

APPENDIX B

INTERNATIONAL NETWORKING FOR EDUCATIONAL TRANSFORMATION (iNET)

The mission of International Networking for Educational Transformation (iNET) is to create powerful and innovative networks of schools that have achieved or have committed themselves to achieving systematic, significant and sustained change that ensures outstanding outcomes for all students in all settings.

1. International Networking for Educational Transformation (iNET) (Australia) was launched in Melbourne on 23 January 2004 by Sue Williamson, Director of Affiliation, Specialist Schools Trust, London and Professor Brian Caldwell, Dean of Education, University of Melbourne. Seventy schools from all sectors have joined. There is a Reference Group of 20 principals. Head of iNET (Australia) and Interim Chair of the Reference Group is Dr Wendy Cahill. Howard Kelly serves as Project Consultant.
2. iNET (Australia) is one of a number of networks to be formed in 2004, with the foundation being laid in several nations in the Asia-Pacific, South Africa and South America (see 10 below). iNET (Global) to which each shall be affiliated is an initiative of the Specialist Schools Trust. Professor Brian Caldwell will serve as Associate Director (iNET), Specialist Schools Trust, from 1 August 2004. He will work closely with Professor David Hargreaves, Chair, British Educational and Communications Technology Agency (BECTA) who is Associate Director (Development and Research), Specialist Schools Trust.
3. An international conference of affiliated networks will be held in Melbourne in July 2004. The conference is sponsored by the Specialist Schools Trust, iNET (Australia), Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, and the University of Melbourne. In addition to being a superb conference in the traditional sense, it is intended to be a working conference, setting an agenda for international networking among participants in the succeeding 12 months.
4. iNET is modelled on the successful strategy of the Specialist Schools Trust that has helped achieve dramatic improvement at upper secondary in England. The driving force for iNET is the strategy that has led to this success rather than the concept of 'the specialist school'. It is worthwhile, however, to gain an understanding of the scale of success, as explained in 5 and 6 below. The driving force for transformation has been principal-led networks, with transformation considered to be change that is significant, systematic and sustained as far as outcomes for students are concerned.
5. Commencing in the late 1980s with just 15 city technology colleges, at 31 January 2004 there were 1,646 specialist secondary schools, representing 54 percent of secondary schools. Success has led to it becoming a major item in the Blair Government's agenda for a second term. Facilitating the development is the Specialist Schools Trust and its network of over 2,300 affiliated schools. Along with the outcomes reported below, this is arguably the most significant development in secondary education in any nation at this time. Ten specialisms are encouraged: arts, technology, languages, sports, business and enterprise, engineering, mathematics and computing, science, humanities and music. A new category of rural schools is to be included. Schools are still required to address the national curriculum in each key learning area. The important feature is the development of specialisation or areas of

excellence in one or more of the nominated areas. These secondary schools, now clearly constituting a critical mass in England, may be found in every setting, with as many in low as in high socio-economic areas.

6. Specialist schools consistently outperform non-specialist schools in terms of success of students in the GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) and this finding applies in all socio-economic settings. In the most recent study of outcomes, it was found that results for pupils at specialist schools are improving three times faster than those in other comprehensives, with children of average or below average ability making the greatest progress. Inner-city comprehensives with the highest levels of poverty also improved more rapidly if they were specialist. When asked for the reasons for these successes, the principal of Sir John Cass Foundation School in working class Tower Hamlets asserted that 'when you become a specialist school you become part of a big family – a huge network of intellectual capital that improves things by 1,000 percent' (as reported in *The Times*). The school achieved top ranking in value added results and top ranking in school improvement: from 32 percent good passes to 79 percent good passes for GCSE in three year. The Prime Minister's Delivery Unit concluded that the Specialist Schools Trust provides 'an effective network for spreading good practice'.

7. The Trust has delivered these outcomes through principal-led networks. However, arrangements between the government through the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Trust provide the framework. DfES provides the Trust with an annual grant to support its work. Special grants are provided for particular projects, the most recent of which calls for the Trust to utilise its principal-led networks to support 450 under-achieving secondary schools.

8. There are currently five themes in the iNET agenda: curriculum, workforce development, technology, school design, and leadership. A feature of iNET is the sponsorship of programs for 'young leaders' – those in the early years of their careers who seek senior appointments in schools. Principals play a key role in the design and delivery of these programs. A 'young leaders' program sponsored by iNET (Australia) will commence in mid-2004.

9. The Specialist Schools Trust is currently working with the National College for School Leadership in the design of leadership programs for teachers at the primary level in England (anticipating an extension of iNET to the primary and early childhood years). The University of Melbourne will offer a Master of School Leadership from July 2004 that will credit related elements of the 'young leaders' program. It is expected that international cross-crediting arrangements will be made with universities in other countries.

10. Two more iNET's will be established in South Africa and Chile in the months ahead. iNET (South Africa) will be launched in Pretoria on 19 March 2004 during a study tour sponsored by iNET (Australia) in association with iNET (England). iNET (South Africa) will place a high priority on the transformation of schools in townships across the nation. It draws its inspiration from Nelson Mandela who personally raised the funds for no less than 127 schools during the time he was President. He launched the Mindset Network in July 2003 in the week of his 85th birthday. This \$50 million public-private partnership provides satellite television channels for learning in schools in challenging circumstances. Françoise Delannoy will serve as Project Consultant to establish iNET (Chile) and will link with others to lay the groundwork for other iNET's in South America.