to demonstrate sound management to Inspectors.	Every 3 years at no notice. More frequent in weak schools. Experts oversee all inspections.

Figure 1 – A framework for building intelligent accountability

What has usually happened in most educational systems is that there has been an initial focus on external accountability say inspection and then other elements are added in a piecemeal fashion. Once there is a reasonably comprehensive external accountability framework in place there is a move towards increasing internal accountability. As a consequence changes to the accountability framework are usually achieved piecemeal rather than as part of a strategic and purposeful re-balancing. Because of this, opponents of accountability will perceive the framework as continuously open to change through attrition. This is inevitably de-stabilising, it is better to develop a

comprehensive proposal in the first place and this diagram is designed to assist in thinking the issues through.

But even a comprehensive accountability framework is only one part of a strategy for systemic sustainable educational reform

The argument in the previous section was that even a well designed inspection system is only one part of a comprehensive approach to accountability. Following the same logic, the argument here is that even a well balanced accountability system is only one element of a systemic approach to educational reform. Put another way even the very best of inspection systems or ‘superintendency’ organisations cannot by itself ensure a high quality educational system – it has to be part of a larger educational reform strategy or to use the phrase introduced shortly – an operating system. For this reason in this section of the paper we briefly review the contribution an inspection system makes to an overall approach to educational reform.

A major problem with large scale reform in many countries, and the discussion on the ‘superintendency’ in Chile is a case in point, is that a single policy option is worked on in isolation from the wider policy context, rarely is the entire policy framework considered at the same time. What is needed are policy frameworks that will allow governments to relate their policy choices more directly to student outcomes, and to reflect on how best to balance various strategies in a comprehensive approach to systemic educational change. These are some of the issues we have been thinking through in a preliminary way with colleagues at the OECD responsible for the PISA programme. The figure below provides an example of such a framework²⁰. It seeks to identify three key elements of a coherent approach to school change.

The framework also suggests how these three elements may interact and impact on the learning and achievement of students. There is the hardware –

²⁰ This educational model was developed by Michael Barber (2005) ‘A 21st Century Self Evaluation Framework’ Annex 3 in ‘Journeys of Discovery: the search for success by design’ Keynote speech in the National Centre on Education and the Economy, Annual Conference, Florida based on the Thomas Friedman’s analogy (in his book **The Lexus and the Olive Tree** Understanding Globalisation (1999)) of a nation’s economy being compared to a computer system.

the infrastructure, funding and physical resources as well as human and intellectual capital. There is also the software – the interaction between the school and the student, the process of teaching and learning infused by the leadership of the school. In between the two there is the operating system, or the strategy for change the school or system chooses, or not, to employ to develop itself as a whole.

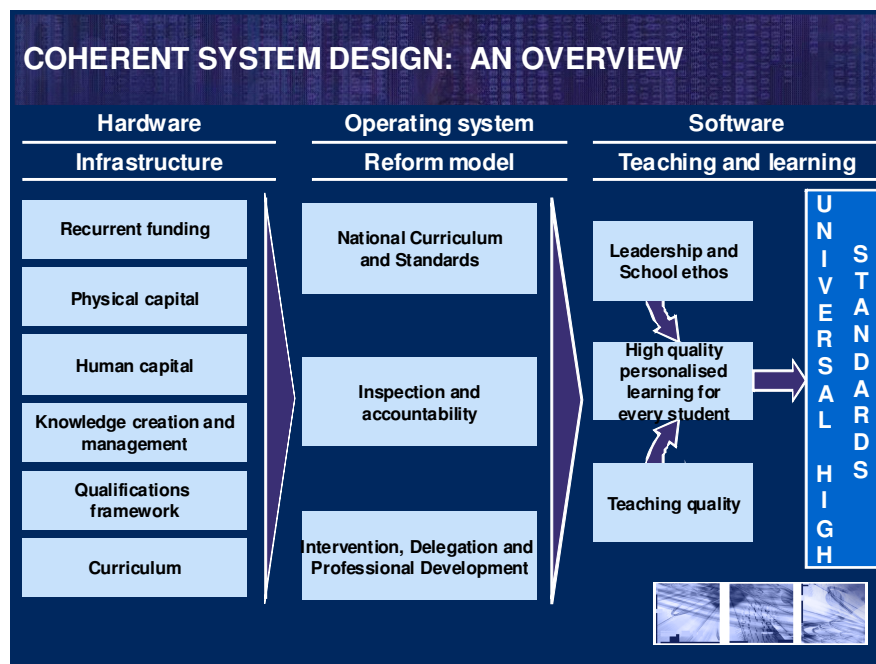


Figure 2 – A coherent system design framework

Many governments assume that there is a direct link between the hardware and the software – as long as the resources are in place then student learning will be satisfactory. This is rarely the case and the reason is simple. We need a change strategy to link inputs to outputs, without it student and school outcomes will be unpredictable. When there is such a clear strategy then governments will be more likely to translate their resources more directly into

better learning environments and therefore enhanced learning outcomes for their children. The existence of such a framework allows for a more intelligent debate over the policies adopted by different countries in terms of all three elements – the hardware, the software and the operating system and their integrated impact on standards of learning and achievement.

The logic of this framework is clearly seen in the Chilean situation. The concern over quality described in the earlier part of the paper is really an issue about linking of inputs to outputs. The argument has been that despite universal education and significant investment that outcomes are not as high as expected. The demands for quality are in reality a desire for a tighter relationship between inputs and outcomes. The ‘superintendency’ proposal is seen as a means of ensuring a closer congruence between inputs and outputs. In terms of this framework the ‘superintendency’ is *de facto* the operating system. The argument being made in this and the previous section of the paper is that: first, the ‘superintendency’ is only one part (although a very important part) of an overall accountability system; and second that accountability although extremely important is again only one part of an operating system.

It is this that I have tried to illustrate in the diagram, by inserting ‘Inspection and Accountability’ as a part of the operating system but by also suggesting that a National Curriculum and Standards together with Intervention, Delegation and Professional Development as its other key features.

Again there is a danger of being too prescriptive here, so what follows is only illustrative. It was clear however that each of the five national and provincial cases had a fairly explicit operating system although none of them used that exact phrase. By and large each system had a national curriculum with clearly articulated standards at various ages and this was linked to the provision of quality teaching materials and professional development support. Most of the cases set demanding targets but gave strong support for schools in the most challenging of circumstance. Finally the demands for accountability were linked to the increasing devolution of responsibility to the school level. It is this complementary cocktail of policies or operating system

that has appeared in many countries to have been highly effective at raising standards in the short term. This of course is not to say that these are the integrated set of policies that Chile should adopt, but it does provide a further more practical framework in which to consider the relationship between various policy options in a coherent design for system reform.

The relationship between these various policy initiatives is seen in Figure 3 with more detail provided in Table 2²¹.



Figure 3 – A Potential Operating System for Chile

²¹ Both diagram and table are adapted from Barber, M. (2001) (2001) 'Large-Scale Education Reform in England: A work in progress', Paper prepared for the School Development Conference, Tartu University, Estonia and further explained in Hopkins, D. (2007) *Every School a Great School*, Maidenhead: Open University Press.

<p>AMBITIOUS STANDARDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •High standards set out in a National Curriculum •National Tests at age 7, 11, 14, 16 	<p>BEST PRACTICE & CPD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Universal professional development in national priorities (literacy, numeracy, ICT) •Leadership development as an entitlement
<p>ACCOUNTABILITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •National inspection system for Schools and Municipalities •Publication annually of school/municipal level performance data and targets 	<p>DEVOLVED RESPONSIBILITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •School as unit of accountability •Devolution of resources and employment powers to schools
<p>GOOD DATA/CLEAR TARGETS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Individual pupil level data collected nationally •Statutory target-setting at municipal and school level 	<p>INTERVENTION IN INVERSE PROPORTION TO SUCCESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Improvement grant for implementation of post-inspection action plan •Monitoring of performance by municipality

Table 2 – Complimentary strategies to drive school improvement

A final word on structure

We are rapidly reaching the end of this narrative. We have also strayed somewhat from the original brief by placing the discussion of inspection systems within the context of a systemic reform programme. I make no apology for this because a) without a systemic approach quality cannot be assured, and b) each of the national / provincial presentations implicitly located their inspection system inside a broader and more inclusive ‘operating system’. In the case of Chile however we cannot leave even this extended discussion here.

Most people at the seminar would agree and certainly the OECD report on Chile argues that there are structural issues in Chilean education that militate against quality. Even the most sophisticated of operating systems cannot ensure and enhance quality in a system that is apparently ambivalent about decentralisation which is a key feature of virtually large scale reform effort globally. It is therefore pleasing to see that the Presidential Advisory Commission’s Report is taking structural reform so seriously. Again there is a

danger of being too prescriptive but there are a number of structural issues that the Chilean Ministry of Education may wish to consider alongside the establishing of a 'superintendency'.

The first three issues relate to the diagram on the following page.

The first issue obviously relates to the establishing of the 'superintendency'. As implied in the diagram it needs to be established as a free standing organisational unit and for obvious reasons be independent of the Ministry of Education. It immediately removes from the Ministry of Education concerns over interfering in the measurement of school results. The agency should also assume responsibility for all data related activities in the system such as SIMCE and besides conducting inspections report regularly on the overall performance of the educational system.



Figure 4 – A Potential Re - Distribution of Key Educational Responsibilities in Chile

Second the Ministry of Education should also consider establishing a similarly freestanding curriculum and standards agency to complement the agency for quality assurance. Again the reason for independence is fairly obvious – it allows for more of a national debate and consensus on curriculum and standards on their own terms rather than being influenced by party politics.

The third implication to be drawn from the diagram is perhaps less obvious. If the previous two functions were outsourced that would allow the ministry to focus its energies on developing policy, creating strategy and ensuring the overall capability of the system. These are the core functions of a Ministry of Education. The arguments for the focus on policy and strategy have already been made. The issue of capability needs more explanation and is related to and the tensions illustrated in the diagram below.

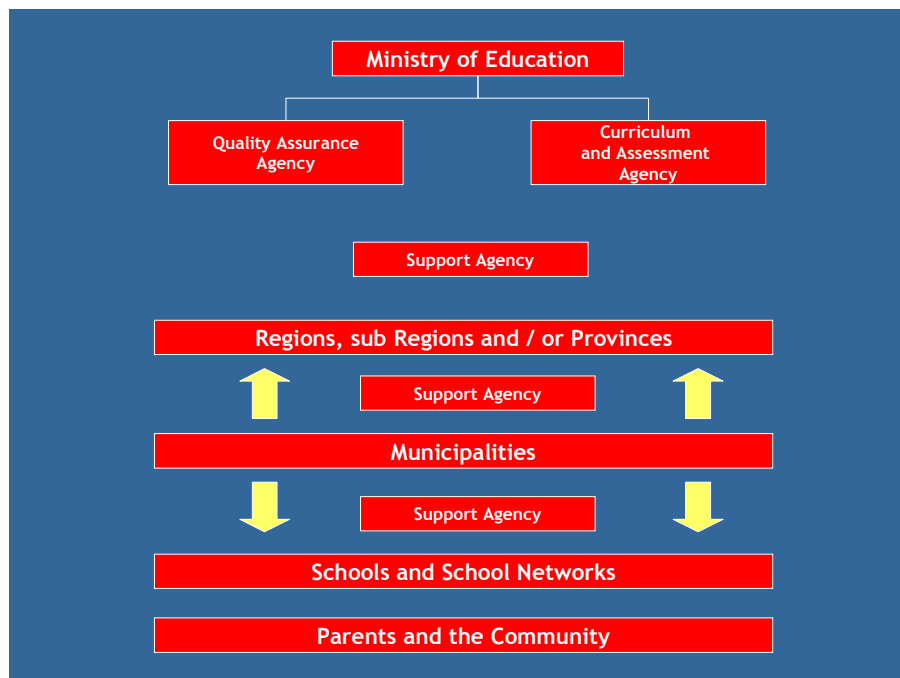


Figure 5 – An Overview of the Structural Relationships in the Chilean Educational System

There are a number of other issues raised by this diagram. They relate to the issue of capability and concerns over ambiguities related to decentralisation.

The key issue is that if and it is an if, the Chilean government genuinely wishes to pursue a greater degree of de-centralisation then a key purpose of the Ministry is to create capability within the system as a whole hence the identification of this function in the previous diagram.

If this is the direction of travel then there a series of other implications need to be considered. Once again there is a need to be conservative in the suggestions being made here – hence the lack of connecting lines in the diagram, but the issues are:

- **The role of the municipality.** The implication of the diagram is that the responsibilities of the municipality are shifted both upwards and downwards.
 - Upwards to some form of sub regional structure because there are just too many municipalities to be efficient. The nature of a sub regional structure needs debate – in my view it should be both a pragmatic and empirical decision. They could for example be based on provincial structures or not.
 - Downwards to the schools in order to increase local management and decentralisation. Consideration should be given to both local management responsibilities to school as well as to encourage schools to establish collaborative arrangements.
- **The role of support.** In order to ensure and enhance quality, the link between inspection and improvement is crucial. As we have seen, the way in which the QA agency communicates to the various support agencies is a critical link in the improvement chain. But in an increasingly decentralised system with a potentially complex series of relationship at various levels of the system then the role of support throughout the system also becomes increasingly important. There is not the space to discuss the detail of this here neither is there readily available information of the extent of support services or agencies already existing in Chile. Three points need to be made however:

- First that support needs to provide at least at three levels in the system: for the sub regional or equivalent level as they take responsibility for the co-ordination of support and enhancing of quality throughout their area and provide challenge and support to the municipalities; second for the municipalities if as is likely they become legally responsible for the performance of their schools; and third for schools and networks of schools themselves as they respond to the outcomes of inspection and formulate their own development plans.
- Second that a map of potential support is created and supply is incentivised. This would be another aspect of the Ministry of Education's capability function. It may well be that market in support services is established and funded from both central and devolved budgets.
- Third the quality of support also needs to be monitored which would be another role for the quality assurance agency.
- **The role of parents and community.** One of the virtues of a quality assurance agency in the way that Chile is intending it is the closer links it will ensure between the provision of educational services by schools and the customer not only students but their parents and communities. This gives potentially a greater control over education by parents and communities.

Concluding comments and summary

The debate over the establishing of a Quality Assurance agency in Chile comes at an opportune time. The history of the increasing innovativeness and equity of the Chilean system has been well documented, but there is much still to do as the Student Movement of 2006 so graphically illustrated. It is pleasing to note that the Presidential Advisory Commission's Report has taken these issues very seriously.

As we have already noted some of the key points in this landmark Report are:

- Instituting a fundamental right to quality education for all, with adequate standards & mechanisms
- Creating a Quality Assurance Agency
- Generating the conditions to allocate more resources to education, focusing on the most disadvantaged students
- Eliminating discrimination of any type and ensuring equitable access for all
- School quality is to be measured by four indicators: coverage, learning results and process quality, level of funding
- Creation of an educational professional career (revising the Teacher's Statute)
- Deepening family participation in the business of the school.

Central to these is the creation of a Quality Assurance Agency – the SuperIntendency – which has been the focus of this paper. The analysis conducted here, and in particular the experience of leading OECD countries in this aspect of educational reform, supports the five key tasks that the Ministry of Education has set for this organisation. The key tasks, together with a summary of the analysis conducted in this paper, are:

- ***Inspection of schools with a view to checking their compliance with operating pre-requisites and operating conditions.*** As long as the inspection model also incorporates the school's own self evaluation and that the links between self evaluation, inspection and improvement are well aligned.
- ***Performance review visits of schools, based on expected standards of school management and students learning.*** The performance review should be a trigger for improvement and the principle of intervention in inverse proportion to success should also be established.
- ***External evaluation of students learning outcomes in relation with standards developed by the ministry and sanctioned by the education council.*** This has a number of implications. The first is the need to establish a data base of performance for each individual child in the Chilean system. Second, a broad consensus needs to be established

as to what constitutes effective student learning. Third is the importance of assessment for learning.

- ***Evaluation of the degree of satisfaction of parents, students and of their participation in the school community.*** It is clear that stakeholder information should be built into the overall inspection framework at a number of different levels. Schools that do not take care to consider parental and community preferences may find enrolments declining and, in the past, some schools have ended up having to be closed as a result of such processes.
- ***Generation and delivery of information on the performance and results of schools and of the system.*** This task should incorporate the quality assurance of Municipalities as well as schools. Municipal reviews also need to be informed by the principles of reciprocity and urgency.

It was then argued that the Ministry of Education should regard school (and municipal) inspection as only one aspect of an overall national accountability framework. As Chile develops its 'superintendency' model this should be seen within the context of the broader accountability agenda. By the same token it is further argued that the 'superintendency' approach is only one piece in the jigsaw of large scale educational reform. In the phrase used later in the paper the 'superintendency' model is an integral but not exclusive feature of an 'operating system' for educational reform. Towards the end of the paper some observations were made on how a 'superintendency' model fits into the overall architecture of the educational system in Chile. In particular, what structural re-arrangements may need to be made in order to accommodate and to ensure that the objectives of the large scale reform of the educational system in Chile is realised. Finally, the progress that Chile has made in developing its educational system over the past seventeen years must be recognised and applauded. As the Chilean government begins to tackle the challenge of ensuring quality throughout the system the conclusion from this analysis is that the proposals for a Quality Assurance agency have the potential to contribute significantly to this goal.