Student movement and schools—what are the issues?

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Ally Bull and Jane Gilbert
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All research is the product of the work of many people.

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Executive summary

This report describes the findings of a research project designed to investigate the educational issues faced by communities with high levels of residential movement. The project is part of a much larger programme of study, called Building Attachment in Communities and Families Affected by Transience and Residential Movement and co-ordinated by the Centre for Research, Evaluation and Social Assessment (CRESA). The aim of this wider study is to investigate how communities can balance the benefits of residential movement with the potentially negative impacts.

The research programme was carried out in four New Zealand case study communities: Waitangirua/Cannons Creek (an urban area in Porirua City, near Wellington); Amuri (a rural community in North Canterbury); Opotiki District (in the Eastern Bay of Plenty); and Kawerau (an Eastern Bay of Plenty town). The programme has several modules. Other researchers have looked at health, housing, and welfare issues; at labour market and employment issues; at community crime and safety issues; and at the issues for young people aged 16–18 years. Information was collected on family and household movement in the four case study areas, and the project has a historical adviser with expertise in the construction of identity and community in New Zealand. The programme's overall aim is to provide local communities and government agencies with information and tools they can use to optimise community attachment and human capital development in areas of high residential movement.

New Zealanders in general move residence frequently. High levels of movement can bring benefits to a community, but they can also have adverse effects, particularly where there is loss of infrastructure and where people are moving for negative reasons. The four case study areas have residential movement rates that are broadly similar to—or slightly lower than—those for New Zealand as a whole: however, all are communities that saw themselves as being significantly affected by high levels of movement.

The work in the education module described in this report, took place in two distinct phases. In Phase One of the study (2003) we collected data on student movement, achievement, and attendance in 20 schools (a mixture of primary, intermediate, secondary, area, and kura Māori) in the four case study areas. We interviewed the principals of all of these schools for their views on the effects of student mobility on their school. We calculated the rates of movement (at non-standard times) for each school (using 2002 information), and worked out the proportion (from a sample of three year groups) of students in each school who were moving frequently from school to school. We then compared the achievement and attendance records of this group of students with those of the other students in the same year group.

The Phase Two work (2006) of the education module involved 18 schools. We collected the same information as in Phase One but added some new instruments. We calculated the 2004 and 2005 non-standard movement rates (from the school's records of enrolments and withdrawals), and the 2006 numbers and proportions of frequent movers in each school (from the "Record of Schools Attended" cards). We looked at the 2006 attendance records of all students in the sample year groups. We re-interviewed the principal (or their representative) in each of the study schools. In addition to this, we also interviewed the teacher of the Year 5, 8, or 11 class in each school (except one), as well as the principal. We designed and administered a survey of Years 5, 8 and 11 students in the study schools (a total of 717 students). This survey assessed students' "sense of belonging" to school via questions on their attitudes to school, school work, and teachers, and links between school and family. In the Phase Two work we also collected the students' achievement records in a different way. For the Years 5 and 8 cohort (primary) we collected the Progressive Achievement Test (PAT) mathematics scores, and Supplementary Test of Achievement in Reading (STAR) scores. (These are nationally standardised tests that assess children's progress in relation to other New Zealand children of the same age.) For the Year 11s we used 2006 NCEA results. The results summarised below, unless specified otherwise, are from the Phase Two work.

The mean non-standard movement rate over three years for the Waitangirua/Cannons Creek schools we visited was 32 percent. For the Amuri schools it was 29 percent; for the Opotiki schools it was 45 percent; while for the Kawerau schools it was 39 percent. Thus all four areas have high levels of non-standard movement. Overall movement rates in the Waitangirua/Cannons Creek, Opotiki, and Kawerau schools are similar to those found in schools in other low-decile areas. The Amuri schools' mean movement rate in the study period of 29 percent was comparable to—though slightly higher than—schools of similar deciles in other studies. Opotiki was the only area showing an upward trend over the study period. These average rates mask a wide spread of rates (from 9 percent to around 80 percent) found in individual schools. Thus a third or more of the student roll in the schools we studied is turning over each year at non-standard times. According to the principals of these schools, this affects their ability to manage, plan, and resource their core work.

We looked at the E19/22A (or "progress") cards of all students in Years 5, 8, and 11 in the study schools to see how often they had moved schools, and where they had moved from. We classified Year 5 students as frequent movers if they had been to three or more schools in their five years at school. We classified Year 8 students as frequent movers if they had been to four or more schools and Year 11 students as frequent movers if they had been to five or more schools. A few students had moved very frequently (there were children in Year 5 who had been to eight or nine different schools, and children in Years 8 and 11 who had been to between 10 and 15). Some were moving in and out of the same schools (many of the schools referred to these students as "boomerang" students).

Twenty-one percent of students in the three sample year groups in Waitangirua/Cannons Creek were frequent movers. In the Amuri schools this proportion was 13 percent, in Opotiki it was 32

percent overall, while in Kawerau it was 29 percent. However, it is likely that the proportions are higher than this. Many of the progress cards had obvious inaccuracies, and the way information is entered varies widely. In some of the secondary schools around half of the students had no progress cards at all. Movement rates were lower in the secondary schools than in the primary schools (except Amuri), which brought the overall rates down.

We found no statistically significant differences in attendance between mobile and non-mobile students in any of the areas. In Phase Two, as in Phase One, we found few statistically significant differences in achievement between mobile and non-mobile students at either primary or secondary level. There was a pattern of slightly lower performance by mobile students in some areas: however, this pattern was not statistically significant, and it cannot be inferred from this that the students' mobility was the cause of their lower achievement.

These findings are consistent with those of international research in this area. Other studies have found links between high mobility, low income, and reduced educational attainment. However, it has proved to be difficult to disentangle the effects of frequent movement from other factors that are associated with low income that could affect educational attainment. Some studies have shown that, when the relative impact of these other factors is taken into account, the direct effect of high mobility on student achievement is small.

Analysis of the responses to the survey of students' attitudes to—and engagement with—school produced only small differences between the mobile and the non-mobile group. However, the differences were greater in the Year 11 group than in the younger groups. The only area with a consistent pattern of mobile students being less positive than non-mobile students was in the links between school and family. This is an area that needs further investigation.

Most of the principals and teachers we interviewed saw student mobility as a major issue for their schools. Most agreed that student movement at non-standard times of the year disrupts programmes and makes planning difficult. However, there was less of a consensus on mobility's other effects. Most agreed that lateness and/or irregular attendance are more disruptive.

An interesting finding of this project is the disjuncture between the data we collected and teacher beliefs. The report puts forward some possible reasons for this "lack of fit". It discusses some of the problems in collecting accurate data in this area, and explores the "school-as-family" metaphor that (it argues) structures teachers' thinking about schools and their purposes. Maintaining this "family" metaphor requires stable school populations: the "blended" and/or "foster family" situations engendered when student movement is high are difficult for schools to cope with. The report concludes by looking at some of the changes signalled in the New Zealand draft curriculum document that could be a useful basis for seeing student mobility more positively.

1. Introduction—The Building Attachment in Communities and Families Affected by Transience and Residential Movement programme

This report describes the findings of a research project designed to investigate the educational issues faced by communities with high levels of residential movement. The project is one module of a much larger study called Building Attachment in Communities and Families Affected by Transience and Residential Movement. The aim of this wider research programme is to investigate how communities can balance the benefits of residential movement with the potentially negative impacts.[1] The research programme was carried out in four New Zealand case study communities: Waitangirua/Cannons Creek (an urban area in Porirua City, near Wellington); Amuri (a rural community in North Canterbury); Opotiki District (in the Eastern Bay of Plenty); and Kawerau (an Eastern Bay of Plenty town). The programme has several modules. Other researchers looked at health, housing, and welfare issues; at labour market and employment issues; at community crime and safety issues; and at the issues for young people aged 16–18 years. Information was collected on family and household movement in the four case study areas, and the programme has a historical adviser with expertise in the construction of identity and community in New Zealand. The programme's overall aim is to provide local communities and government agencies with information and tools they can use to optimise community attachment and human capital development in areas of high residential movement.

The first section of this report outlines the context in which the wider programme was developed and briefly describes each of the four case study areas. The second section reviews the existing research literature on the educational implications of high levels of mobility.[2] The NZCER study of mobility in schools in the four case study areas is then outlined and the findings presented. The final section of the report discusses some of the issues raised by this research. It suggests some ways of capitalising on the positive aspects of mobility, and recommends some areas for further research.

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[1] The wider programme is being co-ordinated by the Centre for Research, Evaluation and Social Assessment (CRESA), and is funded by the New Zealand Foundation for Research Science and Technology (FoRST).

[2] The term "mobility" is used in much of the international education literature to describe students who change schools frequently. It is used in that sense in this report and does not necessarily imply residential movement, although it could.

The research context

New Zealanders in general move residence frequently. According to the 2006 Census data, just over 60 percent of children aged 5–9 (and slightly more than half of the total population) had moved at least once in the previous five years. High levels of movement can be highly beneficial to communities, individuals, and families. People who are moving to pursue employment or educational opportunities are likely to bring considerable economic and cultural benefits to the communities they move in to. However, high levels of movement can also bring significant costs to individuals, families, and communities, particularly when people are moving for negative reasons—such as escaping debt or family violence. Families and individuals who move frequently can have difficulty finding suitable housing. They may find it difficult to access health, education, or other community or government services. There are likely to be issues around continuity of health care and schooling, and where there are family problems—such as child abuse or neglect—these problems are difficult to address if the family is regularly moving house. These difficulties eventually impact on the wider community. Families who move frequently are unlikely to be a stable labour resource for prospective employers in the community, so large employers may move their operation elsewhere, forcing others to move. Communities that have a net loss of high-resource individuals and a net gain of low-resource individuals often go into a spiral of decline, eventually losing key community resources and infrastructure that, in turn, produces further decline. The individuals and families who are left are increasingly disadvantaged—irrespective of their individual socioeconomic status. In contrast, vibrant, functional communities with strong public infrastructures can protect people from the effects of disadvantage—the "neighbourhood" or "community mix" effect.

At central government level there seems to be a range of views as to whether residential movement is good or bad. Some see high levels of movement as an indicator of economic efficiency and upward mobility, while others see it as a critical factor in the decline of some localities. However, on the basis of the existing knowledge base, we simply *do not know* which of these two positions is correct. Most research focuses on measuring the movement of individuals and families. There is very little analysis of how people understand their movements, or of how communities respond to these movements. We know very little about how the views of individuals and/or communities interact with or reflect policy makers' views. The Building Attachment project aims to address some of these gaps.

The four case study areas[3]

Waitangirua/Cannons Creek

The Waitangirua/Cannons Creek community is located on the eastern side of Porirua City, just north of Wellington. It has a predominantly Pasifika population. Porirua East is an area that expanded rapidly from virtually nothing in the 1950s and 1960s. A number of large industries—notably Todd (later Mitsubishi) Motors—were established in the area and became major providers of work for new immigrants. These industries have since closed down, with major consequences for the community. In its early development Porirua East was a major state housing area (6,000 or more new rental dwellings were built there during the 1950s and 1960s). However, more recent government policies have resulted in large numbers of these units being sold to private sector buyers, and there are now far fewer HNZC-owned[4] dwellings. The first wave of Pasifika migrants to the area were from the Cook Islands, Nuie, and Tokelau—as people from these nations are officially New Zealand citizens—but later Western Samoan and Tongan people were able to migrate via a quota system. Today Waitangirua/Cannons Creek is, like Otara in South Auckland, a major focus of the New Zealand Pasifika community.

According to the 2001 National Census, the total population of the Waitangirua/Cannons Creek community was 15,699 people (a 0.7 percent increase in the period 1996–2001). The area has a relatively high proportion of people in the younger age groups compared to the rest of the country—over a third of the population were aged 0–14 in the 2001 Census (as compared to 22.6 percent nationally). There is a very small proportion of people in the 65+ age group (4.7 percent, compared to 12 percent nationally). Fifty-eight percent of the population are of Pasifika descent (as compared to 6 percent nationally), 26 percent are European (77 percent nationally), and 24 percent are Māori (14 percent nationally).

Population movement trends are similar in Waitangirua/Cannons Creek to those in New Zealand as a whole. In 2001, 45 percent of the population had lived at their current address for five years or more (42 percent nationally). Seventy-one percent of households are one-family units (which is slightly more common than the national average of 67.6 percent), but 8.6 percent of households are two-family units, which is considerably higher than the national figure (2 percent). Thirty percent of Waitangirua/Cannons Creek families are classified in the "couple with dependent children only" category (39 percent nationally), and 27.6 fall into the "one parent with dependent children only" family type (13 percent nationally). The median personal income of people aged over 15 years was $14,223 ($18,545 nationally) in 2001, while the median annual household income was $38,954 ($49,343 nationally). Thirty-seven percent of the population aged 15 or over are in full-time work (46 percent nationally), and 20 percent are unemployed (7.5 percent

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[3] Most of the information in this section was taken from profiles of the four case study areas that were prepared early in the Building Attachment project by members of the CRESA team (see Stevenson, Kiddle, Fraser, James, & Saville-Smith, 2003a, b, c, d). These profiles were compiled using information taken from the 2001 National Census and all figures quoted in this section are taken from the 2001 National Census data.

[4] Housing New Zealand Corporation.

nationally in 2001).[5] Of those who are employed, most work in the retail and other service industries (45 percent) and in manufacturing industries (16.5 percent). The 2001 Census data locates the Waitangirua/Cannons Creek community at points 9 and 10 on the New Zealand Deprivation Index.[6]

There are 16 licensed early childhood education centres (including one a'oga amata and six kōhanga reo) in Waitangirua/Cannons Creek, four full primary schools (Years 1–8), five contributing schools (Years 1–6), one intermediate, and one secondary school (Years 9–13). Most of these schools are decile 1 schools.[7] In 2001, 32.3 percent of school leavers in the Porirua City area[8] left school with no formal qualifications at all (compared to 17 percent of school leavers across the whole country). Thirty-two percent of Pasifika students left with no qualifications (25 percent nationally), 38 percent of Māori (33 percent nationally), and 23 percent of Europeans (12 percent nationally).

Home ownership patterns in Waitangirua/Cannons Creek differ markedly from the national pattern. In 2001, 36.4 percent of houses in the area were owned by the inhabitants (with or without a mortgage), compared to 68 percent nationally. The overall rate of home ownership dropped by about 3 percent between 1996 and 2001 (which is roughly in line with the trend for New Zealand overall in that period). The proportion of people renting their houses (62.2 percent) is double the national average (29.2 percent). The area has a wide range of social service organisations, many of which provide for the specific needs of different Pasifika groups (for example, the Taeaomanino Trust, Wesley Porirua, and the Fanau Centre), and many churches. However, as a result of the impact of various government policies of the last 20 years or so, and the departure of the area's major employers, there has been a steady decline in the quality of the area's other facilities. There are no bank branches and only a small range of shops.

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5 Unemployed here means people who are not currently in paid employment but who are available for and actively seeking work.

6 The New Zealand Deprivation Index has a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 representing an area with the lowest levels of deprivation and 10 representing areas with high levels of deprivation.

7 A school's "decile" indicates the extent to which the school draws its students from low socioeconomic communities. Decile 1 schools have the highest proportion of students from low socioeconomic communities while decile 10 schools have the lowest proportion of these students. The school "decile rating" is worked out via a complex measure of the proportion of disadvantaged students at the school. Random samples of student addresses are referenced to national census mesh blocks of about 50 households. Mesh block scores on the following five factors are added: percent of households with a low household income; percent of households with employed parents in the lowest skilled occupation group; household crowding; percent of parents with no educational qualifications; and percent of parents relying on income support. The percent of Māori and Pacific students at the school is added from data provided by the school. This system was developed to provide a basis for determining the extent to which a school should be allocated supplementary funds to better meet the needs of its students (under the Targeted Funding for Educational Attainment, or TFEA, scheme).

8 The figures for Porirua City as a whole are given here as, using information in the public domain, it is not possible to disaggregate the figures for the Waitangirua/ Cannons Creek area alone from those for this wider area. However, it is likely that the proportion of those leaving school with no qualifications in Waitangirua/ Cannons Creek was higher than in the rest of Porirua City.

Amuri

Amuri is a rural area about an hour-and-a-half's drive north of Christchurch. It includes the villages of Culverden, Rotherham, and Waiau. The town of Hanmer Springs lies just outside the Amuri area on its north-western border. Traditionally a mainly sheep farming area, the introduction of widespread irrigation in the 1980s saw much of the land in Amuri converted to dairying. As a result many share-milkers and their families have moved into the district. In the same period the forestry sector was restructured and the former Rabbit and Pest Destruction Boards were disestablished. The rabbit shooters and tussock grubbers lost their jobs and moved out of the area, leaving many of their government-provided houses vacant. In recent years there has been some movement by beneficiaries into the area to take advantage of this cheap housing.

According to the 2001 Census, the Amuri area has a population of 2,013 (up by 0.7 percent on the 1996 Census). This population is primarily European, with a very low proportion of Māori and Pasifika peoples (6.6 percent and 1 percent respectively). The area's age structure is similar to that of the New Zealand population as a whole. Amuri people move slightly less often than other New Zealanders (47 percent of the population had lived at their current address for five years or more, as compared to 42 percent nationally). Seventy-one percent of households are one-family units (higher than the national average). Twenty-three percent of households are one-person households (about the same as the national average). The most common family type in the area is the "couple without children" category (43 percent), while 38 percent are "couples with dependent children only", and 6 percent are "one parent with dependent children only" families (lower than the national figure of 13 percent). The median annual personal income of people aged over 15 years was $19,332 ($18,545 nationally) in 2001, while the median annual household income was $44,548 ($49,343 nationally). Fifty-eight percent of the population aged 15 or over are in full-time work (46 percent nationally), and 2.9 percent are unemployed (much lower than the national average of 7.5 percent). Most people work in the agriculture, forestry, and fishing sector (60 percent overall but 72 percent of men). The second largest employers in 2001 were the hospitality sector (accommodation, restaurants, and cafes) and education (both 6.6 percent). The Amuri area is classified as 5 on the New Zealand Deprivation Index. Its home ownership rate (in 2001) was 67 percent (similar to the national average of 68 percent).

There are two playcentres, two contributing schools (Years 1–6), and one composite school (Years 1–13) in Amuri. These three schools have decile ratings of 7, 9, and 9. In 2001, 18.8 percent of school leavers in the Amuri/Hurunui district left school with no formal qualifications at all (about the same as the national average). Apart from these educational institutions, no other government agencies have a specific presence in the area. Work and Income representatives used to visit Hanmer Springs once a month (until mid 2002), but this service has since been discontinued. People need to travel to Rangiora to access government services. Buses operate regularly between Christchurch and Culverden but to travel to Rangiora requires one to travel to Christchurch first to catch a connecting service. There is no public transport within the Amuri area. There are no banking facilities—the closest bank is at Amberley. Most health and social services are community-run: for example, the Amuri Community Trust runs the medical centre at

Rotherham; the Hurunui Academy provides local work-based training programmes; and the Amuri Dairy Employers Group was set up to address local employment issues. The Waiau Community Project was recently set up to provide school holiday programmes and a locally based citizen's advice service, and to improve early childhood education services in the area. There are two churches, which together have set up Amuri Community Care (an organisation that assists the elderly and works with families in need) and Federated Farmers and Rural Women New Zealand have branches in the area.

Opotiki

Opotiki District is in the eastern Bay of Plenty. The population is a fairly even mix of Māori (54.3 percent) and Pākehā (52.6 percent), with a few (about 2 percent) Pasifika people. There are three major iwi in the area: Whakatōhea, Te Whanau-a-Apanui, and Ngai Tai. The town developed during the second half of the 19th century as a small port and farming service centre. At this time it was the main food producing area for Auckland. The economic policies of the late 1980s and 1990s had a major impact on Opotiki. Many local industries, including a dairy factory, a footwear factory, a clothing factory, and a bacon works closed, and unemployment in Opotiki is now considerably higher than the national average. Today agricultural production (dairying, beef, sheep, and horticulture) and (to a lesser extent) tourism are the mainstays of the local economy.

In 2001 the total usually resident population of Opotiki was 9,201 people (down about 2 percent from the previous Census). The area's age structure is similar to that of the New Zealand population as a whole. On average, people move slightly less frequently than other New Zealanders (in 2001, 47.4 percent of the population had lived at their current address for five years or more, as compared to 42 percent nationally). Sixty-eight percent of households are one-family units (about the same as the national average). One-fifth of households in 2001 were one-person households (again about the same as the national average). The most common family type is the "couple without children" category (34 percent), while 29 percent are "couples with dependent children only", and 28 percent are "one parent with dependent children only" families.

The median personal income of people aged over 15 years was $12,899 ($18,545 nationally) in 2001, while the median annual household income was $35,429 ($49,343 nationally). Thirty-four percent of the population aged 15 or over are in full-time work (46 percent nationally), and 15.9 percent are unemployed (7.5 percent nationally in 2001). Most people are employed in the agriculture, forestry, and fishing sector (32 percent). The second largest industry is retail trade (14.2 percent), followed by education (13.4 percent). Opotiki district as a whole is classified as 9 and 10 on the New Zealand Deprivation Index: however, there are some pockets of relative wealth, particularly in the town area.

There are 19 licensed early childhood education centres (including 11 kōhanga reo) in Opotiki, 13 full primary schools (Years 1–8) including three kura kaupapa Māori, two composite (or "area") schools (Years 1–13), and one secondary school (Years 9–13). Twelve of these 16 schools are decile 1 or 2, three are decile 3, and one is decile 4. In 2001, 33.6 percent of school leavers in the

Opotiki district left school with no formal qualifications (compared to 17 percent of school leavers nationally). Forty-five percent of Māori left school with no qualifications, a figure that is substantially higher than the national average for Māori (33 percent).

In 2001, 67 percent of homes in Opotiki were owned by their inhabitants (similar to the national average): however, the number of people renting their houses seems to be increasing. Two percent of the area's available housing is classified as "temporary"[9] (compared to 0.4 percent of all dwellings in New Zealand). Work and Income is the only government agency with a full-time base in Opotiki. Other agencies (Child, Youth and Family, for example) operate from Whakatane. The area has four banks, a number of churches, and a range of iwi-provided health and social services (Whakatōhea Iwi Social and Health Services, Te Runanga o te Whanau-a-Apanui, and the Ngai Tai Iwi Authority).

Kawerau

Kawerau is at the foot of Putauaki (Mt Edgecumbe) on the Rangitaiki Plains in the Eastern Bay of Plenty. The tangata whenua in the Kawerau area are Tuwharetoa ki Kawerau. The town of Kawerau is a purpose-built mill settlement, designed to accommodate forestry workers and specialist workers in the forestry products processing plants. The pulp and paper companies Carter Holt Harvey, Norske Skog (formerly Tasman Pulp and Paper), and Fletcher Challenge continue to be the town's main employers. In recent years these companies have developed processes that require a smaller workforce. As a result many families have left Kawerau and there has been an in-migration of beneficiaries and retired people attracted by the low housing costs. The town's unemployment rate is much higher than the national average, and the town's infrastructure, particularly its retail sector, is in decline.

In 2001 the total usually resident population of Kawerau was 7,278 people (a decrease of about 12 percent from the previous Census). Kawerau has a relatively high proportion of young people and a lower than average proportion of people in the 65+ age bracket. Its population is a mix of Māori (56 percent) and European (50 percent) with a very small number of Pasifika people (3.5 percent).[10]

Kawerau people move slightly less frequently than other New Zealanders—in 2001, 48.3 percent of the population had lived at their current address for five years or more (42 percent nationally). Seventy-two percent of households are one-family units (slightly higher than the national average): however, the proportion of this kind of household is declining in Kawerau. One-fifth of households are one-person households (about the same as the national average). The most common family type is the "couple without children" category (31 percent). Twenty-nine percent of families are "couples with dependent children only", and 25 percent fall into the "one parent

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[9] Temporary dwellings are defined as caravans (and other mobile dwellings), cabins, or tents—either in or out of a motor camp.

[10] These percentages do not add up to 100 because people could classify themselves in more than one category.

with dependent children only" category. Kawerau's home ownership rate is 71 percent (slightly higher than the national average). Kawerau district as a whole is classified as 9 and 10 on the New Zealand Deprivation Index. The median personal income of people aged over 15 years was $13,602 ($18,545 nationally) in 2001, while the median annual household income was $40,888 ($49,343 nationally). Thirty-four percent of the population aged 15 or over are in full-time work (46 percent nationally), and 20.1 percent are unemployed (7.5 percent nationally in 2001). Most people are employed in the manufacturing sector (36.7 percent overall—but 55.3 percent of men). This is much higher than the proportion employed in this industry for the country as a whole. The second largest industry overall is retail trade (11.7 percent), but for men alone it is agriculture, forestry, and fishing (8.8 percent). Third overall is education (10.1 percent).

In Kawerau there are nine licensed early childhood education centres (including five kōhanga reo), one full primary school (Years 1–8), three contributing schools (Years 1–6), one intermediate, and one secondary school. Most of the schools are decile 1. In 2001, 53.4 percent of the local high school's leavers left with no formal qualifications (compared to 17 percent of school leavers nationally). This figure was 64.7 percent for Pākehā and 50 percent for Māori school leavers. These figures are obviously substantially higher than the national averages. Kawerau has a Heartland Community Services Centre that was set up to provide a presence for government agencies and community organisations. Current tenants include a health clinic, Housing New Zealand Corporation (HNZC), Plunket, the Rural Education Activities Programme (REAP), and the Safer Community Council.

2. The educational implications of frequent movement—what does the literature say?

In the education sector, frequent movement by students between schools is seen as a problem—for the students, and for the schools they attend. This section reviews recent New Zealand and international work on the educational implications of high levels of student mobility.

Frequent movement and "transience"—what *are* they?

In the international educational literature, a number of different terms are used to describe students who change schools frequently. These students are referred to as being "transient", "itinerant", "mobile", "high turnover", "turbulent", or "nomadic". In New Zealand education circles, the term "transient" is most commonly used. This term has negative connotations. It is usually used to refer to students for whom frequent movement from school to school is assumed to be enough to disrupt their progress. Discussions of the "transience problem" have become more and more common in recent years: however, as yet there is no "official" nationally agreed-on definition of what this term actually means in educational contexts. Moreover there has been little systematic research into the impact of movement on educational achievement. Broadly speaking, the adjective "transient" is used to refer to *students* (and/or their families) who move frequently, while the noun "transience" is used to describe overall patterns of student movement in and out of *schools*.

However, what *is* frequent movement? *When* does it become a problem? *Why* is it a problem? *Who* is it a problem for?

Some definitions of *student* "transience"

In the international research literature, individual—or "student"—transience is defined in many different ways—for example:

- when a student has moved *more than once during the primary school years* (Kariuki, Nash, & College, 1999)
- when a student has been to *three or more schools in two years* (Edwards, 1997; Fields, 1997)
- when a child has moved *three or more times before the end of Year 4* (Whalen & Fried, 1973)
- where a student "joins the school partway through a key stage" (UK) (Strand, 2000, p. 8).

In a New Zealand research report commissioned by NZEI Te Riu Roa (New Zealand's national organisation for primary teachers, early childhood educators, and school support staff) a few years ago, "transience" was defined as being where a student has attended *two or more schools in the previous year* (NZEI, 1999).

School "transience"

Because frequently moving students are seen to create issues for the schools they attend, researchers have tried to develop measures of the extent which students are moving in and out of particular schools. These measures are usually referred to as *school* transience. However, *what* is actually being measured varies widely. Bruno and Isken (1996), for example, define school transience as the total number of children entering and leaving a school at a point *other* than the beginning or end of a school year. In the New Zealand context, Neighbour (2000, p. 111) defines it as the number of children joining or leaving a school at a point other than the normal entry or exit point for that school. Thus some definitions measure all "non-standard" turnover, while others attempt to differentiate between moves *during* the school year, and moves at the beginning or end of the year.

Issues

Research on "transience" and schools is very much an "emerging" field. In general the goal has been to establish whether or not high mobility is a problem in educational contexts, and if it is, its extent. However, there are a number of "muddy" areas, some of which are as follows:

1. The term "transience" is clearly a negative one, and it is common for the term to be used in ways that tend to conflate movement with other aspects of students' circumstances that may have negative educational consequences.

2. It is a term that has proved to be difficult to define and measure. As outlined above, a number of different measures have been developed—some that distinguish "normal" from "non-standard" movement in and out of a school, and others that don't.

3. There is a tendency to assume that *schools* with high "transience" rates (i.e. high overall student turnover at times other than the standard entry and graduation points), are populated by large numbers of *student*s who are moving very frequently. This of course does not necessarily follow (although it could). High movement rates could be the result of large numbers of students moving a small number of times, or they could be the result of a smaller number of students moving in and out of the same schools very frequently. It is important to distinguish these two trends because, while both will probably be problematic for the *school*, for the individual students, one or two moves are probably not a problem, but more probably are.

4. Frequent movement and transience are not generally distinguished. The term "transient" is widely used to refer to any student (or their family) who moves frequently, regardless of

whether or not they are in fact transient, in the more general sense of this term (i.e. nomadic, impermanent, or rootless; moving in an aimless or random way). People who move frequently are *not* necessarily "transients".

5. Students who change schools frequently are not necessarily changing as a result of residential mobility. Some student mobility is a result of school "exclusions", voluntary transfers, and other school- related factors.

The next section looks in more detail at existing New Zealand and international research on the effects of transience/frequent movement on students and schools.

Recent New Zealand work on frequent movement in schools

In 1996–1997 the Education Review Office (ERO) carried out a study of 397 New Zealand schools[11] to investigate patterns of attendance, absenteeism, truancy, and student movement, and to look at the practices schools adopted to deal with these issues. According to the report on this study (Education Review Office, 1997), student movement rates vary markedly between schools. Many schools have very low levels, but others, especially in dairying areas and areas where seasonal work is available, have very high levels of student turnover.[12] Schools in areas offering low-cost rental accommodation also have high student turnover.

The ERO study found that primary schools with a roll turnover of around 50 percent a year reported unsettled families, disrupted learning programmes, and high numbers of students with learning difficulties.[13] The teachers at these schools said that children who move frequently are more likely to have gaps in their learning—especially their reading ability—and many have already existing special learning needs that are made worse by their frequent moves.[14] Teachers said that settling these children into the school was often complicated by a lack of information on the child's previous education and needs. Records from the child's previous school either did not arrive, or were significantly delayed, especially where the child had changed schools more than twice already.

The ERO report points out that a high level of student movement is, for some schools, simply a part of the context in which they operate. Individual students cannot be held responsible for their family's mobility, and schools cannot control the movement of families in their area. However, schools are responsible for developing programmes that meet their students' needs—whatever

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11 328 primary schools, 20 intermediate schools, 45 secondary schools, and four area schools.

12 This report used the term "turnover", not "transience" (although it appears to deal with what other reports refer to as "transience". The report doesn't specify how "turnover" was defined, nor does it tell us how the turnover figures it quotes were arrived at. Apart from a reference to areas with low-cost rental accommodation (p. 13), the report doesn't mention the association (in international research) between high turnover and low income.

13 The report doesn't distinguish between within-year movement and beginning or end-of-year movement.

14 It is worth pointing out here that *schools* with high student turnover are not necessarily populated by *students* who have moved many times—these two separate questions are often conflated.

these may be. The report says that schools need strategies to address the learning needs of their highly mobile students if they are to deliver a balanced curriculum and overcome barriers to achievement. Some schools apparently do this very effectively. Some have orientation programmes, buddy systems, peer support programmes, and so on, while others try to link the students' families with local support services. Some schools develop an Individual Education Programme (IEP) for each new student, paying particular attention to any specific learning or social needs identified in an initial assessment.[15]

Reflecting the concerns of their members, the national education sector organisations have started, over the last few years, to take a strong interest in the issues of "transience"—in particular, its implications for student achievement and school resourcing. A report presented at the 1999 annual meeting of NZEI Te Riu Roa, made the following recommendations:

- When a school enrols a student who has previously attended two or more schools, they should assess the student's learning needs as soon as practicable, and apply for extra teacher aide time to support the student to settle in as quickly as possible.
- An independent research programme should be set up to establish the size of the transience problem.
- The Ministry of Education should set up a national database for tracking frequent movers.
- The Ministry should also set aside a resource fund that schools could apply to for immediate assistance in meeting the needs of students who are moving frequently.[16]

It is interesting to note that, of these four recommendations, one is for schools to address, while the other three all have national resourcing implications. This probably accurately reflects the concerns expressed by NZEI's membership.

These two reports make it clear that the education sector has major concerns about students who change schools frequently. The issue seems to be particularly concerning to teachers and principals in primary schools, and resourcing issues appear to underpin at least some of this concern. However, there has been very little New Zealand research that has focused directly on this issue. A few studies have been done by people who are—or were—primary school principals or teachers, and some information has recently been collected as part of wider surveys of current issues for schools. What we know as a result of this work is summarised in the following section.

Measuring movement

New Zealanders, on average, move residence frequently. The 2006 Census reported over half (57.7 percent) of the total usually resident population had moved residence at least once since the 2001 census and almost a quarter (24.8 percent) had moved in the past year. (The corresponding figures for the 2001 Census are 55.4 percent and 24.2 percent). However, from other studies, it

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15 See Education Review Office (1997, pp. 12–14.)

16 See Recommendations 2.9–2.10 of NZEI Te Riu Roa (1999).

appears that this national figure masks the fact that residential movement rates are not evenly distributed across all ethnic and income groups, or across all regions. If this is the case, then it is clear that some schools will have more student movement than others.

In 2000, Murray Neighbour (a primary school principal) was awarded a grant to travel to the USA, the UK, and Australia to study "transience" in these countries. He reports the results of this study in Neighbour (2001). The following year, he analysed data collected by the New Zealand Principals' Federation[17] in their November 2001 national survey of all primary and intermediate schools, with the aim of establishing some New Zealand figures for student transience. On the basis of data provided by 795 schools, he calculated each school's percent roll turnover and its transience.

For "roll turnover" (percent) Neighbour used the formula:

Figure 1 **Neighbour's formula for calculating "roll turnover"**

$$\frac{\text{[no. of enrolments]} + \text{[no. of withdrawals during the year]} \times 100}{\text{the school's total roll}}$$

For "transience" (percent) Neighbour used the formula:

Figure 2 **Neighbour's formula for calculating school "transience"**

$$\frac{\text{[no. of enrolments]} - \text{[new entrants]} + \text{[no. of withdrawals]} - \text{[no. of Year 6/8 graduates]} \times 100}{\text{the school's total roll}}$$

Neighbour's "roll turnover" formula includes *all* students who enrol in the year surveyed and those who leave during the year. His "transience" formula, on the other hand, is an attempt to separate "normal" movement from "non-standard" movement. It does this by excluding new entrants and those who are graduating to the next level of education: that is, students who are moving between schools in the normal or expected way.

On the basis of the data provided by the principals who responded to the survey, Neighbour found average roll turnover to be about 43 percent and average school transience to be about 30 percent. An NZCER team later recalculated his figures using the same data. Their figures were very similar: 43.7 percent for roll turnover and 29.6 percent for transience. However, this team expressed some reservations about the quality of the original data: for example, it was clear that the questions had not been understood in the same way by all respondents (for details, see Hodgen & Wylie, 2002).

Neighbour analysed roll turnover and transience rates in schools of different type, size, and decile rating, and in schools in different regions of New Zealand. The most obvious trend was that schools in poorer areas have much higher rates of roll turnover *and* transience. The decile 1

[17] The New Zealand Principals' Federation is the national organisation for primary school principals.

schools in Neighbour's study had, on average, 57 percent roll turnover and 43 percent transience, while the decile 10 schools averaged 36 percent turnover and 23 percent transience.

Another recent New Zealand study (Lee, 2000) also collected data on interschool movement. Lee used information obtained from 10 Auckland intermediate schools, with a combined roll of 5,124 students. Five were decile 1 schools and five were decile 10 schools. She calculated the roll turnover for each of the 10 schools using the first of the two formulae cited above (that is, the one that does *not* factor out the school's new entrants). The average turnover in the five decile 1 schools was 77 percent (one school had a turnover of nearly 98 percent), while in the decile 10 schools it was 64 percent. However, it has to be said, because the schools surveyed were all intermediates (offering a two-year programme) a turnover rate of 50 percent per year would be completely normal. The above figures should be interpreted in light of this.

Johnson (2002), in a study of interschool movement in South Auckland primary schools, reported similar patterns. Roll data from 59 schools (covering 85 percent of all South Auckland primary-aged children) were collected and school transience rates were calculated (for different areas of South Auckland) using the formula:

$$\text{Transience (percent)} = \frac{\text{enrolments during the year} - \text{increase in school roll}}{\text{average school roll for the year}}$$

This formula is different from the two used in the studies reported in Neighbour (2001) and Lee (2000): however it clearly measures roll *turnover*—as opposed to "transience" (as Neighbour defined it). Johnson's study found an average turnover rate of 29 percent. The rate was highest in Manurewa (33 percent) and Otara (32 percent), and lowest in Papatoetoe (15 percent). Rates were higher in decile 1 schools. The Mangere rate was the second lowest (24 percent). Mangere is an area with a high number of HNZC-owned dwellings and this survey was completed just after the reintroduction of income-related rentals for these units. Johnson suggests that the more affordable rents and greater security of tenure that were the result of this policy could have produced the lower roll turnover rates found in Mangere schools. This trend was not, however, evident in Otara (another area with a high number of HNZC dwellings) in the same period. The survey asked respondents (school principals or their nominee) to rate the extent to which student mobility is a barrier to children's learning at their school. Eighty-seven percent said that the situation at their school was very serious or quite serious. Johnson argues that frequent movement is a problem that can be addressed via better, more focused housing policies that allow low-income families to stay in houses they can afford.

Similar patterns of student movement were evident in the 1999 NZCER National Survey data (Wylie, 1999), where the average rate of non-standard movement was 26 percent. However, in the decile 1 schools surveyed, it was 39 percent (compared with 15 percent in the decile 10 schools). This survey also found that schools with high student turnover rates (more than 20 percent) were more likely to be low-decile schools (42 percent of low-decile schools as compared to 7 percent of high-decile schools). Turnover rates were also higher in schools with large rolls (over 120).

What is significant here is that the rates being reported for New Zealand schools are considerably higher than those found in overseas studies. For example, in the UK, Dobson and Henthorne (1999) report national average rates of between 10 and 20 percent for primary schools, and between 8 and 12 percent for secondary schools. Since 2000, OFSTED[18] has been collecting data on student mobility. A report drawing on UK data from 2000–2001, found a median rate of 11 percent for primary schools and 5.6 percent for secondary schools. Mobility levels in London were much higher than elsewhere with average turnover in inner London secondary schools double that found elsewhere (OFSTED, 2002).

In the 2003 NZCER National Survey of New Zealand Primary Schools[19] principals were asked to give the number of children transferring in and out of their school during 2002 (other than new entrants and those graduating to the next level of education) so that the schools' rates of non-standard movement could be calculated.[20] The average rate (for 170 schools) was 31 percent (slightly higher than the 1999 result of 26 percent). Thirty-six percent of the primary schools surveyed had rates of less than 20 percent and 38 percent had rates between 20–39 percent. However, 27 percent had rates of 40 percent or more. Just over half the decile 1–2 schools fell into the latter category, compared with 27 percent overall, and 17 percent of the decile 9–10 schools. Full primary schools were the most likely to have high rates (33 percent, compared with 8 percent for intermediates, and 22 percent for contributing schools). Location and school size were not clearly associated with different rates.

In the 2003 NZCER survey, principals were also asked to estimate the number of "boomerang" students (students who move in and out of the same school within the course of a year, often because they are moving between family members). Most schools had low numbers. The average overall was 4 percent (for 159 schools). However, the primary schools that had high rates of movement at "non-standard" times also tended to have high numbers of "boomerang" students. In half of the high movement schools, more than 10 percent of the students were "boomerang" students. (In comparison, 10 percent of the low-movement schools, and 40 percent of the medium-movement schools had this proportion of "boomerang" students.) The proportion of students remaining in the same school for the whole of their education at that level was low overall (177 schools). For the schools with high movement rates the mean proportion was 44 percent (s.d. 26.5), in the schools with medium movement rates it was 47 percent (s.d. 23.4), while in the schools with low rates it was 52 percent (s.d. = 31.4).

The 2003 National Survey also explored whether or not there are links between high movement rates and other issues, by comparing principals' views of their resourcing and staffing situation. Their views of the adequacy of their government funding and staffing entitlement, and their views of their ability to fund adequate support staff were looked at, as were the number of provisionally

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[18] OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education) is the UK equivalent of New Zealand's Education Review Office.

[19] Wylie and Hodgen (forthcoming).

[20] Using the same formula as the one used in Neighbour's analysis.

registered teachers they employed, their staff turnover rates, and the difficulties in finding suitable teachers to fill vacancies. Only the last item showed any links. Forty-two percent of principals of schools with medium and high movement rates said they had difficulty finding suitable teachers, compared with 30 percent of principals of schools with low movement rates. This is likely to be related to decile, since the proportion of those who had difficulty fell from 63 percent of principals of decile 1–2 schools to 26 percent of those in decile 9–10 schools.

This survey also looked at whether or not there was a relationship between high levels of movement and whether or not the school had problems engaging its parents and wider community. There was a relationship with respect to the board of trustees and the PTA, but not with respect to classroom assistance, school concerts, outdoor education, fundraising events, and maintenance of the school and its equipment. The two areas where there are difficulties could possibly be seen as indicators of the availability of parents willing to make a long-term or major commitment. The level of overall community support for schools was related to their movement rates, ranging from 77 percent of principals in low-movement schools saying it was good or very good, to 58 percent of those in schools with high movement rates. There was no link between the proportions of parents discussing their child's report with the teacher and the school's movement rate.

The principals of primary schools with high movement rates were more likely than those with low rates to think they lacked sufficient knowledge about new students (from their early childhood education centre or primary school) to help them make a good transition to their school (31 percent compared with 20 percent of those in schools with low movement rates). The principals of the schools with high movement rates were more likely than the others to be working 60 or more hours a week (51 percent, compared with 33 percent of those with low movement rates). Again, this is likely to also be related to school decile. However, their overall morale appeared to be as high as for other principals.

Similar trends were evident in the secondary schools responding to the 2003 NZCER National Survey (Hipkins & Hodgen, forthcoming). Movement rates of 10 percent or more were more likely in decile 1–2 schools (88 percent of these schools, decreasing to 18 percent of the decile 9–10 schools). There were no clear links between movement rates and school type, location, or size. High-movement secondary schools (a rate of 10 percent or more) were slightly more likely to be employing provisionally registered teachers, and to have classes taught by teachers without appropriate curriculum expertise. They were also more likely to have unsatisfactory levels of parent help for outdoor education, school concerts, school and equipment maintenance, and the PTA (but, in contrast to the primary schools, not on the board of trustees). The level of overall community support was somewhat lower: 50 percent compared with 79 percent for the schools with low movement rates. In contrast to primary schools, fewer parents discussed student reports with teachers at the secondary schools with high movement rates. The principals of schools with high movement rates were more likely to say that the information they receive on new students is not sufficient to allow them to help these students make a good transition. These principals were

working similar hours to their peers in schools with low movement rates, and their morale levels were similar.

In response to the "boomerang" question, half of the secondary school principals answering this question (n=72) said they had less than 1 percent in this category. However, 5 percent of the respondents said that 5 percent of their roll were "boomerang" students. These students were most likely to be in decile 1 and 2 schools, but small numbers were found in schools in all deciles. An interesting finding from the secondary responses was that students leaving school at Year 11 were, on average, less likely to have completed all their secondary schooling at one school than those leaving in Years 12 or 13. Students in decile 1 and 2 schools were, on average, also less likely to have stayed at the same school for their entire secondary school career. The connection between low-decile schools and frequent movement has been evident in other studies but, in this data, it appears that there is a connection between frequent movement and leaving school early.

These national survey results fit with Neighbour's and Lee's work. These studies all found high movement rates and low socioeconomic circumstances to be linked. The survey results indicate that there are some effects for schools in terms of parental and community support, both financial and human. Principals in schools with high movement rates point to gaps in the information they receive about new students from other schools.

What does all this tell us?

While this body of data as a whole has some gaps and weaknesses (which, given that this is an emerging field, is to be expected), there are some trends:

1. The rates of student movement between schools appear to be very high in some New Zealand communities—considerably higher than those found in overseas studies.[21]

2. Many of New Zealand's very highly mobile students appear to be moving in and out of the same schools—or other schools in the same general area.

However, more robust data are needed. We need consistent and comparable measures of school movement, and we need ways of collecting data that do not rely on asking school principals to complete questionnaires.[22] When the project involving giving all New Zealand school students a unique identification number is in place, it should be possible for researchers to develop these.

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[21] New Zealand student mobility rates were the highest of all countries participating in the Third International Mathematics and Science Study for Year 5 and Year 9 (Chamberlain, Chamberlain, & Walker, 2001 cited in Biddulph, Biddulph, & Biddulph, 2003, p.98).

[22] This is an issue for at least two reasons. Firstly, it involves asking already overworked principals to do extra work, and secondly, even where careful attention is paid to question design, it is common for data quality issues to arise because respondents have interpreted questions in different ways.

Why are some children moving so often?—What principals think

The New Zealand Principals' Federation survey analysed by Neighbour (2002) asked principals to report on the likely reasons for children's withdrawal from their school. They could choose from the following: parents seeking employment elsewhere; family break-up or other difficulties; dissatisfaction with the school; housing issues; being chased by other agencies; or "other", and it was possible to choose more than one reason. Employment, family difficulties, and housing issues were the most commonly reported reasons: however, the pattern differed markedly across the different school types. For example, in the decile 10 schools the most common reason for moving was a change in employment (74 percent), whereas in the decile 1 schools, employment was given as the reason in only 43 percent of cases. Family difficulties (39 percent), housing (47 percent), and being chased by other agencies (14 percent) were, according to the school principals, more important in the decision to move for these families.[23] By way of comparison, in the decile 10 schools, the figures were 4 percent for family difficulties, 12 percent for housing issues, and 1 percent for being chased by other agencies.[24] In all cases the figure for school dissatisfaction was never above 5 percent (but this could have something to do with the fact that the data were derived from principals' views). Employment issues appeared to be more important in some regions of New Zealand (most notably Northland, Waikato, Gisborne, Wellington, and Southland), but the question did not distinguish between moving to take up a better job and moving in search of any suitable work.

In Lee's (2000) study, principals were also asked for their views on why children moved frequently. According to Lee, the principals of decile 1 schools tended to give "negative" social or economic reasons: the examples she gives are "keeping one step ahead of the law"; "rent increases/searching for cheaper housing"; and/or "moving to live with other members of the whānau".[25] The principals of the decile 10 schools, on the other hand, said that their families were moving because someone in the family had a job promotion, or because they had arrived from overseas.[26] Interestingly, she found that schools with low roll turnovers were more likely to have induction programmes for new students.

If these principals' perceptions are correct, it would seem that children moving in or out of schools in high socioeconomic areas are more likely to be moving as a result of a conscious choice made by their family, a choice that is likely to produce an improvement in the family's circumstances. In contrast, it appears that children moving in and out of schools in lower socioeconomic areas are much more likely to be moving for reasons that are beyond their family's control and less likely to improve the family's circumstances. As we have seen, schools in low-income areas are more likely to have higher movement rates. If these principals are right, and

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[23] These figures do not sum to 100 percent because respondents could choose more than one reason.

[24] Here we have cited the recalculated figures from the NZCER re-analysis of the New Zealand Principals Federation survey.

[25] Lee (2000, p. 30).

[26] The implication of this is that it is not the movement *per se* that is the problem, but the other factors that are associated with it.

movement in these areas is, more often than not, the result of "unproductive"[27] difficulties in people's lives, then it seems likely that the movement *per se* is not the problem. Rather (if there are problems), it could be that frequent movement is simply a surface-level indicator of deeper problems, not a problem in itself. If this is the case, then strategies that focus on movement *per se* are unlikely to be helpful. We return to the question of whether or not frequent movement is a problem for the children concerned later: however, what is clear, from the comments made by school principals, is that frequent movement by students is very definitely a problem for *schools*. The next section looks at what principals had to say about this.

The effect on schools of high mobility

Neighbour interviewed principals of primary schools in high-mobility areas in the USA, the UK, Australia, and New Zealand (see Neighbour, 2001, 2003).

The principals Neighbour interviewed said that students who move frequently[28] need a great deal of extra support for their learning, which in turn requires the school to set aside extra resources for them. They said that these students are commonly behind their peers academically and often do not function well at school (because their social skills are not well developed, or because they are disruptive or withdrawn). This, according to Neighbour's interviewees, causes problems for the schools. Teachers have to work harder (planning, preparing, and revising work for these students), and schools have to commit more teacher aide or counselling time to these students—time which is then not available for other students—those who teachers see as their "natural" cohort. The principals said that moving many children in and out of classes during the year (which can require entire classes to be restructured) is very disruptive to learning programmes and damaging to teacher morale. There are significant administrative costs to the school (processing enrolments and withdrawals, and liaising with other schools and other agencies that are involved with the child) and considerable tangible costs to the school (losses of books and other resources, for example). In addition, and importantly for the school's reputation, the principals say that the school's performance with respect to any given year group of students is likely to be lower than it should be when the school has more than one or two frequent movers. The principals think it is unfair that they should be held accountable for the performance of students who haven't been in their school very long. They say they don't keep many of these students long enough to "add value" to them, and, when large numbers are involved, many admit that they find this impossible.

Lee also asked her principals for their views on the impact of high levels of student movement on schools, obtaining similar results. The principals of intermediate schools with high roll turnover

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27 "Unproductive" in the sense that it doesn't result in "upward mobility".

28 See comments on p. 13 above. Neighbour's research, like a lot of the work in this area, appears to assume that schools in areas with high movement rates will have large numbers of frequently moving students. This of course doesn't necessarily follow (although it could). A school with a high level of movement could have large numbers of students moving a small number of times. In future research it will be important to clearly distinguish between these two different factors.

rates all thought this high turnover had a major effect on their school. According to these principals, students who change schools frequently have learning difficulties and behaviour problems, and commonly have difficulty settling in and making new friends. This, they said, was a major extra overhead for the schools concerned. In contrast, however, the principals of schools with a low roll turnover tended to see new students as a good thing, as adding new strengths and varied experiences to the school. Two other recent studies by New Zealand primary school teachers (both Resource Teachers of Literacy) produced very similar findings (Carter, 2002; Reinink, 2002).

What schools can do

In his report Neighbour (2002) offers some strategies for schools with large numbers of highly mobile children. On the basis of his interviews with principals, he concludes that the schools that are dealing successfully with this issue are those that have been able to fund specialist lead teachers to develop individual programmes for frequent movers, or an increase in administration staff hours. The employment of a social worker or attendance officer by clusters of schools was said to be an effective strategy, especially where there was good co-ordination between them, the school administration, and the children's teachers. Some schools had a full-time co-ordinator—usually a teacher released from classroom responsibilities. Sometimes this role was combined with other responsibilities—for example, special needs co-ordinator, RTLB (Resource Teacher—learning and behaviour), ORRS (Ongoing and Reviewable Resourcing Schemes) funding co-ordinator, or reading recovery co-ordinator. This co-ordinator role was most effective where the person was not a full-time classroom teacher.

Many schools had induction programmes designed to introduce new students to the school's routines and culture, and many provided new students with a trained buddy or mentor. Others reported success with a range of other strategies: for example, parent tutoring programmes for reading; streaming of maths classes; employing specialist teachers of music or physical education; being involved with the Books in Homes programme; providing worksheets, stationery, pens, and pencils; and/or encouraging students to maintain contact with their previous school. However, the principals said they were not able to demonstrate whether or not these initiatives made a difference to individual children as, in most cases (they said), the children weren't in the schools long enough for useful information to be collected.[29] Lee, following suggestions made by school principals in her study area (e.g. Fitchett, 1998; Joseph, 2000) offers a similar set of strategies. The success or otherwise of these strategies clearly needs to be evaluated at a level beyond the individual school.

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[29] However, it could be argued, achievement information is not the only useful data that could be collected here. Schools could, for example, collect information on the children's engagement in learning, or their relations with peers, and so on—that would be useful in indicating whether or not the school's strategies were making a difference.

In a later, follow-up study, Lee (2003) investigated students' views on movement, looking in particular at the factors that allowed them to feel comfortable and make progress as they changed schools. She surveyed 71 Year 8 students who had attended five or more schools, and ran focus groups for 12 of these students. She concluded that "transient' students settled more quickly and made more progress when schools provided an "inclusive culture", and that teachers had an important role to play in assisting the smooth transition between schools for these children.

Neighbour concludes his report by making a strong case for the development of a national electronic database that can track students as they move from school to school. He argues that we need to define "transience" (i.e. problematic frequent movement) and to develop standardised ways of measuring roll turnover and "school transience". Standardised definitions, he says, would allow us to establish the extent to which high mobility is a problem, and a national tracking system could improve the efficiency of information exchange between schools. He also makes a strong case for the funding of research looking at the effect of high mobility rates on student learning and staff morale (Neighbour, 2003).[30]

Measuring student movement

Unlike Neighbour, Lee (2000) collected data on individual *student* movement. Using the E19/22A cards (commonly known as "Progress" or "Record of Schools Attended" cards) from 2,238 students in 10 Auckland schools, Lee recorded information on the number of schools attended by these students.[31]

Lee classified students who had attended more than two schools as "transient". However, given that all the students she studied were Year 8 intermediate school students, and so would, at a minimum, have attended two schools (their primary school and the intermediate they were at when the data were collected), this is a very conservative and not particularly sensitive measure. In addition, it counts *all* moves equally and does not distinguish multiple, frequent moves from single moves.

However, her key findings[32] were as follows. In the five decile 1 schools, 48 percent of students had attended only two schools. A further 32 percent had attended three or four. Thus 80 percent of students could be said to have had a relatively stable school career. Fourteen percent had attended between five and nine schools, and 6 percent had attended 10 or more. One student had attended 17, one 18, one 19, while one had been enrolled in 23 schools in eight years.

In the five decile 10 schools, 62 percent had attended only two schools, and a further 33 percent had attended three or four. In these schools, 95 percent of students had had very little change.

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30 See p. 9 of his 2003 paper.

31 In this study Lee found a large number of incomplete records. We found a similarly high proportion of incomplete or missing cards in our study.

32 These aggregations come from our calculations: the data were presented school by school in her report.

However, of the other 5 percent with a less stable background, there were one or two who had been to 10 schools.

Thus Lee's data show that a small percentage of students, in mainly low-decile schools, are moving *very* frequently between schools. As we have already seen, this is clearly an issue for the schools these students attend. Because of the way schools are organised and funded, higher than average student movement has budgetary implications for schools.

In the education sector it is widely believed that moving frequently impacts negatively on the children involved. Is this in fact the case? *Do* highly mobile children achieve at a lower level than other similar children? *Do* they have behavioural and/or social problems as a result of their frequent moving? The short answer to this is that we just don't know. There is no direct evidence to support the claim that frequent movement reduces educational attainment, and, to date, there are no New Zealand research studies that focus specifically on mobility's impact on student achievement.[33] However, NZCER's Competent Children project does provide some indicative data.

Does mobility affect children's educational achievement?—the Competent Children at 12 study

The Competent Children project is a longitudinal study that has been following 500 Wellington region children through their schooling from age near-5.[34] Data on these children at age 12 show that, when the cohort was in Year 7 or 8, 25 percent remained in the school at which they had started. Fifty-one percent were at their second school, and 16 percent were at their third school. Eight percent had attended four or more schools. Because this cohort originated in the Wellington region, the population of which has, on average, higher socioeconomic status than other areas, this general pattern is likely to be more stable than in other parts of the country.

Within this cohort, the children who were most likely to have attended four or more schools over their first eight years of schooling were from low-income families. School stability was greatest for children who attended decile 9–10 schools. Children who had attended three or more schools were more likely to have attended all low-decile schools, or a mixture of decile schools.

Children's overall current attitudes to school, as reported by parents, were unaffected by the number of schools they had attended in their school career, perhaps because views of their current teacher were much the same no matter how many schools they had attended. However, the proportion of children who had had teachers they did not like rose from 38 percent of those who

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[33] This isn't to say that there isn't a problem: just that there isn't any New Zealand research that actually shows this.

[34] Wylie, C., Thompson, J., Hodgen, E., Ferral, H., Lythe, C., and Fijn, T. (2004). *Competent children at 12*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research (available on www.nzcer.org.nz). See also Wylie, Thompson, & Lythe (2001); Wylie, Hodgen, & Ferral (2006). The information in this section comes from pp. 232–234 of Wylie et al. (2004).

had remained in one school since they started, to 61 percent of those who had changed schools. This could mean that difficulties in teacher–child interaction are sometimes behind a change in school. This raises the question of the reasons behind school change. If better relationships and a better learning environment can be established in another school, then school mobility *per se* may not be the issue. Parents of those children who had changed schools more than three or four times were just as satisfied with their child's overall progress as those whose children had stayed at one school, or had made only a single change.

Parental involvement in the school showed mixed associations with the number of times a child had moved schools. On the one hand, parents of those who had attended four or more schools were just as likely as others to have regular talks with their child's teacher, attend parent–teacher interviews, or be a board of trustees or parents' association member. On the other hand, it was the parents of children who had spent their entire school life in a single school who were more likely to undertake voluntary work in classrooms, though their overall rates are not high (14 percent compared with 6 percent of those whose children had shifted school at least once).[35] Other volunteer work around the school was also more likely in this group: 42 percent, decreasing to 21 percent of those whose child had been to four or more schools by the time they were aged 12. Eight percent of this group were employed at their child's school, compared with 2 percent of those whose children had shifted school at least once.

There were a few relationships between the number of schools attended by children and their competency scores. On the whole, children who had attended a single school tended to have higher average scores than others for reading and writing, and children who had attended four or more schools by the age of 12 tended to have lower than average scores for mathematics. These associations remained after taking into account family income and maternal qualification, though they were somewhat diluted. However, high mobility did not disadvantage the Competent Children study children in terms of social and attitudinal competencies, including social skills with peers and perseverance.

Sixty-nine percent of the study children had moved house at least once by the time they were 12.[36] Twenty-three percent had moved once, 15 percent, twice, 17 percent, three or four times, and 14 percent, five or more times (to a total of 14 shifts for one child). A number of associations were found with children's competency levels at age 12, generally favouring children who had either stayed in the same house, or moved only once or twice in relation to those who had moved five or more times (see the data in Table 1 below).

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[35] This contrasts with the findings from the National Survey. See the discussion earlier in this report.

[36] However, we don't know if this means that they also changed *schools*. We also don't know how many changed schools while continuing to live at the same address.

Table 1 **Number of times child's family has shifted house since child's birth and children's competencies at age 12**

Number of times of family changes of house since birth of child→ Age-12 competency↓	None Mean (n=154)	Once Mean (n=115)	Twice Mean (n=73)	3 or 4 times Mean (n=86)	5 or more times Mean (n=68)	Prob. Of F-value from ANOVA	Percent variance acct. for
Curiosity	63.8	**64.6**	63.0	59.3^	56.1	0.018	2.4
Perseverance	71.8	**73.9**	68.3	65.3^	60.5	**0.0003**	**4.3**
Individual Responsibility	76.6	**78.0**	76.2	71.8^	70.1	0.033	2.1
Social Skills with Peers*	72.0	**72.8**	71.6	69.9^	65.5	0.014	2.5
Social Skills with Adults*	78.1	76.5	77.3	75.6^	73.7	0.45	0.7
Communication*	**71.2**	70.5	68.0	68.3^	64.0	0.056	1.9
Mathematics**	**54.0**	52.6	52.0	51.2	39.9	**0.002**	**3.5**
PAT Reading Comprehension	55.4^^^	**56.4**	55.1	53.0^	49.0	0.19	1.3
Burt Word Reading*	76.9	77.6	77.6	**79.3**	72.2	0.030	2.2
Writing	52.1	52.1	**53.0**	52.4	47.3	**0.006**	**2.9**
Reading Age (yrs, mo)	12.10^	**12.11**	12.8	12.7^	12.2	0.079	1.7
Logical Problem-Solving*	**71.9**	69.9	70.7	70.6	66.7	0.033	2.1
Composite Competency*	**67.8^^^**	**67.8**	66.7	65.1^^	60.4	**0.0004**	**4.2**
Composite Cognitive Competency	**61.2^^^**	60.4	60.5	60.4^	53.6	**0.001**	**3.6**
Composite Social & Attitudinal Competency*	72.3	**72.7**	70.7	68.4^	65.0	**0.004**	**3.0**

* In these cases the squared model was a better fit.

** In this case the square-root model was a better fit.

^ One fewer in this mean. ^^ Two fewer in this mean. ^^^ Three fewer in this mean.

The mean scores are percentages, not raw scores. The highest scores for each competency are in **bold** type.

Some associations became indicative or not notable once maternal qualification and family income were taken into account, suggesting that family resources may be protective for multiple shifts in place of residence. Significant contrasts remained (between those who had not moved or moved only once, and those who had moved five or more times) for Mathematics, for Perseverance, and for Social Skills with Peers.

These findings tell us that the relationship between mobility and school achievement is not a simple one. In this study there is an apparent connection between stability and higher reading, writing, and mathematics scores, and a possible link between high mobility and lower scores in mathematics and some social skills. These are patterns that, in general terms, are consistent with the findings of international research in this area.

A more recent report on the Competent Children/Competent Learners Project (Wylie, et al., 2006) examined the experiences of transition to secondary school for these students, finding that there

were some positive features associated with mobility. Students who had changed schools previously found this particular transition easier than those who had not. Thirty-one percent of students who had attended only two schools (including the secondary school) settled in straight away compared with 43 percent of those who had attended five or more schools.

International research on mobility and education

Concern about the effect of frequent movement on children's education is not a specifically New Zealand issue.[37] Nor is it a new issue.[38] A number of British researchers have explored mobility patterns in schools, the factors that produce high levels of mobility in schools, and various initiatives designed to address the effects of student mobility on schools and students (see, for example, Demie, 1998; Demie, Lewis & Taplin, 2005; Dobson & Henthorne, 1999; Goldestein, Rath & Hill, 1999; Mortimore, Sammons, Stoll & Ecob, 1988; Tymms & Henderson, 1995; Yang, Strand & Demie, 2006). A comprehensive UK study of pupil mobility and schools is reported in Dobson, et al. (2000). The first part of this project involved a national survey of mobility rates in schools, in which it was found that average rates across the UK were between 10 and 20 percent for primary schools, and between 8 and 12 percent for secondary schools.[39] The second part of this study was a more in-depth look at the trends in six case study schools. One of these schools had a mobility rate of 81 percent, a second had a rate of 57 percent, and a third of 35 percent (1998–1999 data).

The following are some of the main findings of the project overall. Most British schools have some mobility: however, there are large differences between schools (they found a range from nil to 175 percent per annum). Schools with mobility rates above 20 percent are in a minority, but in London and other large urban areas, between a quarter and a half of all schools have rates above 20 percent. In the UK, rates of over 30 percent are regarded as very high. The study found high mobility rates to be linked with certain kinds of residential movement: in particular they are common in areas with a lot of low-quality and/or short-term accommodation, and in areas where there are military facilities. High mobility schools, other than those with a high proportion of armed forces children, tend to have high numbers of disadvantaged mobile *and* non-mobile children. Highly mobile children often have attendance problems, and high levels of student movement were found to have adverse effects on schools (and their LEAs). In some areas, home–school conflict[40] was found to be a reason for high mobility.

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37 Although, as mentioned earlier, some parts of New Zealand appear to have mobility rates that are very high by international standards.

38 Dobson, Henthorne, and Lynas (2000) quote from reports written 30–40 years ago identifying pupil mobility as an issue.

39 This data was compiled from 66 LEAs. LEAs are Local Education Authorities—the UK term for a schooling "district" or administrative unit.

40 This is an umbrella term for situations where parents are dissatisfied with the school *and* where children have been suspended from the school.

Dobson and Pooley (2004) report on a complementary study investigating mobility in the secondary school system in three LEAs that were known to have high levels of mobility involving disadvantaged pupils. Although each authority was significantly different from the others in the study, each had similar patterns of mobility across its secondary schools. In each authority there was one school with a mobility rate above 26 percent and one or more schools with mobility rates below 5 percent. Twenty-two of the 27 schools in the study had mobility rates above the national median (5.9 percent). The findings from this study broadly reflected the findings from the previous study on primary schools. Schools with high mobility rates were also schools with high levels of disadvantage and students with lower than average achievement levels on enrolment. However, findings in the secondary study did suggest that at this level of schooling mobility patterns seem to have more to do with the school system itself than with geographical factors. The authors warn that the trend for increasing numbers of schools to set their own admissions criteria could limit access by mobile students to these schools, producing an increasing concentration of mobility and disadvantage in some schools.

From this research and the earlier work, it would appear that high mobility rates are common in some areas of the UK. Rates are higher in primary schools than in secondary schools,[41] and they are very high in a small number of areas. These trends are broadly similar to those identified in the New Zealand work described in the previous section. Overall, however, movement rates are lower than those in New Zealand schools.

Mobility and student achievement

However, in the UK, as in New Zealand, very little research has until recently specifically focused on the effects—if any—of frequent movement on educational achievement. A number of broadly focused studies have looked at the influence of a range of contextual factors on educational achievement, and found mobility to be one among many negative influences (see, for example, Alston, 2000; Strand, 2000). US research has produced similar findings (see, for example, Alexander, Entwisle, & Dauber, 1996; Hanna, 2003; Ingersoll, Scamman, & Eckerling, 1989; Kendall, 1997; Kerbow, Azcoitia, & Buell, 2003; Lash & Kirkpatrick, 1990, 1994; Nelson, Simoni, & Adelman, 1996; Rumberger, 2003; Vail, 1996; Williams, 1996).

In one of the few studies that directly examines the relationship between mobility and achievement, Demie (2002) investigated the educational performance of about 5,000 primary- and secondary-aged students[42] in an inner London LEA, 21 percent of whom had been identified as

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41 Some researchers argue that this is because families with young children tend to move around more often, but settle as the children get older. Others point out that this is because the most frequently moving students are likely to have dropped out of the system before they reach secondary school, or are truanting. This is clearly an area for further investigation.

42 In three cohorts (one of 2,403 at Key Stage Two, a second of 1,479 at Key Stage Three, and a third of 1,225 at GCSE level).

mobile.[43] The average performance of mobile students was found to be substantially below that of non-mobile students, sometimes by as much as 50 percent. This study found that high levels of student mobility depress the overall performance of schools, and that only a small minority of schools had similar achievement rates for mobile and non-mobile pupils.[44] However, it also found strong links between high mobility and *other* factors—such as low income, poor accommodation, family break-up, and recent immigration to the country.

In another (US) study, Entwisle, Alexander, and Olson (1997), reporting on a large-scale study of children's first few years at school in a Baltimore community, found clear links between low income, frequent movement, and reduced school performance. Other studies show that many frequent movers *begin* school with low achievement levels (see, for example, Mantzicopoulos & Knutson, 2000; Strand, 2000).

Thus it seems that low income, high mobility, and reduced educational achievement are linked. This link is not, however, a straightforward one. It is not possible to conclude from this, that high mobility lowers educational achievement, and, as some researchers have found, it is very difficult to disentangle the effect of frequent movement from the large number of other factors associated with low income that could influence educational attainment.

Two researchers have made a strong case for exercising caution here. Wright (1999), in a meta-analysis of studies of the relationship between student mobility and achievement in the USA, found that other "risk factors" (family income and ethnic minority status) had more influence, and that mobility is often confounded with these other factors. In a study of the links between mobility and attainment in 6,000 students in an English urban education authority, Strand (2002) found mobility in the early years of schooling to be strongly associated with significantly lower levels of attainment. However, when he took into account other factors (low income, ESOL, absence rates, and existing learning needs), the effect of mobility, while still statistically significant, was substantially reduced. He found that there was a significant effect on progress in mathematics only, and that even there the impact was low relative to other factors.

Strand and Demie (2006), in a later study, compared the end of Key Stage Two test results[45] with results from the end of Key Stage One[46] for a sample of 2,279 pupils in an inner London LEA. Again, they found that although pupil mobility was strongly associated with low attainment at the end of Key Stage Two, when other pupil background factors such as socioeconomic status, fluency in English, and ethnicity were taken into consideration, the difference in attainment was reduced by almost a half. When the results of Key Stage One were accounted for, the association

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[43] In this study, "pupil mobility" was defined as: "a child joining a school at a point other than at the start of the key stage" (p. 199): that is, a child who fits this definition is "mobile", and all others are "non-mobile". School mobility rates were calculated by dividing the number of pupils joining school other than in the first year of a key stage by the total number of pupils taking the end-of-key-stage test, and multiplying this by 100.

[44] Where this was the case, it didn't seem to be a school effect. Rather, anecdotal evidence suggests that this occurred where schools were admitting particularly able mobile pupils.

[45] Key Stage Two covers Years 3–6 and end-of-stage tests are taken when students are around age 11.

[46] Key Stage One covers Years 1–2 and end-of-stage tests are taken when students are around age 7.

between mobility and low attainment at Key Stage Two was no longer significant. Students who moved during Key Stage Two had lower scores at Key Stage One—their progress during Key Stage Two was not affected by the move. Similarly, they found that pupils in high-mobility schools, on average, made similar progress to pupils in schools with low mobility—when other variables were statistically controlled.[47] The authors argue that, while it is not possible to establish a causal relationship between mobility and attainment, where a student is experiencing difficulties, changing schools might make the problem worse.

Strand and Demie point out that it is important to analyse the *reasons* for mobility, and not to treat mobile students as a homogeneous group. In the LEA they studied, effects attributed to "pupil mobility" should, more accurately, be attributed to the effect of international migration. They caution that the results of this study are specific to primary-aged students and that the situation may be different at the secondary level.

Strategies for dealing with high mobility

Many of the reports on research in this area include sections on how schools, education authorities, and communities can mitigate the effects of high mobility on student achievement. Schools are encouraged to develop programmes that aim to build strong school–community links and/or to increase awareness of the impact of frequent movement on children (through parent brochures and/or support materials for teachers and school administrators). Communities and local government authorities are enjoined to "enhance stability"—through programmes designed to provide adequate and affordable housing, deal with poverty, support families, and so on. Two widely cited examples of such programmes are the Staying Put programme in Chicago (Kerbow et al., 2003), or the Langley Park programme in Washington DC (Hanna, 2003). Entwisle, et al. (1997) point out that, while moving frequently clearly adds to the problems already faced by poor children, it differs from some other problems in that it is an issue that schools *can* help with. They suggest a number of strategies schools could adopt to help transferring children adapt—including allowing them to commute to their old school until the end of the school year; providing extra counselling; educating parents about the hazards of within-year moves; and giving parents strategies for supporting their children as they make the transition. Other researchers make very similar suggestions (see, for example, Bruno & Isken, 1996; Dobson et al., 2000; Kerbow, 1996; Lash & Kirkpatrick, 1990; Neuman, 1987; OFSTED, 2002; Schuler, 1990; Tucker, Marx, & Long, 1998).

Do these strategies "work"? It seems that the jury is out on this too. For example, Fisher, Matthews, Stafford, Nakagawa, and Durante (2002) reviewed a number of school-based programmes designed to address the challenges of high mobility, and collected data on the perceived effectiveness of these programmes. They found that although many schools in the US

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[47] Strand and Demie say this could indicate the success of high-mobility schools in integrating mobile students into their schools, but further research in this area is necessary.

are making strong efforts to build community links with the families of highly mobile children, these attempts have not translated into greater involvement by these families. They argue that schools cannot be expected to do this alone. If they are to do this work successfully, they need support from the wider community, in partnership with government, at the "meso-system" level.[48] Another similar study (Nakagawa, Stafford, Fisher, & Matthews, 2002) drew similar conclusions.

What does all this tell us?

In the UK and the US, as well as in New Zealand, the high rate of student movement between schools in some areas is seen as a problem. There are some resourcing issues for schools in areas with high rates of student movement, and high levels of mobility appear to be associated with reduced educational attainment in low-income areas. There is some evidence for a greater effect at secondary level. However, on the basis of the research outlined above, it cannot be said that high mobility *on its own* is necessarily a negative influence on children's educational progress.

While frequent movement *could* affect a child's educational achievement, like a lot of things in education, the relationship between these two things is not at all straightforward. The research outlined above points, not to a linear unidirectional cause and effect relationship, but to a complex system of networked relationships feeding back into each other in multiple ways and multiple directions. To take one example, moving frequently is regarded negatively by teachers because they believe it has a negative impact on children's educational achievement. However, it could be that, where there is an impact on achievement, this is an effect of the teacher's lowered expectations. Schools are highly complex organisations that are, for all sorts of reasons, set up to deliver their services to *groups* of students. Because they are set up in this way, it is not easy for them to deal with children who don't fit conventional patterns, and as a result these children (or, more accurately, their families) tend to be seen as problematic. Turning this around, it is possible to argue that it is *because* schools are organised in the way they are that these children are seen as problematic and/or deficient: that is, that it is the schooling *system* that needs to change, not individual children, if this "problem" is to be solved. We return to these ideas in the final section of this report. However, in the next section, we describe our investigation of the links between mobility, schools, and community attachment.

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[48] The meso-system is a term developed by the psychologist Bronfenbrenner (1979) to describe the inter-relationships between different microsystems—such as family–school or school–community—that affect children's development. Bronfenbrenner's "ecological" model of human development is currently very influential among educationists.

3. The educational implications of frequent movement—the NZCER study

Background

As outlined in the previous section, students who move schools frequently are seen as a problem—for the schools they attend, and for themselves. High levels of student movement are linked with lower achievement in low-income areas, and in these areas, frequent movers are seen by schools as a burden. However, we don't know whether frequent movement affects student achievement *on its own*, or whether it is one factor among many that, together, produce an effect. We also don't know *how* frequent movement might impact on achievement (if it does), nor do we know exactly why it seems to loom so large as an issue for schools.

Phase One of this study set out to answer the following research questions:

1. What do individual student and school mobility rates reveal about patterns of familial attachment to the community?
2. What impact does individual student mobility have on student learning?
3. What impact does student mobility have on a school's ability to meet the educational needs of its more stable students?
4. What impact does student mobility have on a school's ability to contribute to its community's social capital?
5. Can any differences in student mobility rates between schools serving comparable communities be ascribed to differences in school policy and culture?
6. Does school movement contribute to variations in local housing and labour markets or variations in the social and cultural capital of one community compared to another—or does it simply reflect them?
7. Do school mobility rates change over time? Are any changes related to changes in policy or culture at individual schools, or are they related to community changes (e.g. changes in the local housing or labour market, or changes in the community's social and cultural capital)?

The first phase of the study (2003–2004) was designed to produce baseline data. To answer these questions we needed to know what school movement rates were in each of the four case study areas. We needed information on how often students were moving in the four areas; whether or not this movement causes problems for schools; and whether or not there are links between frequent movement and reduced educational achievement.

In the Phase One work we collected data on student movement, attainment, and attendance from the following school records:

- school's records of enrolments and withdrawals and its attendance registers;
- "Record of Schools Attended" or "progress" cards (Form E19/22A) of all students in Years 5, 8, and 11.[49]
- achievement records for all students in Years 5, 8, and 11. For Years 5 and 8 in Phase One we used the records collected by the teacher, and for Year 8 students we used National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) results.

This work was done in late 2003. The information we collected allowed us to calculate each school's non-standard movement rate; to compare the attendance patterns of children who had moved frequently with those who had not; to work out which students in the school are highly mobile (and the proportion of the school's roll they form); and to establish whether or not there were differences in the achievement of frequently moving students. In Phase One we also we interviewed the principal in each of the study schools. The data we collected gave us preliminary answers to questions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 above.

The main findings of the Phase One work were as follows:[50]

1. Rates of mobility in the study schools were very high—overall around 35 percent.

2. About 20 percent of students in the year groups we sampled were frequent movers. A few had been enrolled in 10–15 (occasionally more) different schools.

3. Almost all of the 20 principals we interviewed saw student mobility as a major issue for their school.

4. The differences in educational achievement between frequent movers and "nonmovers" in the same year groups at the same schools, were very small (and not statistically significant).

These findings raised some interesting questions for us. Given that mobility rates are high, and that schools see frequent movers as problematic, why did we *not* find differences in achievement? Conversely, if mobility doesn't affect school performance, then why are schools worried about it? In Phase Two of this project we wanted to answer these questions. We added another research question to the list above (on p31):

8. Is there something about the way schools and teaching are organised that makes student mobility a problem?

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[49] We chose Years 5, 8, and 11 as our sample cohorts: Year 5 is near the end of primary school; Year 8 to represent the "middle school" years and the end of intermediate; and Year 11 to represent the secondary school years. Students begin to leave school from Year 11 and they participate in nationally recognised forms of assessment (Level 1 of the NCEA).

[50] These findings are summarised in the next section of this report: however, for full details of the Phase One work, see Gilbert (2005).

We also made substantial changes to the project design for the Phase Two work. These changes are outlined in more detail later in this section: however, briefly, they were as follows:

1. We used the same, s*tandardised* measures of student achievement in *all* of the study schools. (In the Phase One work we used the achievement data collected by teachers, which meant that the data could not be compared across the study schools).

2. We added a *student survey*—which was designed to assess students' sense of belonging to—or engagement with—their school.

3. We interviewed the *teachers* of the sample year groups.

4. We *reinterviewed* the *principals* of the study schools, probing more deeply for their views on exactly why frequently moving students are a problem.

These changes were additional sources of data. However in Phase Two we also collected a "second wave" of all of the same kinds of data collected in Phase One. Our aims in adding these new data sources were:

- check the Phase One findings on student achievement
- see if we could develop another measure of the perceived differences between the two groups of students
- collect more detailed information on why schools experience frequent movers as a problem.

The next section outlines in more detail what we did.

Methodology

The case study schools

The Phase One work took place in 20 schools in the four case study areas, while Phase Two involved 18 schools.[51]

Two of the four case study areas have six or fewer schools. In these areas we planned to visit all six. In the other two areas we visited a sample of six schools, chosen to represent the range of school types in the area. The samples were derived as follows.

In the Waitangirua/Cannons Creek area there are 11 schools altogether. We visited six of these: one full primary (Years 1–8); two contributing primaries (Years 1–6); one intermediate (Years 7–8); one kura Māori (Years 1–11);[52] and one secondary school (Years 9–13). All of the schools we visited were decile 1 schools. In the Amuri district there are only three schools—two contributing

[51] Two withdrew between Phase One and Phase Two.

[52] In Phase One this kura enrolled students from Years 1–8 but by Phase Two it also had wharekura (secondary) students.

primaries and one area school (Years 1–13). We visited all three of these schools. These three schools had decile ratings of 7, 9, and 9. We also visited a fourth school (a full primary with a decile rating of 5) that is just outside the Amuri area.[53] Data from all four schools have been included in our results. The Opotiki district (a very large area) has 16 schools. We chose six of these schools—two full primary schools, two kura kaupapa Māori, one area school, and one secondary school. All are decile 1 schools except one, which is decile 2. Kawerau has six schools. We planned to visit all six, but this was reduced to four in Phase One[54]—three contributing primary schools and one secondary school. All are decile 1.

In Phase Two one of the six schools in the Opotiki area formally withdrew from the study and a second did not respond to any of our attempts to re-establish contact about the project. As a result the Phase Two data are derived from four, not six, schools in the Opotiki area, and the overall number of schools was reduced to 18. Two of the four Phase Two schools in Opotiki were full primaries, one was an area school, and one was a secondary school. In the other three areas the study schools were the same in Phase One and Phase Two. In Phase Two the Amuri schools' decile ratings had dropped to 5, 7, and 8 respectively.[55] The fourth school, just outside the area maintained a decile 5 rating. In Waitangirua/Cannons Creek one school had a decile 3 rating by Phase Two, but the others remained at decile 1. All schools in Kawerau and Opotiki maintained the same decile ratings in Phase Two. We visited all schools between July and October 2006.

Data

In Phase Two we collected the same kinds of information collected in Phase One. We calculated the 2005 and 2006 non-standard movement rates (from the school's records of enrolments and withdrawals), and the 2005–2006 numbers and proportions of frequent movers in each school (from the "Record of Schools Attended" cards) and looked at the attendance records of the frequent movers. We also reinterviewed the principal (or their representative) in each of the study schools (17 principals and one deputy principal).

However, as outlined above, in the Phase Two work we collected some new kinds of information. We interviewed the teacher of the Year 5, 8, or 11 class in each school (except one), as well as the principal. We designed and administered a survey of Year 5, 8 and 11 students in the study school (a total of 717 students). This survey was designed to assess students' "sense of belonging" to school. The questions probed students' attitudes towards school, school work, and teachers, and links between school and family.[56] The survey was administered by the NZCER researcher in

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[53] This wasn't part of our original plan: however, we did this on the recommendation of one of the other principals in the area.

[54] One school did not want to participate in the project and one principal was hospitalised the day before the planned (Phase One) interview and subsequently withdrew from the project for health reasons.

[55] We did not investigate whether these changes were due to changes in the composition of the community, or whether they were due to a change in the way decile ratings were calculated after 1 January 2005.

[56] See Appendix A for a copy of this survey.

each school. Students were assured that there were no right or wrong answers and that their responses were confidential.

In addition, we collected the students' achievement records in a different way. For the Years 5 and 8 cohort (primary) we collected the Progressive Achievement Test (PAT) scores (for mathematics), and Supplementary Test of Achievement in Reading (STAR) scores (for reading).[57] PAT and STAR are nationally standardised tests that are used in many, but not all, primary schools to assess children's progress in reading and mathematics in relation to all other children in New Zealand. Some of the study schools use these tests: in these cases we used the scores they had collected. Others do not. In these schools we supplied the tests free of charge, also offering to mark and analyse the results of these tests where this was necessary.[58]

Using the scores from these tests allowed us to compare achievement information for Years 5 and 8 students across the different schools in the study. For the Year 11 cohort (secondary) we collected their 2006 National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) results.[59]

All interviews were taperecorded. All other information was entered on spreadsheets.

Results

How often are students moving in or out of the case study schools?

As outlined earlier, there is currently no official or nationally established method of measuring the rate of non-standard movement in and out of a school (as distinct from its overall roll turnover).

We used information from each school's 2002, 2004, and 2005 attendance registers and the second of the two formulae suggested in Neighbour's work (see Figure 2, p. 13 above)…

that is…

$$\frac{[\text{total no. of enrolments}] - [\text{new entrants}] + [\text{total no. of withdrawals}] - [\text{no. of graduates}] \times 100}{\text{school's total roll}}$$

to calculate each school's overall rate of "non-standard" movement.

Aggregating the figures for the schools in each case study area over the two phases of the project, we obtained the following results:

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[57] The achievement data we collected from primary schools were different from Phase One in that we used the results of standardised tests only. We provided the tests to the schools if necessary.

[58] NZCER developed both of these tests and supplies them to New Zealand schools.

[59] The National Certificate of Educational Achievement is now the main form of assessment in the senior secondary school. It provides information on students' performance on a set of "standards" at three levels: Level 1 (which is usually—but not necessarily—completed in Year 11); Level 2 (Year 12); and Level 3 (Year 13).

Table 2 **Mean non-standard movement rates in the four study areas during 2002, 2004, 2005 (Phase One and Phase Two results)**

	Mean non-standard movement for each area			
	2002 %	2004 %	2005 %	Over 3 years %
Waitangirua/Cannons Creek	31	39	27	32
Amuri[60]	26	25	38	29
Opotiki[61]	36	42	53	45
Kawerau	40	35	41	39

This table shows that all areas in the study have high levels of non-standard movement. Overall movement rates in the Waitangirua/Cannons Creek, Opotiki, and Kawerau schools are similar to those found in schools in other low-decile areas—32, 45, and 39 percent, compared to 43 percent (Neighbour's study), 39 percent (the 1999 NZCER National Survey).[62] The Amuri schools' mean movement rate in the study period of 29 percent was comparable to—though slightly higher than—schools of similar deciles in other studies (26 percent for decile 6 and 7 schools in the NZCER Analysis of NZPF 2001 Transience Survey (Hodgen & Wylie, 2002). Apart from Opotiki, where there was an upward trend, there was no pattern of increase or decrease in rates in the study period.

However, these average rates mask a wide spread of movement rates across the individual schools— see Table 3.

Table 3 **Range of non-standard movement rates in the four study areas during 2002, 2004, 2005 (Phase One and Phase Two results)**

Range	2002		2004		2005	
	Highest school rate %	Lowest school rate %	Highest school rate %	Lowest school rate %	Highest school rate %	Lowest school rate %
Waitangirua/Cannons Creek	44	12	54	20	35	9
Amuri	44	9	33	13	52	27
Opotiki	45	23	52	38	81	37
Kawerau	45	35	37	31	44	39

[60] The 2005 data exclude the area school as there was some concern as to how "new entrants" were defined when the data were collected.

[61] The 2002 data include one Kura Kaupapa Māori but this school had withdrawn by the time the other data were collected. The 2005 data exclude the college as some data were missing.

[62] This study used a methodology which was different from that used by Neighbour.

It should be noted, however, that some of this data comes from very small schools (e.g. rolls of less than 40). The movement of just one or two large families, in this situation, has a very large effect. In some of the study areas there were "special character" schools, such as Māori medium schools (where whānau are often asked to make a commitment to keeping their children in the school for a period of time), or intermediate schools (where students only attend for a maximum of two years). These schools will have much lower non-standard movement rates than other schools in an area, which affects the overall rate for the area. In general, however, these rates are high, and, in some schools, extremely high.

What proportion of the individuals in each school are frequent movers?

We used the Record of Schools Attended (RoSA)[63] cards to collect information on the total number of schools every student in Years 5, 8, or 11 at the study schools had attended during their school career.[64] We did this for two reasons: first, we wanted to find out how often some children have moved; and second, we wanted to establish the proportion of mobile students in each school. We had to decide how we were going to differentiate the mobile students from the others. As with rates of movement in schools, there is no generally agreed way of doing this. As noted earlier, there are many different definitions in the literature. We decided to look at movement patterns over the students' entire school career (rather than year by year), and to define frequent movement as follows.

How we decided who was a frequent mover

Children in Years 1–6 at a primary school who have not moved house would usually have attended one school. Year 8 students would usually have attended up to two[65] schools, and secondary school students (Years 9–13) would usually have attended up to three different schools in their school careers. Taking these three figures as our baseline (n), we defined "non-mobile" individuals as those who had attended n or n + 1 schools, and "mobile" students as those who had attended *n + 2* or more schools. In other words, if a child had been to a total number of schools that was *two or more* than the baseline figure for their year, then s/he was classified as mobile. Any move was considered as a change of school, so a child who had been to only a few schools could be considered mobile if s/he had multiple enrolments in those schools.

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63 The Record of Schools Attended cards are officially known as E19/22A cards, but commonly referred to as "progress" cards.

64 We also noted the names of their previous schools so we could investigate patterns of movement.

65 The "normal" number of schools attended is determined by the school types available in the area—e.g. whether the area offers full primaries, intermediates, or area schools.

Table 4 **Our measure of mobility**

	Baseline number (n)	Mobile students (n + 2)
Year 5	1	3
Year 8	2	4
Year 11	3	5

It is important to note here that this way of classifying students as "mobile" or "non-mobile" is a rather arbitrary—and fairly blunt—measure. It does not take into account the stage (of school career) at which the mobility occurs. For example, it does not differentiate between a Year 11 student who may have moved schools several times in their early years, but who has since settled, and one who has been to several different secondary schools. Neither does it allow for the different school types in different areas. For instance, in a region with an area school it could be completely normal for a Year 11 student to have attended only one school, whereas in other areas, a Year 11 student would have attended at least three different schools. Also, a student coming from overseas was counted as having made one move when they arrived in New Zealand but they may of course have had several moves before they arrived (which would not be recorded on their RoSA card).

It is also important to note here that a high proportion of the RoSA cards we looked at, in both phases of the study, had obvious inaccuracies. For example, there do not seem to be any accepted conventions for entering the entry and withdrawal dates; many children had gaps when it appeared they were not attending any school; attendance information is often omitted; and some children have no card at all.[66] As a consequence of these limitations, the data presented in the tables below should be treated with caution.

The tables below show the numbers and proportions of mobile students present in the study schools for each of the four areas in 2006 (Phase Two).

[66] In one of the secondary schools we visited in Phase Two, RoSA cards were held for only 30 percent of all Year 11 students who were currently enrolled and attending the school. This was, however, an extreme example: other schools had cards for all or nearly all of their students.

Table 5 **Number of mobile students in Waitangirua/Cannons Creek schools in 2006**

	No. of mobile students/ total no of students in year group[67]	Percent of total number of students in year
Year 5 (attended 3 or more schools)	22/117	19
Year 8 (attended 4 or more schools)	42/172	24
Year 11 (attended 5 or more schools)	11/71	15
Total for area (6 schools)	75/360	21

The 2006 figures are slightly lower than those found in the same schools in 2003 (Phase One). The 2003 figures were as follows: Year 5 – 27 percent; Year 8 – 25 percent; Year 11 – 16 percent. Total overall was 23 percent.

Table 6 **Number of schools attended by Waitangirua/Cannons Creek mobile students in 2006**

No. of schools attended	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15+	Total no. of mobile students
Year 5	11	5	3	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	22
Year 8		19	7	10	-	2	2	-	-	-	1	-	1	42
Year 11			9	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11

In the Waitangirua/Cannons Creek primary schools, using our definition, about a quarter of the students are mobile. The proportion is lower at secondary school level.

Of the 22 Year 5 mobile students, 19 had been to three, four, or five different schools. However, one had been to seven, one to eight, and one to nine different schools in five years. This pattern was similar to that found in Phase One. Of the 42 mobile students in Year 8, about half had been to four different schools. Another 17 had been to five or six schools. Six students had been to eight or more different schools in 8 years and of those six, one had been to 13 schools and one to

[67] According to information gathered from ROSA cards (see previous note re the accuracy of the information on some of these cards). The actual numbers of mobile students are probably higher—we had no data on the previous schools of many currently enrolled students. NB: this note applies to data in this column for all four case study areas.

17. Of the Year 11 students, only two had been to more than five schools during their 11 years of schooling.[68]

The RoSA cards showed that some of these students were moving in and out of the same schools, sometimes returning to a school they had previously been enrolled at, and sometimes moving from one school to another school within the Porirua basin.[69] All of the moves of about a quarter of the mobile Year 5 and Year 8 students were *within* the Porirua basin. On the other hand, however, all of the Year 11 mobile students had attended at least one school outside the Porirua basin.

Table 7 **Number of mobile students in Amuri schools in 2006**

	No. of mobile students/ total no. of students in year group	Percent of total number of students in year
Year 5 (attended 3 or more schools)	7/49	14
Year 8 (attended 4 or more schools)	2/37	5
Year 11 (attended 5 or more schools)	4/17	24
Total for area (6 schools)	13/103	13

In the Amuri schools, about one-quarter of Year 11 students are mobile: however, the proportion of mobile Year 5 and Year 8 students is smaller. Two of the primary schools had no mobile

[68] However as already noted these figures should be treated with caution. Many of the records were obviously inaccurate and the figure is likely to be higher. According to the principals, many of the students who were frequent movers earlier in their school careers are likely to have been, as one put it, "lost to the system" by Year 11—they have either officially left school or are truanting. We had no way of verifying this.

[69] These students are sometimes referred to in the literature and by teachers as "boomerang" students. Note that the Porirua basin is an area that is wider than the Waitangirua/Cannons Creek case study area—but within 10–15 minutes drive.

students at all.[70] As in Waitangirua/Cannons Creek, these figures are lower than those found in the same schools in 2003 (Phase One) with the exception of the Year 11 group. The 2003 figures for Amuri were as follows: Year 5 – 18 percent; Year 8 – 25 percent; Year 11 – 10 percent. Total overall was 20 percent.

Table 8 **Number of schools attended by Amuri mobile students in 2006**

No. of schools attended	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15+	Total no. of mobile students
Year 5	6	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
Year 8		1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Year 11			3	-	1	-	-		-	-	-	-	-	4

None of the Amuri Year 5 mobile students had been to more than four schools. Of the two Year 8 mobile students, one had been to four schools and one to five. Of the four Year 11 mobile students, three had been to five schools, and one to seven. No students in this area had been to a very large number of schools. As in Phase One, we found that nearly all of the previous enrolments of the Amuri mobile students (10/13) were in schools outside the area.[71]

Table 9 **Number of mobile students in Opotiki schools in 2006**

	No. of mobile students/ total no. of students in year group	Percent of total number of students in year
Year 5 (attended 3 or more schools)	16/32	50
Year 8 (attended 4 or more schools)	20/55	36
Year 11 (attended 5 or more schools)	35/134	26
Total for area (4 schools)	71/221	32

In the Opotiki schools surveyed in 2006, about 30 percent of students are mobile. The 2006 figures are higher than those found in the schools surveyed in 2003 (Phase One), except for Year 11. The 2003 figures were as follows: Year 5 – 19 percent; Year 8 – 25 percent; Year 11 – 9

[70] It is possible that the lower rates of mobility found in this phase of the study are an artefact of the time of data collection (early August). This is after dairy cows in this area are "dried off" and some of the mobile students may consequently have been out of the area. However, some school staff told us that they thought mobility rates in the area were dropping.

[71] Eight students who were classified as "non-mobile" had, however, moved schools within the area at non-standard times.

percent. Total overall in 2003 was 15 percent. As was the case in Waitangirua/ Cannons Creek, there were fewer mobile students at secondary school level.

Table 10 **Number of schools attended by Opotiki mobile students in 2006**

No. of schools attended	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15+	Total number of mobile students
Year 5	8	4	3	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16
Year 8		4	5	4	3	1	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	20
Year 11			12	8	11	2	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	35

Of the 16 Year 5 mobile students, three-quarters had been to three or four different schools. Of the 20 Year 8 mobile students, three-quarters had been to six or fewer schools although two had been to 11 schools in their eight years of schooling. One Year 11 student had been to 12 schools, one to 10 schools, and two to eight schools. Over half had been to six or fewer schools. A great deal of this movement is within the Opotiki district, often backwards and forwards between the same schools and may or may not involve residential movement. Over a quarter of *all* students in the Opotiki case study schools had been enrolled more than once in the school they were currently attending.

Table 11 **Number of mobile students in Kawerau schools in 2006**

	No. mobile students/ total no. of students in year group	Percent of total number of students in year
Year 5 (attended 3 or more schools)	19/92	21
*Year 8	-	-
Year 11 (attended 5 or more schools)	28/76	37
Total for area (4 schools)	47/168	28

* NB we don't have data for Year 8 because the Year 8 school didn't participate in the project.

For the Year 5 group, these rates are lower than those found in the same schools in 2003 (Phase One), but the Year 11 rates are higher. Overall, the proportion is slightly higher than it was in 2003. The 2003 figures were as follows: Year 5 – 28 percent; Year 11 – 13 percent. Total overall was 21 percent.

Table 12 **Number of schools attended by Kawerau mobile students in 2006**

No. of schools attended	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15+	Total no. of mobile students
Year 5	14	-	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	19
*Year 8														-
Year 11			10	8	5	-	1	1	-	2	-	1	-	28

* NB we don't have data for Year 8 because the Year 8 school didn't participate in the project.

Of the 19 Year 5 mobile students, almost three-quarters had been to three different schools. No student had been to more than six different schools. However, in the Year 11 mobile group, one student had been to 14 schools, two to 12, one to 10, and one to nine different schools. One-third of mobile Year 11 students had been to five, six, or seven schools.

As was the case in the Opotiki schools, a lot of the movement at primary school level seems to take place within the district, often between the same schools. Just over a quarter of *all* Kawerau Year 5 students had been enrolled in another school in Kawerau, or had previously been at the school they were currently attending (i.e. they had been away and then returned to the school).

Summary of data on numbers of frequent movers

In three of the four case study areas, using our definition of frequent movement (Table 4 above), around a quarter to a third of the total number of students in the sample year groups are frequent movers: however, the percentage of frequent movers in Amuri in Phase Two was lower (13 percent). A small number of students in all four areas are changing school very frequently.

In three of the four case study areas (Waitangirua/Cannons Creek, Opotiki, and Kawerau), there is a pattern of local circulation (movement between schools in the district—as opposed to movement to or from schools in other parts of New Zealand). The Amuri data did not follow this pattern. Most moves made by mobile students in Amuri involve a shift to or from another completely different part of the country (although some students who we classified as non-mobile had moved between schools in the area). In all four case study areas there were a number of "non-mobile" students changing schools within the area at non-standard times.[72]

Across all areas there were no significant differences in attendance between mobile and non-mobile students.[73] There were slight differences in the ethnic composition of the two groups, with students identified as Māori being overrepresented in the mobile group. Students identified as Pasifika were underrepresented in the mobile group. Fifty-three percent of non-mobile students

[72] By "non-standard" we mean at times other than the normal graduation times for a particular school (i.e. end of Year 6 for contributing schools, end of Year 8 for intermediates, and so on). In Porirua, Kawerau, and Amuri this number was around 10 percent, but in Opotiki it was closer to 20 percent.

[73] Because the differences were not significant we have not presented the data here.

identified themselves as Māori (they could choose more than one ethnicity) compared with 68 percent of the mobile group. Thirty-six percent of the non-mobile students and 22 percent of mobile students identified themselves as Pasifika. Approximately 37 percent of both mobile and non-mobile students identified as Pākehā.

How do these figures compare with the findings of other studies?

The only other studies involving the collection of information from the RoSA cards for a specific cohort of New Zealand school students are the Phase One work for this study and Anna Lee's study of a group of Auckland schools.[74] She counted the number of schools attended by 1,926 students at 10 Auckland intermediates, classifying those who had attended three or more schools as "transient". In the table below Lee's results are compared with those obtained from the schools in both phases of this study.[75]

Table 13 **Proportions of mobile Year 8 students found in Lee's (2000) study compared with those found in Phase One and Phase Two of this study**

	1–2 schools %	3–4 schools %	5–9 schools %	10+ schools %
Lee's Auckland				
Year 8s (decile 1 & 10)	48	32	14	6
Current study Phase One				
Waitangirua/Cannons Ck Year 8s (all decile 1)	58	30	10	2
Amuri Year 8s (decile 5–9)	65	16	19	-
Opotiki Year 8s (decile 1 or 2)	66	17	17	-
Current study Phase Two				
Waitangirua/Cannons Creek Year 8s (decile 1 or 3)	56	30	12	2
Amuri Year 8s (decile 5–8)	76	22	2	-
Opotiki Year 8s (decile 1 or 2)	53	18	25	4

* No data for Kawerau Year 8s—see note under Tables 11 and 12 above.

[74] Lee (2000).

[75] Because we decided to classify only those Year 8 students who had attended four or more schools as mobile, the figures we use in this table are different from those used elsewhere in this report for Year 8 students—because they include students who have attended *three* schools. This was done so that our figures could be compared with Lee's.

Waitangirua/Cannons Creek has about the same—or slightly fewer—mobile students than found by Lee in her study of 10 Auckland intermediate schools. This is interesting because half of Lee's schools were decile 10 (in which movement rates tend to be lower), whereas our study schools were mostly low decile. From this, it seems likely that, in comparison with similar decile Auckland schools, Waitangirua/Cannons Creek schools have considerably fewer mobile students.[76] This is consistent with the view, widely held in education circles, of South Auckland as New Zealand's "problem" area for high rates of student mobility.[77]

On the other hand, however, our data show that schools in Opotiki, while they have fewer medium-level movers (3–4 schools) than the Auckland schools, they have higher proportions of very frequent movers (students who have been to 5–9 schools).

However, while these trends are interesting, and may be indicative, it is important to note that both of these studies were small in scale and exploratory. In both cases, the data come from a small number of schools and the numbers overall are small. Thus these findings need to be treated cautiously.

Does frequent moving affect educational performance?

In Phase One of this study we compared the achievement of the non-mobile students with that of mobile students at Year 5 and Year 8 using PAT scores and/or teacher-estimated reading and maths levels, and NCEA results for the Year 11 cohort. While this is the achievement information that is collected by schools, there are some issues in using this kind of information for research of this kind. Briefly, these are as follows. We did not have the same kinds of information for all students (different schools collect different kinds of information), and most of the information we had was not standardised. It was thus impossible to compare information obtained from different schools and, where we could do this, the overall numbers we had data for in each year group were too small for robust statistical analysis.

In Phase Two we changed the way we collected achievement data. In the English medium schools[78] we collected PAT maths and STAR reading scores for primary students,[79] and NCEA results for secondary students. This was an improvement on the Phase One work in that using these standardised tests meant that data from different schools could usefully be compared.

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[76] We didn't disaggregate Lee's data to check this.

[77] Data collected in some South Auckland schools as part of the Student Engagement and Attendance strand of the Manurewa Enhancement Initiative (a partnership between the schools in this part of South Auckland and the Ministry of Education which aims to raise student achievement) indicate that some schools in this area have very high levels of non-standard movement. In one school the "transience" rate in 2002 was 106 percent—although this had dropped to 59 percent in 2006. (J. Good, personal communication, 4 March 2007)

[78] Achievement data were not collected from Māori immersion settings because of the difficulties in obtaining standardised data and the inappropriateness of comparing Māori medium education with English medium.

[79] See comments in Data section (p.35 above): where schools did not already use these tests we provided them free of charge.

However, there were still some limitations. At the primary level, the data set was smaller than in Phase One (the number of study schools was slightly smaller and there had been roll decreases). Testing was done at varying times of the year and under differing conditions in the different schools. This means that the Phase Two data also need to be interpreted with caution. At the secondary level, however, we had a larger sample of students in Phase Two (four—not three—secondary schools took part in the Phase Two work).

Primary school achievement information

In Phase One our aim was to collect PAT scores for reading vocabulary, reading comprehension (in English), and mathematics for all students in Year 5 and Year 8 at each of the case study primary schools. However, as it turned out, not all of the case study schools recorded PAT test scores. Where we had this standardised data, we used it first. However, the information most commonly recorded in the case study schools was the students' (teacher-estimated) reading ages and their (teacher-estimated) mathematics curriculum level. In most cases we had to use this data: however, this meant that we could not compare results across different schools and different communities.

Our analysis of the Phase One data showed few differences in achievement between the mobile and non-mobile students. Where there were differences they were small and not statistically significant. The exceptions were mathematics (Waitangirua/Cannons Creek Year 5s, Kawerau Year 5s, and Opotiki Year 8s), and reading (Amuri Year 8s and Opotiki Year 8s), where there were small differences that were statistically significant. However, as we have said, the data we were able to use were not from standardised tests and our sample sizes were very small.

In Phase Two of the study we were able to collect standardised mathematics (PAT) and reading (STAR) achievement information for 220 Year 5 students (84 percent of all Year 5 students in the case study schools) in English medium classes.[80] Of these, 39 were classified as mobile. (We had data for 63 percent of all mobile Year 5 students).We collected PAT and STAR scores for 231 Year 8 students (93 percent of all Year 8 students in the case study schools). Forty-three of these students were classified as mobile (we had data for 70 percent of Year 8 mobile students). This situation is further complicated by the fact that, for some students, we have data on *both* mathematics *and* reading, whilst for others we have data on *only* mathematics *or* reading. Details of the achievement data we had for each area are set out in the following tables.

Waitangirua/Cannons Creek

In Waitangirua/Cannons Creek we have Year 5 achievement data on 78 students from three schools. Eight of these children had been to three or more schools and so were classified as

[80] See note 76 above—these figures do not include students in Māori medium settings.

mobile. We have Year 8 data on 152 students from two schools. Twenty-seven of these children had been to four or more schools and so were classified as mobile.[81]

Table 14 **Number of Waitangirua/ Cannons Creek Year 5 and Year 8 students with achievement data**

Year 5	PAT maths	STAR reading	Year 8	PAT maths	STAR reading
Non-mobile	62	68	Non-mobile	113	118
Mobile	7	8	Mobile	27	25

Amuri

In Amuri we have Year 5 achievement data on 47 students from 4 schools. Seven of these children had been to three or more schools and so were classified as mobile. We have Year 8 data on 34 students from two schools. One of these children had been to four or more schools and so was classified as mobile.

Table 15 **Number of Amuri Year 5 and Year 8 students with achievement data**

Year 5	PAT maths	STAR reading	Year 8	PAT maths	STAR reading
Non-mobile	40	32	Non-mobile	33	27
Mobile	7	4	Mobile	1	0

Opotiki

In Opotiki we have Year 5 achievement data on 25 students from three schools. Nine of these children had been to three or more schools and so were classified as mobile. We have Year 8 data on 45 students from two schools. Fifteen of these children had been to four or more schools and so were classified as mobile.

Table 16 **Number of Opotiki Year 5 and Year 8 students with achievement data**

Year 5	PAT maths	STAR reading	Year 8	PAT maths	STAR reading
Non-mobile	13	16	Non-mobile	28	30
Mobile	6	8	Mobile	12	13

Kawerau

In Kawerau we have Year 5 achievement data on 70 students from three schools. Fifteen of these children had been to three or more schools and so were classified as mobile. We have no Year 8 data as the Year 8 school withdrew from the study.

[81] As above—the figures for all areas are for English medium schools only.

Table 17 **Number of Kawerau Year 5 students with achievement data**

Year 5	PAT maths	STAR reading
Non-mobile	39	53
Mobile	8	14

Were there any differences between the two groups?

Collating the achievement data from across all four areas gave us a total sample size of 451 students. (In Phase One this number was 692—the decrease is due mainly to dropping rolls in the study schools and our exclusion of data from students in Māori medium schools).Of these, 39 Year 5 students were mobile (74 in Phase One), and 43 Year 8s were mobile (70 in Phase One). Only one Year 8 student in the Amuri area was classified as mobile. Thus the Phase Two work yielded lower numbers overall: however, the source of these data (standardised tests) allows us to have more confidence in the results. The Phase Two data show very few differences between the reading and mathematics achievement levels of the mobile and the non-mobile students. While the non-mobile group appeared to be performing slightly better overall than the mobile group, the differences were not statistically significant. These differences are set out in the following tables.

Table 18 **STAR (reading) results (stanines)[82] for Year 5 students from across all areas**

	N	Minimum	Median	Mean	Maximum	Std. dev
Non-mobile	169	1.00	5.00	4.72	9.00	1.86
Mobile	34	1.00	4.00	4.32	9.00	1.85

These differences are not statistically significant.

Table 19 **PAT (mathematics) results (stanines) for Year 5 students from across all areas**

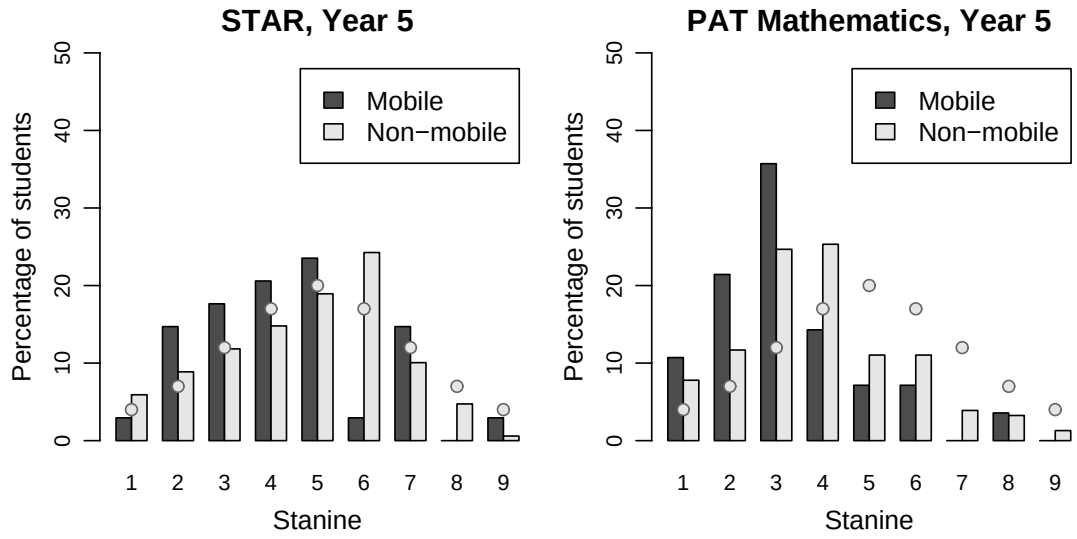
	N	Minimum	Median	Mean	Maximum	Std. dev
Non-mobile	154	1.00	4.00	3.93	9.00	1.78
Mobile	28	1.00	3.00	3.25	8.00	1.62

These differences are not statistically significant.

Presenting these data in graph form allows us to see some patterns: although, the differences were not found to be statistically significant. It is important to note here that, although the sample of non-mobile students is a reasonable size, the sample size of mobile students is small.

[82] Stanines are used to compare an individual's achievement with the results obtained by a national reference group chosen to represent a certain year level. Stanines divide the distribution of results for a year group into nine categories. Most students when compared with their own year group achieve around stanines four, five and six. Stanines seven, eight, and nine represent comparatively high achievement, while stanines one, two and three indicate comparatively low achievement.

Figure 3 **STAR (reading) and PAT (mathematics) for Year 5 students in all areas**



The circles on the graphs represent the national norms. In reading, non-mobile Year 5 students in the case study areas are performing close to the national norms, while mobile students are slightly overrepresented in the lower stanines (although some mobile students did very well). When compared with the non-mobile students (in the same schools), the mobile Year 5s are doing slightly less well in reading. In mathematics, the results for all Year 5 students in the study were slightly below the national norms, and mobile students seem to be doing slightly less well than non-mobile students. These differences were not statistically significant.

Table 20 **STAR (reading) results for Year 8 students from across all areas**

	N	Minimum	Median	Mean	Maximum	Std. dev
Non-mobile	175	1.00	4.00	3.94	9.00	1.91
Mobile	38	1.00	3.00	3.63	7.00	1.36

These differences are not statistically significant.

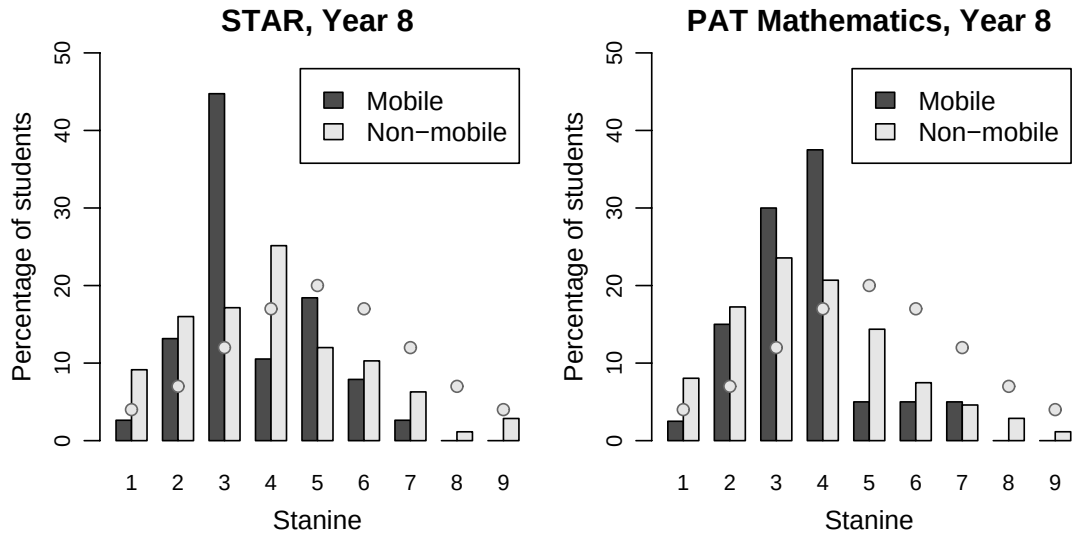
Table 21 **PAT mathematics results for Year 8 students from across all areas**

	N	Minimum	Median	Mean	Maximum	Std. dev
Non-mobile	174	1.00	4.00	3.78	9.00	1.80
Mobile	40	1.00	4.00	3.63	7.00	1.31

These differences are not statistically significant.

Presenting these data in graphical form again allows us to see some patterns. Again, however, the differences are not statistically significant (and the number of mobile students is small).

Figure 4 **STAR (reading) and PAT (mathematics) for Year 8 students in all areas**



As can be seen from the graphs, all of the Year 8 students in the case study schools are performing slightly below the national norms in reading and mathematics. There is no clear pattern when the reading performance of mobile students is compared with non-mobile students: however, the mobile Year 8 students are overrepresented in the lower stanines.[83] In mathematics the pattern is similar to that of the Year 5 students. The mobile students' achievement levels are slightly lower than those of non-mobile students: however, overall, the Year 8s in the schools are performing slightly below the national norms.

Taking into account the findings from both phases of this study, it seems likely that further investigation of this issue, using much larger samples, would be worthwhile. Some patterns emerge here, but given the numbers involved, these data should be treated with caution. In further research, if PAT scale scores, rather than stanines (as used in this study), were used, this would allow the Year 5 and Year 8 samples to be combined into a single larger sample.

Secondary school achievement data

In Phase One we had access to achievement information from only 91 Year 11 students in only three schools (28 percent of Year 11 students in the case study schools). Twenty-five of these 91 students were classified as mobile. Given the limitations of these data, they showed few differences between the educational achievements of mobile compared with non-mobile students.

In the schools for which we had data, overall achievement levels were not high. These schools seem to be emphasising the "core" subjects (English, mathematics, and science) more than is the

[83] In the Year 8 data (unlike the Year 5 data) no mobile students scored in the high stanines. However, as the samples are small and as these are different cohorts of students it is not possible to make inferences about possible cumulative effects of mobility from this pattern.

case in larger urban schools. The only difference we found was that, in these three schools, the non-mobile students appear to be more likely to choose "traditional-discipline" subjects (like science and history) than the mobile students, and, conversely, the mobile students appear to be taking more "applied" subjects (like health and physical education) than non-mobile students. However, because of the limitations of this data set, this information should be interpreted with caution.

In Phase Two we collected NCEA data from four of the five secondary schools in the study.[84] These four schools—two area schools and two secondary schools—had NCEA data for 17, 17, 93, and 117 students respectively, a total of 244 students. Sixty-seven of these 244 students (27 percent) had attended five or more schools, and so were classified as mobile.[85] Thus the Phase Two sample is larger (by a factor of 2.7) than the Phase One sample: however, there are still some issues with the quality of the data.

The NCEA is a standards-based assessment system—as opposed to the norm-referenced School Certificate, University Entrance, and University Bursaries examinations of the past. Students' results are based on an assessment of whether or not they have "achieved" or "not achieved" certain pre-set "standards" for the various components of the subjects. These results are no longer—as was the case in the past—given as a global percentage score that has been scaled to fit with a national norm. There are two kinds of standard: "unit standards"—that students either "achieve" or "do not achieve", and "achievement standards"—that students can "achieve", "achieve with merit", "achieve with excellence", or "not achieve". These four possibilities have introduced a grading component into what is primarily a standards-based system. The number of students achieving a given standard can—and undoubtedly does—vary from year to year. The introduction of this system, with its emphasis on pre-set standards designed to show what students can do (not what they can't do), was a deliberate attempt to move away from the nationally normed "pass/fail" assessment systems of the past. However, it makes things difficult for researchers. Using NCEA data to provide information on the extent to which an individual has been successful in the education system is not a straightforward matter.

At Year 11, most students are assessed by standards drawn from Level 1 of the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NQF). Level 1 achievement standards were designed to replace the old School Certificate and are generally considered to be at a similar level of difficulty. Level 1 achievement standards assess work being done at Level 6 of the *New Zealand Curriculum*

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[84] NCEA results are formally sent to schools in January, which was several months after we visited: thus we had to rely on the schools to send us this data.

[85] At two schools there was a poor match between the set of students for whom we had data from RoSA cards and the set of students for whom we received NCEA data. At one of these schools almost a quarter of the students for whom we received NCEA data did not have RoSA cards, and approximately a third (38 percent of mobile students and 26 percent of non-mobile students) of those with RoSA cards did not have NCEA data. At the other two schools there were NCEA results for nearly all of the students for whom we had data from RoSA cards.

Framework (Ministry of Education, 1993).[86] This is also the case for many of the unit standards available.[87] However, there are a great many unit standards that are set at Level 4 or 5 of the *New Zealand Curriculum Framework* (that is, at a lower level). These unit standards were, in the early days of the development of the NQF, designed to contribute to the awarding of the National Certificate in Employment Skills (NCES). However, when the NCEA was introduced, it became possible for credits gained on unit standards developed for the NCES to be counted towards Level 1 NCEA totals.[88]

Given the complexity of NCEA and the differences in the types of data provided by schools we had to make some difficult decisions about which data to use. In the Phase Two work, we decided to look at:

- the number of internal and external credits attempted by students
- the number of credits they achieved
- whether or not they had met the Level 1 requirement of at least 80 credits overall with a minimum of eight literacy and numeracy credits
- the percentage of attempted credits that were achieved.

What did this tell us?

Overall there were no statistically significant differences between the number of credits attempted, the number of credits achieved, or the percentage of attempted credits achieved by the mobile group and the non-mobile group. These results are presented below as "box-and-whisker" plots (Figures 5 and 6). In reading these plots, it is important to note the following:

- The horizontal bar in the middle of each box area represents the median score (half the students scored above this, and half below).
- The upper limit of each box area represents the third quartile (i.e. a quarter of the students had higher scores than the score indicated by the top of the box). The lower limit of each box area represents the first quartile (i.e. a quarter of the students had lower scores than that indicated by the bottom of the box, and half of all the students had scores in the range indicated by the limits of the box).
- The notched area in the box indicates an approximate 95 percent confidence interval for the median. If the notched areas on the two boxes do not overlap, then it is probable that there is a statistically significant difference between the groups represented by the boxes.
- The horizontal lines at the end of the dashed "whiskers" represent the highest and lowest scores observed.

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[86] Level 1 is the beginning level of primary school and Level 8 is the final (secondary) school level.

[87] Unit standards designed early in the NQF reform process may assess similar material to achievement standards that were subsequently designed.

[88] Students must achieve 80 credits to be awarded a Level 1 NCEA.

- Where the notched box has "wings" (as on the plots for the number of internal and external credits attempted by mobile students), this is because the upper or lower confidence limit is above or below (respectively) the upper quartile or lower quartile.
- The width of the boxes is proportional to the sample size represented by the box.
- Where there is no "whisker" (e.g. mobile students in the plot for the number of internal credits attempted), the minimum (or maximum) and relevant quartile scores are equivalent. In this plot, over a quarter of the students attempted no internal credits, so both the minimum and first quartile scores are zero.

Figure 5 **NCEA credit totals as indicators of educational achievement in 2006**

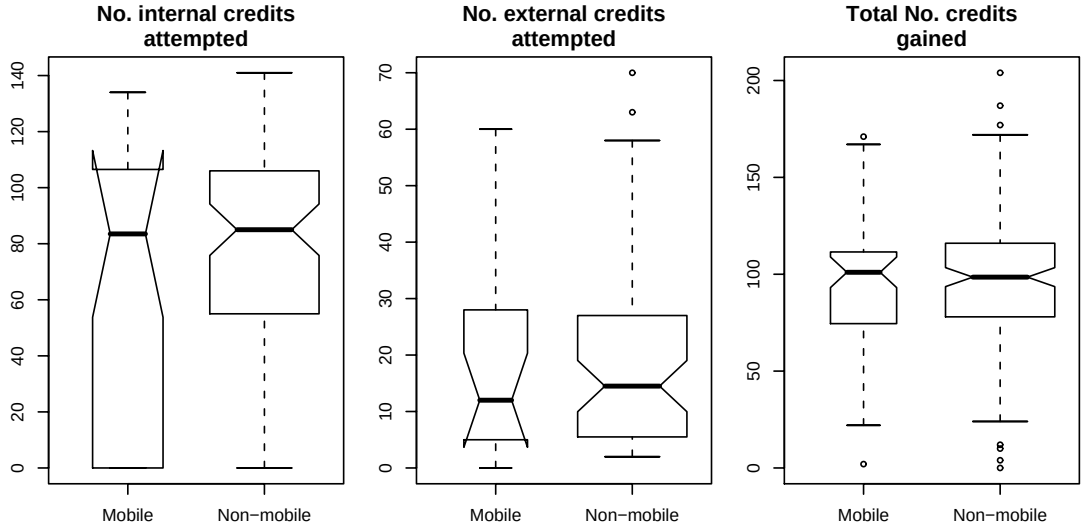
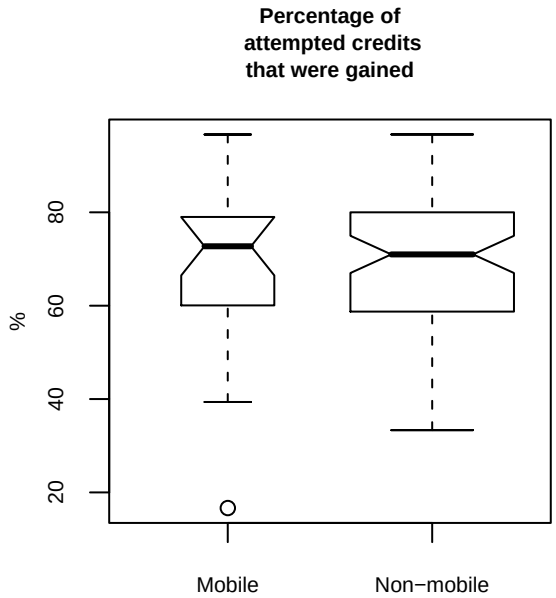
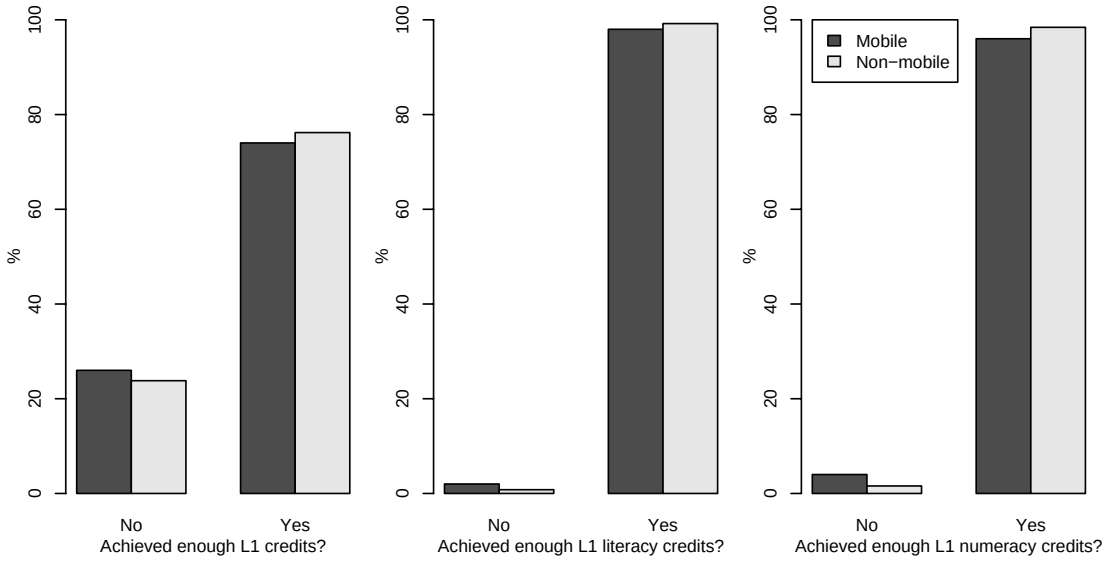


Figure 6 **Percentage of attempted credits gained by mobile students compared with non-mobile in 2006**



There were also no statistically significant differences between the mobile and non-mobile students in regard to whether or not they achieved enough literacy or numeracy credits to be awarded Level 1 NCEA. Presenting this data in graphical form though allows us to see some patterns. Mobile students were slightly less likely to have achieved NCEA Level 1 and to have achieved the necessary number of literacy and numeracy credits: however, these differences were not statistically significant—see Figure 7 below.

Figure 7 **Percentages of students meeting NCEA Level 1 requirements**



In Phase Two we did not compare the subjects being taken by mobile and non-mobile students (as we did in Phase One) because, without knowing how, why, and by whom subject choice was made, this information did not seem to be helpful in forming an overall picture of how mobility affects student achievement.[89]

Summary of primary and secondary achievement information

Overall, we found no statistically significant differences in educational achievement between mobile and non-mobile students at either primary or secondary level. This does not, however, necessarily mean that there are no differences between the two groups. There was a small but consistent pattern of slightly lower achievement in some areas by mobile students compared with non-mobile students in the same schools. However, it cannot necessarily be inferred from this that the lower achievement *resulted from* the mobility.

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[89] Work done by other NZCER researchers (see, for example, Vaughan & Hipkins, forthcoming) points to the need to investigate the way students are "constructed" by their teachers (and other advisers) and channelled into particular "pathways"—an approach which may not be helpful in post-Industrial, 21st century educational contexts.

Does frequent moving affect students' sense of "belonging" to their school?

In Phase Two of this project we surveyed all Years 5, 8, and 11 students in the case study schools (n=717) to see if there were differences in their "sense of belonging" to their school. In this survey students were asked how they felt about school, about school work, their teachers, and about the links between their school and family. We used various other studies designed to measure student "school engagement" to inform the design of these questions.[90] (See Appendix A for a copy of the questionnaire.) Students in Māori medium schools were surveyed using a slightly modified questionnaire in te reo Māori (see Appendix B).

The mobile students' responses to the questions were compared to the non-mobile students' responses. Where possible the RoSA cards were used to identify which students were mobile.[91] Where these cards were unavailable, or we were unable to match a student to a card, we used the information offered by the student[92] regarding the number of previous schools attended.

Seven hundred and seventeen students completed the survey. One hundred and twenty-eight (about 18 percent) of these students were classified as mobile.[93] Approximately a third of the total number of students surveyed were in each of the three year groups. Within the mobile group there were slightly more Year 11 students (43 percent), and slightly fewer Year 8 students (27 percent) (see Table 22 below).

Table 22 **Numbers of students at different year levels responding to questionnaire**

	Total sample	Year 5	Year 8	Year 11
Mobile	128	38	35	55
Non-mobile	589	194	190	205
Total	717	232	225	260

Overall the survey results showed few differences between mobile and non-mobile students in terms of their attitude towards school. There were no differences between the two groups in regard to how they felt about their teachers, and a few small differences between the two groups' views of school and school work. The area where the differences were most marked was where students were asked to indicate their views of the links between their school and their families.

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90 These included the NZCER Competent Children/Competent Learners project; the Whaia te iti Kahurangi project and the Key Competencies project. We also used the *Trust in Schools* resource (Bryk & Schneider, 2002), and the PISA 2003 study (OECD, 2004).

91 Students who had been to two or more schools than the baseline figure for their year level were counted as frequent movers. See the explanation earlier in this report.

92 See Question 5 in the student survey.

93 Questionnaires were completed by students when the NZCER researcher visited the schools. Any student who was absent that day, or out of their class for any reason when the questionnaires were completed, was not included. Students could also choose not to participate: however, very few did.

There were seven statements in this section, and small but statistically significant differences in the collated data between the two groups of students on all except one item. The biggest difference was in response to the statement "My family come to school events". While this in itself might not be important it may be an indicator for other things—such as the families' overall involvement/engagement with school.

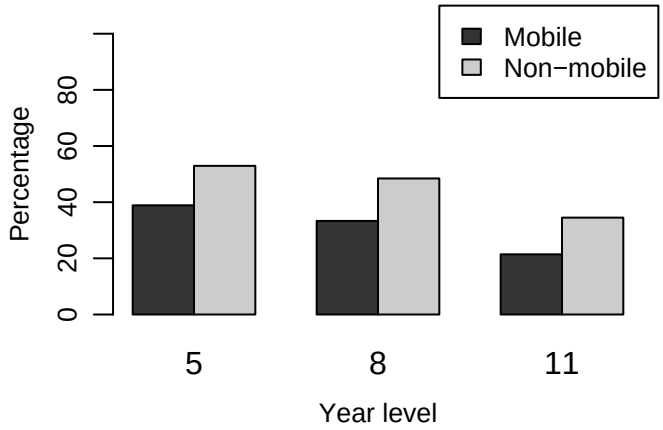
How students feel about school and family

Figure 8 **Questionnaire items about school and family**

My family and teachers think the same things are important.
My family and teachers have the same ideas about what I should learn.
My family come to school events.
My family talk to my teachers.
My family often talks to me about what happened at school.
My family often talks to me about what I learned at school.
My family helps me with my school work if I need it.

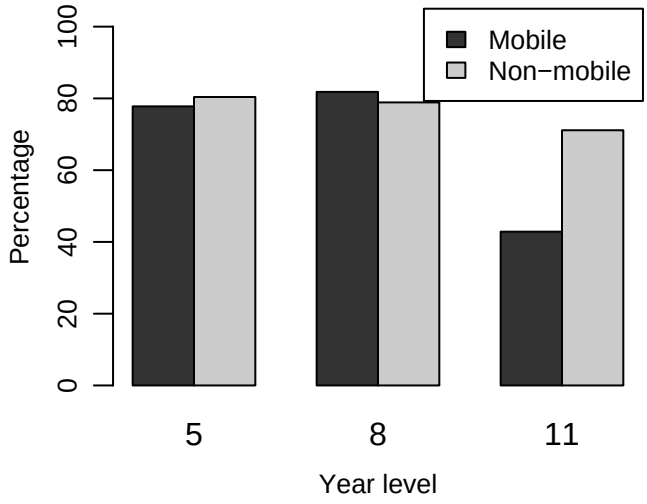
Almost half the non-mobile students said their families came to school events "most or all of the time" compared with only 30 percent of mobile students. This difference was evident at all age levels but was particularly marked at Year 11.

Figure 9 **Students who said their families came to school events most or all of the time**



Students who were mobile also seemed less likely than other students to agree with the statement "My family and teachers think the same things are important", although two-thirds of these students ticked the "most of the time" option. When we split the students into year groups this difference was statistically significant at Year 11 only—although as can be seen on the graphs below, there was also a difference at Year 5.

Figure 10 **Students who said their families and teachers thought the same things were important most or all of the time.**



Other items where there were small but possibly significant differences when we collated data across the year groups were:

- My family and teachers have the same ideas about what I should learn.
- My family talk to my teachers.
- My family helps me with my school work if I need it.
- My family often talks to me about what happened at school.

When we split the responses into year levels, the first three of these differences were only significant at Year 11, and the last only at Year 5. The only item in this section where there was no discernible difference in the collated responses between the two groups was “My family often talks to me about what I learnt at school”. Here again there was a difference at Year 11, but not in the younger groups, and not overall. It could be that the younger students had difficulty differentiating between “what *happened* at school” and “what I *learned* at school”.

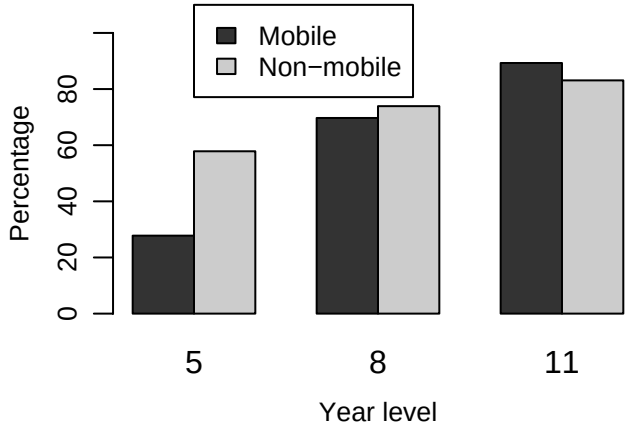
How students feel about school

Figure 11 **Questionnaire items relating to feelings about school**

I have lots of friends at this school.
Other students seem to like me.
I feel that I belong to this school.
I feel safe at this school.
I get involved in lots of sport or other activities at school.
I know the rules at this school.
I feel proud of my school.
I feel shy at school.
I feel scared at school.
I know who to go to when I need something at school.
I have all the gear I need to do my work at school.

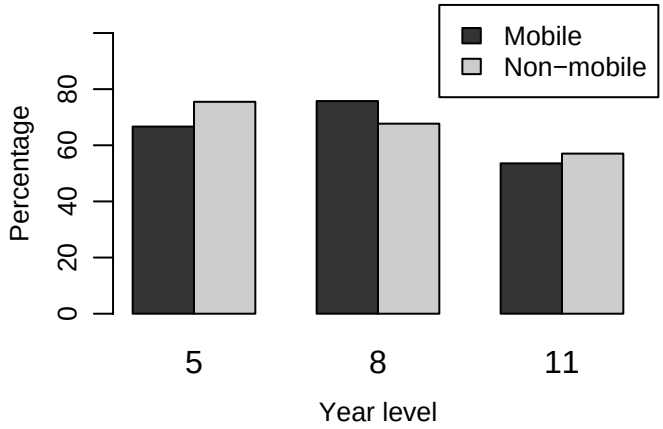
When asked how they felt about school, there was no significant difference between mobile and non-mobile students at any level in response to the statement "I feel that I belong to this school". Overall, non-mobile students were more likely than mobile students to agree with the statement "Other students seem to like me". This was especially evident with the younger students but there was no significant difference between the groups at Year 8 or Year 11.

Figure 12 **Students who said others seem to like them all or most of the time**



The collated data also showed students who did not move frequently were more likely than students who did to agree with the statement "I get involved in lots of sports or other activities". However, this difference was only statistically significant at Year 11.

Figure 13 **Students who said they got involved in lots of sports or other activities at school all or most of the time**



At Year 5, fewer mobile than non-mobile students said that they "knew the school rules" and at Year 11 fewer mobile students than non-mobile students said they felt "proud of their school".

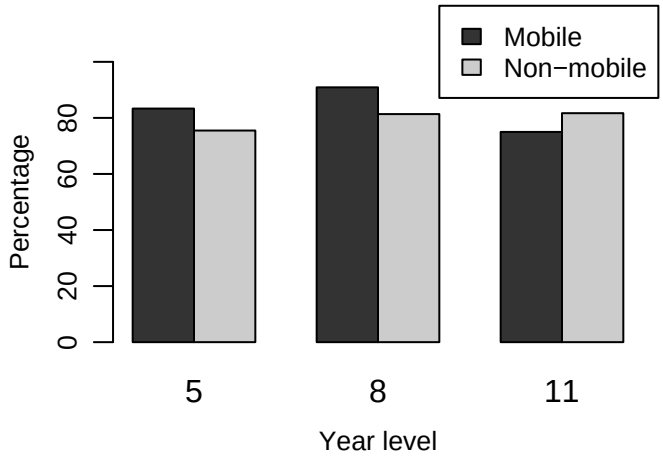
How students feel about school work

Figure 14 **Questionnaire items about school work**

I like this school.
At school I learn about things I am interested in.
I know how to do the work.
I feel OK asking questions in class.
Doing well at school is important to me.
I try hard to do my best work.
I enjoy English.
I do well in English.
I enjoy maths.
I do well in maths.
I am repeating work I have done before.
I am bored in class.

The responses to the items on the students' feelings about school work, when collated across the year levels, suggest that the mobile students were slightly less confident than the non-mobile students that they knew how to do the work. This pattern was most evident at Years 5 and 11.

Figure 15 **Students who said that they knew how to do the work all or most of the time**



When we collated data across the year levels, the mobile students also responded slightly less positively than non-mobile students to the statement "I like this school". This difference, while strong at Year 11, was less evident at Years 5 and 8. At Year 11 mobile students were slightly less likely to say they enjoyed English than non-mobile students: however, this difference disappeared when we collated the data across the year levels.

Year 8 students

Throughout the survey there were some items where mobile Year 8s were slightly *more* positive than the non-mobile Year 8s. Items where there were small but significant differences were:

- I feel proud of my school. ($p < 0.002$)
- I like this school. ($p < 0.029$)
- At school I learn about things I am interested in. ($p < 0.032$)
- I enjoy reading and writing time. ($p < 0.037$)
- My teacher treats me fairly. ($p < 0.03$).

In addition to these items, there were others where the mobile Year 8s seemed slightly more positive than the non-mobile students: however, these differences were not statistically significant. We do not know why the mobile Year 8s appeared more positive than the non-mobile Year 8s.

Students in Māori medium education

In the survey used in the kura Māori, responses to questions that were translations of the English questionnaire were included with the rest of the data. There were no significant differences at any

level in the responses of mobile students compared with non-mobile students on any of the four questions that appeared in that survey only.

Figure 16 **Questionnaire items in te reo Māori survey only**

He whanaunga ōku kei tēnei kura.
Ahakoa no whea te tangata, ka ako mātou i ngā mea e pā ana i ō mātou whakapapa.
Ka ako mātou i ngā kōrero tuku iho, arā, ā kui mā, ā koro mā.
Ka ako mātou i ngā tikanga ā kui mā, ā koro mā.

NB The total number of students answering the Māori questionnaire was very small (n=35).

Summary of student survey findings

We found only small differences between mobile and non-mobile students in terms of their attitude towards school: however, the differences were more pronounced in the Year 11 students in relation to the younger students. The one area with a consistent pattern of mobile students being less positive than non-mobile students was in the links between school and family. This is an area that deserves further investigation, especially given recent research findings suggesting that effective home/school partnerships can be important in lifting students' achievement (Biddulph, et al., 2003).

What do principals think?—The principal interviews

In Phase One of this study, we interviewed the principals of all except one of the study schools. Each interview took about an hour. One or two were shorter than this, particularly when the principal was clear that high student mobility was not a problem in their school, and one or two were much longer. The interview was semistructured in that we had a series of questions (which had been sent to the principals in advance), but in most cases, when the principals were invited to talk about this issue, they did so in a way that answered all of our questions as part of the conversation.

In Phase Two, we interviewed the principals of 17 of the study schools and the deputy principal at one school. Again each interview took about an hour. The questions for the second interview were designed to probe more deeply into some of the issues that had been raised by principals in the earlier interviews. We were particularly interested in trying to distinguish the effects of mobility from other issues that disrupt class programmes, and to uncover principals' views of the benefits for students of being part of a school community. See Appendix C for a copy of the schedule of questions we used.

It is worth noting that in several of the schools the principals were new in Phase Two. In one area, three out of four principals were new. In another area one principal interviewed was acting in the position while a new principal was being sought, and in a third area one of the principals interviewed in Phase Two had been on study leave during the first phase of interviews. In Opotiki two schools did not participate in the second phase of interviews. Thus the views expressed in Phase Two interviews are not necessarily those of the same group of people three years on.

In Phase Two there was a wider range of opinion on the extent to which mobility is an issue. There are many possible reasons for this shift: for example, as outlined above, the group of people interviewed was not exactly the same. In addition, however, there were changes in the interview questions, and the interviewer was a different person. It is also possible that schools' involvement in recent professional development initiatives had made it easier to accommodate the needs of mobile students, or that the first phase of this study had some sort of interventionary effect. There did not appear to be a relationship between the levels of mobility in individual schools and principals' opinions about the impact of mobility on students or schools.

The next section summarises the principals' responses to the interview questions.

Is frequent movement an issue?

Phase One

In the Phase One interviews, most of the principals said that high student mobility is very definitely an issue—for their school, for the school's local community, and for the students involved. It was common, in areas with high levels of student movement, for movement to be referred to as "transience". Primary school principals were, in general, more concerned about this issue than secondary principals.

In this first set of interviews, the principals told us that schools with large numbers of students moving in and out have administrative overheads that they cannot budget for. One primary principal said that, on average, she enrolled four or five new students a week, and dealt with about three or four withdrawals. On one day immediately prior to the interview (in October) she had enrolled seven new children. This would have involved about four extra hours work for her alone—and this was before the children have been assessed, assigned a class, and given programmes of work designed for them by their new teacher.[94] This extra work, the principals said, is especially noticeable in schools where there are large numbers of what they called "boomerang" students or "revolving transients": that is, students who move away and then come back—again and again.

All the principals in the Phase One interviews said that frequent movement by students disrupts school programmes and routines. Each time a new child comes into a class, the class teacher has

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[94] In addition (although she didn't point this out), these new children would not have generated extra funds for the school (because they were enrolling after the 1 July roll return to the Ministry of Education).

to re-establish routines and standards of behaviour that include and fit with the new child. According to the principals, teachers find this stressful, but, they said, it is also highly stressful for the new child, and for the children who are already in the class. They said that children who have moved a lot often take a long time to settle into their new school's "culture" or "ethos". They also said that, because it is difficult for teachers to set and achieve targets, and to monitor the progress of a class of children that is constantly changing, it is very common for teachers in this situation to lose motivation and enthusiasm and become, as one put it, "demoralised". Several principals said teachers commonly have strong feelings that they personally are not meeting the needs of "transient" children, but worse, that *nobody* is, and these children are falling by the wayside very early in their educational careers. The principals in rural areas commented that children moving into—or back to—their area from urban schools came with "way different attitudes" and that they were not "on the same wavelength as us around here". This was especially apparent at secondary level with students who had left the area to go to boarding school, but returned later because this "hadn't worked out".

Phase Two

In the Phase Two interviews, there was less of a consensus between principals as to the extent to which mobility is a problem. Among the primary principals there was a wide range of views: some seeing it as a huge problem, while others thought it wasn't an issue at all. The secondary principals also had a range of opinions: however, in contrast to the Phase One interviews, most said that underlying issues, particularly behavioural difficulties, were more of a problem for schools than mobility. In the Phase Two interviews only three principals specifically mentioned the extra administrative work mobile students can bring. Some said there are no additional costs to a school.

The Phase Two interviews were designed to probe more deeply into exactly how programmes are disrupted where there are high levels of student movement. This produced a range of responses. All except two principals said that poor attendance is more disruptive to programmes than high levels of mobility, and half of the principals believed that it is the individual characteristics of some of the students (rather than their mobility) that are disruptive. One college principal felt that only mobile students with a history of behavioural difficulties are disruptive. Another principal said that when teachers are "on top of things" in the classroom, students arriving or leaving have little or no impact. Another felt that because their class sizes in their school were small it was easy to cope with changes in the class make up. One principal said that new students coming in were a positive feature in that they bring new ideas, and provide leadership opportunities for established students.

Where mobility was seen as disruptive, this, the principals said, was most often because the social dynamics of the class were upset. One college principal mentioned that the arrival of new senior students disrupts work programmes because the class is usually partway through different unit standards. At the primary level the arrival of a new student takes the teacher away from the rest of the class while s/he establishes the learning needs of the newcomer and reorganises instructional

groups within the class. Newcomers can broaden the range of learning needs in the class—which is likely to take the teacher away from the "top" students. In small schools the unexpected arrival of new children can necessitate the reorganisation of all of the school's classes (to make sure classes are approximately equal in size). Student mobility also causes problems for the effective operation of "special" programmes such as Reading Recovery.

Both phases

In Phase Two, as in the earlier interviews, principals mentioned the emotional cost to teachers when students move. They said that teachers put a great deal of time and effort into children and become disheartened when the child moves on. In the words of one principal, "It hurts when they go—especially when it is within the area—because it implies you are not doing a good job." In schools with decreasing rolls principals were understandably particularly concerned about students leaving, as this has an impact on school funding and staffing levels.

Many principals, in both phases, said it is unfair that the overall performance of their school is measured in ways that include the results of frequent movers. They think that because these children haven't been in their school long, their performance doesn't accurately reflect the school's efforts. Some think these children's results should be presented separately from those of the school's "natural" cohort.

Two principals of kura kaupapa Māori said that student mobility definitely is *not* an issue for them although both schools are located in areas where other schools have high levels of student mobility. In Phase One, the principal of one of these kura explained how her school had strict protocols for enrolling new students. An important part of the school's kaupapa is that it requires a strong commitment by the parents to their child's education. This commitment includes regular attendance at whānau hui and participation in sports days, kapa haka, wānanga, and so on. This kaupapa, the principal says, requires families to commit to staying in the area so their children can have strong connections to one school, and a secure education. As she put it (in Māori), she tells parents that "If you're not on this waka we're on, then get off!" This philosophy is widely supported by the other parents, and is, she said, critical to the success of the children. Some children travel up to an hour each way each day to attend the kura, and, according to the principal, the school has only lost one family since it became a kura kaupapa Māori (and this was for an unavoidable, valid reason).[95] In Phase Two the principal of another kura, in a different area of high mobility, echoed these views.[96] She explained that the kura is unlike a neighbourhood school in that parents make a conscious decision to send their children there. When parents of prospective students are interviewed, staff clearly explain that consistency and a long-term commitment are essential for achievement in Māori medium education.

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[95] We did not collect enrolment and withdrawal data from this school's records, or information on the numbers of schools its children had attended, so we can't easily verify this (see footnote 50).

[96] Enrolment and withdrawal data collected from this school's records verify that this school has very low rates of student mobility.

Why do some students move frequently?

In general, schools do not collect specific information on people's reasons for moving into or out of an area. Some try (e.g. when enrolling new students) but, because it is quite common for children to leave without formally withdrawing, it is not usually possible for them to do exit interviews. Most of the information schools have is anecdotal—local, "institutional" knowledge that develops through the collective experience of the school's teachers. The interview questions in Phase Two did not address this question directly as we were more interested in probing into how mobility impacted on teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning.[97]

Phase One

In the Phase One interviews, the Waitangirua/Cannons Creek and Opotiki principals told us that their schools have three distinct (and roughly equal) cohorts. First, there is a group of "stable", "settled" students who stay at the school for the whole of their schooling at that level. The principals see this group as being their school's "natural" cohort. Second, there is a group of students who move around a lot between the schools in the local area (and in and out of the same schools). The principals see these students as a "nuisance": however, most acknowledge this kind of movement as a simple "fact of life" for the people in their area. The third group is made up of students who move from school to school around the country in, it seems to the principals, a largely "random" way. According to these principals, it is common for families to "house hop"—to shift around within the area, usually to get a better house or cheaper rent. Some commented that when Housing New Zealand Corporation introduced its market rents policy in the late 1980s this practice became widespread. They said that two or three families often move into one house to save money, but such arrangements are usually short-lived (because of overcrowding and/or conflict). The result of this, they said, is that one family has to move somewhere else to live—probably with some other relatives—and then the same thing happens again. Then, the principals say, the parents will move their children to the school that is closest to their new house—even when the new school is (as it is in many cases) only five or ten minutes walk from their old one. People don't seem to use the local bus service: as one Waitangirua/ Cannons Creek principal put it, "Nobody will catch a bus to come to the same school." Another also commented on this, saying that she thought the fare of $1.20 a day was beyond most local families. Many of the principals in this area mentioned the use by one school in the area (not one of the study schools) of taxis to bring children to the school. All the principals who mentioned this saw it as unethical (because most of the schools in the area have declining rolls and, they said, the taxis are being used as a roll maintenance strategy). However, they also pointed out that the taxi strategy works very well as a way of keeping children at the school. It is expensive for the school, and a "logistical nightmare" for the teacher who organises it, but it works. Some mentioned that a free bus or minivan service

[97] The student questionnaires about their sense of belonging to school in Phase Two asked students to give the reason for attending their current school. There were no statistical differences between the responses of mobile students and non-mobile students to this item.

could serve the same purpose—so that, as one put it, "there could be at least one constant in the children's lives".[98]

This situation raises some interesting issues. The principals we interviewed were strongly opposed to the taxi strategy. To them it unfairly uses resources to give one school a competitive advantage in a situation where each school's survival depends on its ability to attract and keep students. At the same time, however, they could see that this strategy was likely to benefit the children involved—by giving them stability and connectedness in at least one aspect of their lives. From this, it seems that the current funding model has some unintended effects, and that this works against the best interests of many children in the case study areas. Several of the principals commented that many parents in their area move around "with the wind" or to "suit their own needs" (as opposed to the needs of their children). Some (especially in Waitangirua/Cannons Creek and Opotiki) said that while a small number of their families move to pursue seasonal work, movement in their area has very little to do with the labour market. They said that most of their families "did not work" (were beneficiaries), but move to and from areas where their relatives live.

Others said that people tend to move because of housing, health, or family issues. If people are moving very frequently, the principals said that this is probably because they are "being chased" by someone—usually a government agency (CYFS[99] or the IRD[100] for example), someone they owe money to, or, as one put it, "a dysfunctional family member". One principal said that people sometimes move because "they seem to have a call home so they go back to where they actually came from". Still another said that people move when parents change partners.[101]

Some principals said that children (not families) are often moved when a family has difficulty with that child. They say that it is common for children—or, more usually, adolescents—to be sent to live with another family member (in the local area or somewhere else in the country). However, the principals say, this often doesn't work out, and the child is either sent back or shifted again to live with another relative. Some schools refer to these children as "parcel children". These children, they say, are always "on probation", always under threat of being sent away somewhere else. One principal commented that these "parcel children" are often "CYFS cases" (i.e. children who are CYFS clients). This principal had a great deal to say about what, in her view, are the "inhuman", "Dickensian", "damaging", and "abusive" ways these children are "ripped" out of school to be relocated in other schools with, as she sees it, no regard for their

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98 In one of the other study areas, a principal in the second phase interviews described how his school had retained 50–60 students over the past five years by providing a bus out of the Operations Grant as a roll maintenance strategy.

99 CYF (Child, Youth and Family) is New Zealand's child care and protection agency.

100 The Inland Revenue Department.

101 It is important to note here that these comments represent the views of the principals we interviewed and are based on their day-to-day experience in the case study areas. Because we did not collect information from parents or students, we have no way of establishing whether or not people are in fact moving for the reasons given by the principals. However, the wider Building Attachment project should eventually have data against which these views can be checked.

educational or emotional security. Another principal said that, while he didn't usually want to know every detail of a child's past—he thought it was important to let them "have a new start"—"If they're bloody CYFS [clients] I want to know!" One principal mentioned a case he had dealt with involving a Year 8 child in his school who had been to 27 schools and, in the six months he was at their school, had lived with five different CYFS caregivers.

Others commented on the tendency for Māori and Pacific Island children to be regularly moved around between different family members, often in quite different parts of the country. Several said that this is just a normal feature of extended family life in Māori and Pacific Island culture, and that it is something that schools in areas with many Māori and/or Pacific Island families just have to accept as a fact of life.

In the Phase One interviews all of the principals said that it was very uncommon—although not unheard of—for children to be moved because the families are dissatisfied with the school.

In the Phase One interviews[102] several of the Waitangirua/Cannons Creek and Opotiki principals commented that the parents in their area seem to think that one school is more or less the same as another, something they all wanted to dispute. Schools can have very different programmes and routines, and can have a very different climate or "ethos". More importantly, however, a sense of "belonging"—to a *particular* school, class, and teacher (or group of teachers) is, they think, a very important prerequisite for educational success. Two principals said that it was possible for children to adapt to a second school (although *really* "belonging" could take a year or more). However, expecting a primary-aged child to successfully adapt to three or more different schools was, they thought, just too difficult. According to them, a sense of belonging to a school is especially important for children in low-decile schools and, they said, many of their parents simply do not know how important it is for the child to stay in the same school.

The picture seems to be different in the Kawerau and Amuri areas. In Amuri, several of the principals talked about the local community as being divided into three quite distinct groups. One group, referred to by one of the principals as "the landed gentry", consists of the (mainly) sheep farming families who have farmed the same land for four or more generations. According to that principal, these families are well established, strongly networked, secure, and highly supportive of their local community. The second of the three groups identified by the principals is made up of the more recently arrived dairy farming families—mainly share-milkers—who moved into the area when major irrigation schemes allowed the lower lying land to be converted to large, multiunit, dairy farming operations. These people, the principals say, are "on the way up". Many (not all) stay in the area for two to three years before moving on to another contract on another farm in another area of New Zealand. (However, some stay a lot longer.) This second group also includes shearers. The third group of people are those who are, as one principal put it, "at the bottom of the social heap", people, usually beneficiaries, who have moved into the area because housing is cheap. According to the principals, these people don't usually stay very long. Although

[102] As explained above, this perception had changed in Opotiki by the time of the Phase Two interviews.

housing might be cheap, other living costs are not, and it is very hard to make a living from the kind of unskilled part-time work that is available in the area. Also, the principals say, these people are often being "chased" by CYFS (or other government agencies), the law, or a violent ex-partner. There are tensions between these three groups of people: as one principal put it, "They don't mix." Others in the community have clearly not welcomed the third group's presence in the area. One primary principal said that the "influx" of this group had "just about killed the school" a few years ago. According to this principal the school suddenly had major behaviour issues with some children, a situation they were not well prepared for, that led to a major teacher turnover problem. Another principal was clear that, in his/her experience, students from this third group were getting less learning support than comparable students in other parts of the country. Some in this group are Māori, but, according to this principal, they are "dislocated" Māori—Māori without strong iwi affiliations and no connections with the area's established Māori families.

In Kawerau the issues seem to be different again. In the Phase One interviews roll decline was clearly a major issue in Kawerau.[103] One principal said that some of the schools in the area are perceived as "nicer to be in" than others. Others are "getting a wee bit old" or are in areas where the housing is "not as wonderful as it could be". The issue of "white flight" was also mentioned. Several principals said that one of the main problems of the area is that people who do well tend to move to other nearby towns. Many continue to work in Kawerau, but commute each day, a trend that has obvious implications for the town's schools. However, according to the principals, there have been some recent changes in people's perceptions of schools in the area. At the time of the first phase interviews the secondary school had experienced a recent roll surge through the return of students who had been travelling outside the town to schools in other areas.

Phase Two

In contrast to Phase One, in the second round of interviews several Opotiki principals attributed some movement to dissatisfaction with particular schools. They said there are strong community views on what the different schools offer, and many families are choosing schools which provide opportunities for learning in te reo Māori. One of the Waitangirua/Cannons Creek principals said, in her Phase Two interview, that some student mobility is the result of suspension or exclusion. In her view, "Students tumble down the decile ratings when they get excluded or expelled" with the result that low-decile schools become a "sink" for students rejected by other schools. Principals in the Phase Two interviews stressed that mobility in Waitangirua/Cannons Creek is often "downward mobility", and, because of this, there are usually compounding factors (that is, where there are problems, these are not necessarily the result of mobility). Two Amuri interviewees said that mobility rates in their area are dropping,[104] possibly because the dairy company is now attempting to provide off-season work for valued staff.

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[103] By the time of the Phase Two interviews most schools in all areas were also experiencing dropping rolls.

[104] The data we collected support this view—in that considerably fewer students were identified as mobile in Phase Two, even though overall levels of non-standard movement in schools were still high.

Does frequent movement affect children's educational achievement?

Phase One

In Phase One all the principals said that frequent moving definitely affects children's educational achievement. Almost all commented that the children are also affected socially—they have a reduced sense of belonging and being part of a stable network of friends and/or a school community.

All said that learning was affected. When a child transfers from one school to another in the middle of the school year, there is almost always a delay in assessing them, putting them into an appropriate programme, and arranging any support they might need in their new school. Some said that when a child moves several times, these delays quickly add up, to the point where it is very hard for the child *not* to get behind. Eventually, according to the primary school principals, this impacts on the child's behaviour.

All of the primary principals commented on the issues involved if the child is reading below their age level. Children are put into Reading Recovery programmes when they are six years old if they have been identified as being in the lowest group in their school. Places in Reading Recovery are a scarce commodity and most schools have waiting lists. Schools are allocated funding for Reading Recovery on the basis of need. However, the level of their need—and the funding they receive—is assessed via the Six Year Net test results of the children from the previous year: that is, on the assumption that the school's level of need will be much the same from year to year. The principals of schools in high mobility areas see this system as unfair because, they say, the group of children in their school this term will have very different needs from those of the group they had a year ago. According to the principals we interviewed, most schools deal with this by delaying the placement of children identified as highly mobile in Reading Recovery until they have been in the school for at least a term. To them, giving Reading Recovery places to children who are likely to move on is not an effective use of resources. If they use one of their places for a highly mobile child, that place is then not available for one of "their" children. As one principal put it:

> If kids come in and they are behind in their learning, we are not going to do something until we see how stable they are, because what about the kids at our school who have stayed here a long time? They might be at low levels too, but we know that they're still going to be here, so we are going to put our efforts into them, rather than putting it into some kids who we don't know how long they will be here.

In deciding who will be offered places in their Reading Recovery programme, this principal said:

> We will take a child who has been in our school since they were five in preference to a child who might have a bigger need but has only been here with us for six weeks.

Another principal said that the children:

> Have to be here for a term before you start putting huge effort into getting outside agencies to help, because the number of times you get bitten by, you know, getting all the paper work

> done, getting the agency involved, getting the Resource Teacher Literacy to look at the child, and assess the child, and then they go….

If a child who has started Reading Recovery transfers to another school, it is highly unlikely that they will be able to continue this programme at their new school. There will usually be a delay while they settle into their new school. They might then be put on a waiting list, but, if they move again before taking up that place, they will have to start the whole cycle again at another school. Given the importance of basic literacy to all other aspects of education, such a start obviously does not augur well for a child's future. The primary principals all commented on this issue and said very similar things (the exceptions were the kura kaupapa Māori and area school principals, who had much less to say about Reading Recovery).

At secondary level, the issues are slightly different. Although most secondary schools offer the same broad range of subjects, the way these subjects are organised can be quite different in different schools. As the secondary principals pointed out, the "package" of achievement standards and unit standards one school uses to frame the teaching of a subject can be quite different to that used in another. The result of this is that, when a student moves schools halfway through the year, the new school might not be able to offer the student a full programme. Alternatively, the student might be forced to repeat work they have already done, or miss work that has already been done at the new school.

Phase Two

In the Phase Two interviews (three years later), the principals' views of mobility's negative effect on children's educational achievement were not as strong. Several maintained that some students are unaffected by frequent movement and that the critical factor that determines the impact of mobility on educational achievement is the priority the family places on education. Principals were most concerned about mobile students with "special needs" or behavioural difficulties. In the words of one:

> Frequent movement affects strugglers more than bright or average students.

In this case it is important that schools know what interventions have been successfully tried before. One principal who did believe that mobility affected student learning explained his views:

> Students come here because of family… How can they learn when they have got so much baggage on their shoulders? They are actually coming here for a short time and then away again… It's not a time for learning: it's a time for healing, for family.

As in Phase One, the primary principals believed frequent movement impacts negatively on students' ability to make friends.

Do schools find the information received from other schools useful?

Since these comments were made, ENROL, the Ministry of Education's Web-based central register of student enrolments has been implemented in many schools (with the remainder of schools due to come "online" during 2007). The purpose of this project is to reduce the administrative burden on schools and to facilitate the quick and efficient transfer of student data between schools. Given what the principals in this study have told us, it seems highly likely that this system will be welcomed by schools.

In both sets of interviews for this study, principals told us that, in general, schools don't find the information they receive from other schools helpful. According to the principals in the study schools, when information on a transferring student is requested from their previous school, there is usually a substantial delay before it is received (about three weeks seemed to be the average). When these records arrive, they are usually inaccurate, incomplete, not up to date, and not especially useful. As one put it, the quality of these records is, at best, "patchy". One commented that the records are especially slow in coming when the move takes place around March or July (when the school's annual roll returns are due with the Ministry of Education).[105] When children leave, it is apparently common for schools to never receive a request for their records: as one principal put it, "We can't just send it to where we *think* they have gone."

Phase One

In the Phase One interviews, all of the principals said they keep everything sent by other schools, but because the information schools collect is not standardised, it is common to find that what is sent is incompatible with their records system. Most said that, in general, they didn't take a great deal of notice of the information sent by other schools. They have more trust in their own systems and prefer to do their own assessments on new children. Most said that they looked for any information on the child's health, for attendance information, and for the number of schools a child has been to. They also said they looked for information on any special needs, and for information on support programmes the child has been involved in (Reading Recovery, for example).

Several of these principals said that secondary schools are not as good as primary schools at forwarding students' records.[106]

Phase Two

In the Phase Two interviews, most primary principals said they did not need much in the way of assessment information from previous schools: however, four said that they would like to receive some sort of standardised information—such as PAT scores.

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[105] Schools are funded on a per capita basis, so these roll returns are very important documents.

[106] This is supported by what we found (see the Methodology section above): i.e. that primary schools held cards for a greater proportion of their students than secondary schools.

Do schools have successful strategies for dealing with children who move frequently?

Some schools have programmes that aim to address this issue. These usually take the form of induction programmes that attempt to establish and build a sense of connection between the child (and their family) and their new school. There is usually an attempt to be explicit about the school's rules and expectations (its "kawa", as one principal put it). Some schools use "buddy" or mentoring systems. One principal said that when new students are enrolled staff make an effort to find whānau connections between the new student and existing students. A primary principal at a school with very high roll turnover, talked in the Phase Two interview about wanting to set up a "transition class". This was something she had read about where new students are enrolled into a special class where the focus is on assessment, and learning the school routines. She thought such a class would minimise disruption to the rest of the school.

Some areas have developed "clusters" of schools that aim to co-ordinate and standardise their learning programmes and assessment systems. (The ICAN group of schools in the Waitangirua area is one example of this.) One school tries to build relationships with new families in its area through its links with a community drop-in centre (run by the school chaplain on a volunteer basis).

At many schools, students do not start the day they enrol. This gives the classroom teachers time to prepare for the new student. At one school, enrolments are only done once a week to ensure senior staff are available to interview families. At secondary schools, in particular, it is common for the enrolment process to include assessments in literacy and in numeracy to facilitate the placement of students in appropriate classes. At one primary school, the principal visits new families in their homes. This principal, at the time of the Phase Two interviews, was about to appoint a social worker and was optimistic that the appointee would help to meet the needs of mobile students.

Several principals said they do not accept enrolments if they are only for a week or so. One kura kaupapa Māori (in a rural area) said that their strategy for dealing with high mobility children was to make it known in the community that they didn't take any new children after March or July.[107] This, they said, was accepted by the community, and it worked. One primary school has instituted a school uniform specifically to deter "itinerant" families from enrolling their children there for short periods.

Many of the Waitangirua principals mentioned the success of the taxi scheme run by another school in their area in keeping children at that school. One school had tried a subsidised bus service, but even the subsidised bus fare of 65c a day had proved to be prohibitive. Another school does successfully run a bus out of the Operational Grant. When asked how they knew whether or not their strategies worked, most of the principals said that they didn't really know.

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[107] See footnote 105 above. Schools are required to send their roll returns to the Ministry of Education in March and July of each year. Students who are not counted in these roll returns do not generate funds for the school.

Most didn't collect any specific information to help them evaluate the success of their strategies. All schools in the study collect achievement data for their students but none analyse it for the effects of mobility. None reported involvement by their staff in professional development relating to the inclusion of mobile students. In the responses to this question there was a lot of discussion of truancy, and the issues involved in dealing with "difficult" or "high needs" (but not necessarily frequently moving) families.

Are schools satisfied with the way they deal with frequent movers?

Most weren't, but as one principal put it, "the sheer bulk of the very high needs students we have", "the sheer numbers of kids coming and going", and "the number of different issues we are dealing with—all at the same time" means that, despite their best efforts, they are often simply "defeated". It is obviously difficult to separate frequent movement from all the other issues in their students' lives, and to develop programmes designed to deal specifically with this issue. The principals talked about student mobility in ways that enmeshed it with a whole host of other issues—truancy, poverty, unemployment, and family, health, and housing issues, for example. It was common for the term "transience" to be used as a kind of proxy for a whole complex of issues that are likely to affect student engagement in learning.

Recommendations schools have for government and community agencies to help them deal more effectively with highly mobile children

Phase One

The principals we interviewed in Phase One had a great many ideas for improving the way schools work with highly mobile children. Some said that all new principals needed to attend an induction course that taught them how to fill in the E19/22A ("progress") cards accurately. There does seem to be a need for at least some standardisation in the way these cards are filled in—if they are to be used as the official record of a child's progress at school. As noted earlier, we found a large number of obvious inaccuracies on the cards we examined. All principals thought that, if information on students is to be of any use at all, it has to be delivered *speedily* to the next school. Schools should be able to get it without having to contact—and chase—other schools, and schools should be required to keep the information up to date.

Several principals argued for the replacement of the paper "progress" card system with a national electronic database for tracking students.[108] They said that the information held on children: the number of schools attended; health, attendance, and achievement information; and any special needs, should be standardised, and principals should be required to keep it up to date. Then, as one primary principal put it:

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[108] See comment on p. 71 about the recent implementation of ENROL, the Ministry of Education's Web-based register of student enrolments.

> …the day a kid like XXX enrols at the next school, the secretary there can just plug in to some sort of Ministry website, or whatever, and say, 'Oh he's doing this, this, and this,' and so the teacher straightaway knows exactly about this child, and what kind of support they have been having, or what levels they are operating at, and straightaway the office could say to the Ministry, 'This child is now at our school, so we need this and this to follow him, please.'

In Phase One the principals were also very clear that roll-based funding does *not* support their efforts to meet the needs of these students. Roll-based models assume that schools work with reasonably stable cohorts of students who progress in an orderly way through the school. The principals say that they make decisions on an annual basis as to how best to meet the needs of each cohort using the funds they have available. They say that if 30 percent or more[109] of the children in that cohort is "turning over" each year, this is very difficult to do.

Some of the principals said that, in the case of highly mobile students with special needs, the funding model should be different. For these children they said it would be more appropriate if the funding was "individualised" so that it went with them as they moved. This, they said, was especially important in the case of early intervention programmes (like Reading Recovery) and other extra support. This way, their entry into a new school would not disadvantage the children who are already there (as, they say, it does now), and the school would have some chance of being able to address the new child's needs appropriately. Many argued that spending money on these children now is a much better use of resources than spending a great deal more money on them later when, they said, they end up in prison.

Some principals argued for better communication systems between schools in a given area, especially in Opotiki and Waitangirua where there is a lot of movement between schools in the area. Many made a very strong case for better communication between different sectors of government—especially between the various welfare agencies (CYFS, WINZ, and SWIS)[110] and schools.

Several (in all four case study areas) were highly critical of CYFS in particular. They said that the fostering arrangements made by CYFS for children in their care take no account of the children's educational needs and there is no co-ordination between the activities of CYFS and those of the school. The principals said that when they ask CYFS for help with children in their care, their experience is that CYFS is "totally overloaded" and "absolutely useless" in helping them, even when the issues are "really serious". The principals in the rural areas said that they deal with many families who are being chased by CYFS, but that CYFS is "completely ineffective" at finding them.

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[109] A figure that was commonly cited.

[110] CYFS is the New Zealand Children, Youth and their Families Service; WINZ is the name for the former Work and Income New Zealand (the organisation responsible for administering the unemployment and other welfare benefits), now part of the Ministry of Social Development; and SWIS is the Social Workers in Schools scheme.

One principal had a lot to say about a WINZ policy that, she said, required families to move to other parts of New Zealand for work in a way that took no account of the effect this would have on the family as a whole. Families are, she said, being sent to areas of New Zealand they are unlikely to fit in to, or settle in, for temporary, low-paid "dead-end" work.

Another principal said that the decile rating system for schools is completely inappropriate for schools in rural areas, where the population of a given census mesh block is far less homogeneous than would be the case in an urban area. This "sledgehammer" approach, according to this principal, strongly disadvantages schools in areas, where there are pockets of affluence side by side with pockets of extreme need, when they try to apply for funding for innovative programmes that are designed to meet genuine need in the area. According to this principal, it also disadvantages area schools in general. These schools commonly have primary and secondary departments that are very different demographically (because many of the children are sent to boarding school for their secondary years): yet the school is given a "global" decile rating.

Phase Two

In the Phase Two interviews, the principal of one school that had just started using the Ministry's new electronic database was very enthusiastic about the speed and ease with which they had been able to access information: however, s/he cautioned that any system would only be as good as the quality of the data entered.

Three principals (one secondary and two primary) in this phase said that funding was not an issue in relation to mobile students, although both the primary principals agreed that large schools (such as theirs) had more flexibility as to how the budget could be used than was the case in small schools. Nearly all the principals in this phase said they were opposed to individualised funding packages although most thought some sort of "whole school package" for schools in areas of high mobility would be useful. One college principal said that he would like schools in areas of high mobility to be resourced in a way that allowed them to set up effective induction programmes for students.

Concerns about communication between schools and other agencies were also voiced in this phase. One secondary principal was particularly critical of the way schools and other agencies work together. From this principal's perspective our policies and our practice are failing New Zealand children:

> It's just that we have lost the simple ways of dealing with something, we've lost it…when you think about a school everything is quite now, everything is immediate and now… but with the agencies everything is then or sometimes. So there's a kind of wheel that's going really fast like this where the rubber meets the road and in the middle there's the hub that goes quite slowly and it doesn't ever get to the, the spokes don't work anymore. So whatever happens here doesn't get to the bit that is going really fast… Someone needs to look at the process by which the now immediate problems which are big and now-ish and how they are actually dealt with, how quickly, how effectively.

The principal interviews: Summary

Phase One

In Phase One, with one exception, the principals we interviewed very definitely saw student mobility as a problem. They said that frequent movement disadvantages children and impacts negatively on schools. For them, children need a strong, long-term attachment to a school "family" if they are to benefit from going to school. Where children have learning difficulties or other special needs it is, according to the primary school principals, very unlikely that these will be adequately addressed if they move schools more than once. Several said that many parents simply do not understand how important it is for their child to stay in one school.

Children who move a lot between schools (particularly within the school year) are seen to disrupt the school's rhythms. The principals all talked about the administrative overheads of large numbers of enrolments and withdrawals at "non-standard" times of the year. Many talked about the disruption to class routines caused by non-standard movement, and the primary school principals emphasised the funding difficulties that are created when children with "extra" special needs arrive in the middle of the year. While none of the principals said this explicitly, it is clear that it is difficult for schools to deal with high levels of mobility because they are organised and funded in ways that assume a stable cohort of students. In the interviews it was common for the term "transience" to be conflated with a range of other issues that might negatively impact on children's learning. The effectiveness of the strategies schools use to ameliorate the effects of high mobility is not at all clear—partly because very little evaluative information is collected, and partly because high mobility tends to be mixed up with other issues. Schools in general do not seem very confident that they are dealing effectively with this issue.

Many suggestions were made for improving the way the education system deals with highly mobile children. Among these were: better information exchange between schools, and between schools and other agencies (especially CYFS); greater standardisation of student information; and more flexible funding arrangements for schools (especially for "special needs" children).

Phase Two

In the second phase of interviews, principals' views about the negative impacts of mobility were more diverse, with five principals saying either that mobility is not an issue for them, or that it is not a big issue.[111] Although there was strong agreement that mobility makes school-wide planning difficult, there was less of a consensus on its other effects. Varied opinions were expressed as to whether or not the time of moving has a bearing on the extent of the disruption. Most of the interviewees thought that the individual characteristics of the students themselves were more important than whether or not they had moved a lot. There was almost unanimous agreement that irregular attendance and/or lateness is more disruptive to programmes and individual learning

[111] These differences in opinion did not appear to be connected to differences in mobility rates in individual schools.

than mobility. All agreed that it is the priority that families place on education that is critical to a child's success, and that some mobile students do well.

What do teachers think?—The teacher interviews

In Phase Two, we interviewed 17 teachers of Year 5 or Year 8 (in the primary schools), and Year 11 (in the secondary schools—in most cases this person was the Year 11 dean). In three (primary school) cases this teacher was also the principal. Each interview took about an hour.

The questions were designed to explore teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning as a way of further investigating some of the issues raised by the principals in Phase One. We were interested in trying to distinguish mobility from other issues that might disrupt class programmes, and in exploring teachers' feelings about student movement. See Appendix D for a copy of the schedule of questions we used.

Four of the 17 teachers interviewed said that student mobility is not an issue for them. In the words of one of these teachers, "They come in and they are mine." About the same number of teachers thought that moving could be a positive thing for some children. One said that the arrival of new students often has a beneficial effect on the class as a whole. Five of the teachers we interviewed volunteered examples of mobile students who were thought of as leaders, either in class or in the school as a whole.

Teachers, particularly of younger students, worried that mobile students miss out on "consistency"—which, in their view, is important. Many[112] teachers believed that the school provides the only stability in the lives of some children. Most of the teachers interviewed thought the ease with which a student adapted to a new school largely depends on the characteristics of the individual student. Most felt that it is harder for both teacher and student when the student arrives partway through a year. Opinions were mixed as to whether it was harder or easier for "boomerang" students to settle. Three out of the four secondary teachers interviewed said that these students were more "difficult" than students who had not been to the school before.[113] Nearly all the teachers mentioned that some students who move a lot are reluctant to make new friends. Students who move frequently also tend to miss out on being involved in extracurricular activities, particularly sports.

All the teachers believed that building effective relationships with students is essential for learning: however, most also said that these relationships can be developed quickly. School/family partnerships were also often seen as important, and these were perceived to take longer to establish with frequent movers. Most teachers felt they could easily work out new students' learning needs. Many teachers said that new students disrupt class dynamics, which often means that they have to change class groupings. This was seen as problematic when classes

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[112] "Many", used here, refers to 6–12 teachers (out of the 17 interviewed); "most" refers to at least 12 teachers; and "some" refers to fewer than six teachers.

[113] It was not clear from the interviews whether it was more difficult for the students or for the school.

are large. Some teachers said that new students take them away from the rest of the class, and, according to one, large numbers of mobile students puts unreasonable pressure on "stable" students (to constantly "buddy" the new students). For teaching principals the administrative work associated with high numbers of mobile students disrupts their teaching programmes. At the senior secondary level, new students take up teacher time in extra administrative tasks—such as chasing up records of work. However, all except one teacher said that irregular attendance is more disruptive—to student learning and the class programmes—than mobility.

When asked how they felt when students left their class during the year, nearly all teachers said they felt frustrated. Teachers generally said that they had worked hard with various individuals, and that this work feels "wasted" when the student leaves. Other teachers said they felt annoyed at the family, sad, or disempowered. Many of the teachers believed schools are having to fulfil many of the functions of the family. They build attachments to the students—"I treat the kids like my own"—and are understandably concerned when they leave. One teacher worried that the family was dissatisfied with her as a teacher when a student left. As with the principals, some teachers mentioned that it was hard to track a student's progress over time when the student is only with them for a short period of time. One teacher said that the current emphasis on "teacher effectiveness" and "evidence-based decision making" in professional development courses is demoralising when your cohort of students is constantly changing.

4. Discussion: The *real* issues—what are they?

One of the most interesting findings of this study is that teachers and principals think that students who change schools frequently are disadvantaged, but, according to the data we were able to collect, this is not the case.

Most of our interviewees told us that mobility was a major issue in their school. Most agreed that high levels of mobility make school-wide planning difficult. However, there was less agreement on its other effects. Most of our interviewees believe that mobility impacts negatively on the students themselves, especially those with "special needs": however, many agree that there are children who appear not to be affected by frequent moves. Nearly all believe it is the individual characteristics of the child that determine how disruptive the move is to both the child and the class. Teachers gave examples of mobile students who quickly took on leadership roles, and also examples of other students who seemed reluctant to establish new relationships. There are varied opinions as to whether the time of year when a child moves schools makes any difference to how disruptive the move is. There is, however, almost unanimous agreement that irregular attendance and/or lateness are more disruptive to programmes and individuals' learning than mobility.

Most teachers feel they can quickly ascertain learning needs of new students and all believe building relationships with students and their families is essential for successful learning to occur. Many teachers feel relationships with children can be built quickly, but that it takes longer to build relationships with families. All agree that the priority the family places on education is critical to a child's success. Most of the teachers reported feeling frustrated or sad when children left their class. Everyone interviewed also believes that it is important for students to feel a sense of belonging to the school.

Thus, despite some differences, there is a common core of "received wisdom" here, a set of ideas about schools and what they are for that, at some level, is disrupted or disturbed when children move between schools frequently. As outlined above, in Phase One of this study, we found few statistically significant differences in educational achievement when mobile students were compared with non-mobile students. Because this was not what we expected, we wondered if this finding was produced by the patchy quality of the achievement information we were able to use. In Phase Two we went to great lengths to improve the quality of this data: however, our findings, broadly speaking, were more or less the same. While there were some patterns suggesting links between mobility and lowered educational achievement, these were not statistically significant. Moreover, such associations do *not* mean that mobility *causes* lower educational achievement.

In the Phase Two work we widened our focus beyond achievement data. We asked *all* of the students (over 700) in the sample year groups how they felt about school, school work, and their teachers. We expected to find differences, but again there were very few that were statistically significant. The only area of difference between the mobile and the non-mobile groups was in the way they responded to the questions on school–family links. There were small, but statistically significant differences on nearly all items in this section, and one item that produced a larger difference—the question that asked students to respond to the statement "My family come to school events". On this item, mobile students (at all three levels) were less likely than non-mobile students to say that their families came to school events.[114] While this may or may not be important in itself, it could indicate a difference between the two groups in terms of their families' sense of connection with the school, and/or the degree of "fit" between their families' values and commitments and "school" values and commitments.

So: what does this mean? Why do our findings not fit with the "received wisdom" of schools? On the one hand, it could mean that our data are inadequate in some way, or that they have failed to capture something important. On the other hand, it could mean that the school view of mobility as negative and disruptive has other origins. In Phase Two of this study, the quality of the achievement information we used was as good as—if not better than—the information that is used to assess student progress (in individual schools and nationally). If there is a way to improve on this (with the resources we had available), it is not obvious to us. Thus in the last section of this report we explore some of the issues raised if the second of these two alternatives is considered. First, however, we look briefly at the problem of collecting adequate data in this area.

Why is it difficult to collect accurate data on mobile students?

Collecting quality achievement data (to compare the progress of mobile students with non-mobile students) was a significant issue in designing and carrying out this project. Briefly, the issues were as follows:

1. The information available for mobile students is often incomplete and/or inaccurate. Mobile students may not actually be enrolled in the sampled schools when the achievement data are collected. Tracking individual students would overcome this problem but would be currently difficult to do.[115]

2. Mobility is not a straightforward variable. It is associated with a whole range of other factors, any one of which could be the "cause" of any effect measured. If we wanted to separate out these other factors—socioeconomic deprivation, other high and/or special needs, for example—it would be necessary to control for these. This would require sample sizes,

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[114] See Figure 9.

[115] In this study we ended up with multiple data sets: students for whom we had RoSA cards; students for whom we had achievement data in reading and/or mathematics; and students for whom we had survey data. None of these data sets were complete.

information about families, and standardised data that we simply do not currently have in New Zealand.

3. Achievement information is collected and used in schools to meet needs that are very different from those of researchers. In primary schools there is an emphasis on "formative" assessment, which means that teachers collect the data they need to identify gaps and needs in individual students. Collecting data that enables them to compare their students' progress against national benchmarks is very much in the background (at least in the current system). At high school level, the NCEA system is primarily designed to measure what students can do, rather than to rank them against others. Modern forms of assessment are designed to produce information that can be used to improve teaching and learning, not to be useful for researchers.

4. There is no commonly accepted definition of mobility. Different studies use different definitions and/or measures, with the result that it is impossible to compare their results. Moreover, the measures that have been used (including ours) are rather blunt instruments, relying on arbitrary distinctions that may or may not be important. To give one example, the system we used doesn't differentiate between a Year 11 student who may have made two non-standard moves in the early years of primary school, but none since, and a student who may have been to several different secondary schools. This difference may well be significant.

However, given all these caveats, our findings are consistent with those of several large British studies with very large sample sizes that have been able to control for the variables outlined above.[116] It seems likely that the broad patterns we have identified are robust. Given this, in this last section of the report, we explore where the schools' view of mobility might come from and the purposes it might serve.

Why do teachers perceive mobility as a problem?

In this section we put forward the idea that frequently moving children are a problem for schools because of the way the school system is constructed (and therefore how the people who work in it think about it). In other words the "problem" of student mobility is a problem with the system, rather than a problem with individual students or their families.

Schools have many different purposes. Underpinning each of these purposes is a different set of ideas, and these different ideas often conflict with each other. Philosophically speaking, this is a problem. However, it is resolved via the (implicit) use of a number of different metaphors or "mental models". Educational thinking is organised—or driven by—these metaphors *as if* they

[116] Strand and Demie (2006) and Dobson and Pooley (2004) in particular—see Section 2 of this report (especially pp. 25–28) for more information.

were "reality". In one of these mental models, schools are constructed as being like families. We think this "family" metaphor underpins some of the issues raised in this report.

This idea arose as, when analysing the interviews, we were struck by the number of times we were told by principals and teachers that they think of schools as being like families. This was more common in some schools (in primary schools, for example), but it was evident to some extent in all of the schools we visited. Some schools use the term "whānau" to describe groupings within the school, others referred directly to "the school family". One of the study schools presents the graduates of the school with certificates saying that they will always belong to "the family of [name of school]". Teachers consistently referred to students in their classes as "*my* children" and comments such as "I treat them like my own kids" were common. Teachers also consistently emphasised the importance, to educational success, of strong, caring, and ongoing relationships: relationships between teacher and students, between students and other students, and between staff in the school. They talked about their schools' efforts to nurture a sense of belonging, and about the importance of children feeling safe and secure enough to "take risks" and try out new things. Each school has its own particular set of shared values and ideas about what is important and how things should be done. They strive to teach individuals to get along with others, to share and co-operate. School families also acknowledge and applaud the individual successes of all their members.

Looking back it seems to us that the "school as family" metaphor is very important in structuring teachers' thinking about schools and their purposes. If teachers do in fact see the "ideal" school environment as being something like a conventional biological family—in which (at least ideally) everyone is connected and committed to each other; everyone is accepted as they are; everyone has a role to play and a contribution to make; and adults scaffold the development of children—then it is easy to see how frequently moving children are disruptive. The conventional nuclear family is forced to become a "blended" family. Children who are not the family's "natural" children move in, possibly only for a short time, bringing with them issues and problems that don't really "belong" in that family. Given this, it is not hard to see why it is not a straightforward matter for teachers to develop (what they see as) the necessary sense of attachment and commitment to these children.

So: Why is this "family" metaphor so pervasive? Why does it "work" for schools? We think it is useful because it unifies three very different—and conflicting—ideas about education's purpose. What are these ideas and how does the family metaphor hold them together? How and why does this metaphor "need" schools to have stable, predictable populations? We look at each of these questions in turn below.

What ideas "drive" what happens in schools?

Schools have many different purposes. These have been written about in many different ways by educational theorists, but Miller and Bentley's scheme is typical. They set out five key goals (in no particular order): (1) keeping children safe—the "custodial" role; (2) establishing certain

behavioural routines and rules; (3) socialisation—understanding and accepting the values of wider adult society; (4) developing cognitive ability; (5) screening and sorting. As they argue, a school designed to achieve any *one* of these purposes would obviously look very different from one designed to achieve all of them simultaneously. They also say that today's schools, because they are required to achieve *all* of these purposes, do none of them particularly well (Miller & Bentley, 2003, p. 32). Other authors[117] point out that modern schools are supposed to produce equal opportunity while *also* providing for the human resource needs of a highly segmented economy. They are supposed to bring out individual "potential" while at the same time *also* socialising children into accepted social norms.

In 20th century education systems these apparently conflicting goals are resolved via the use of the "production line" model of education.[118] Children are "processed" through the system in "batches" (known as year groups or classes). A preset curriculum is delivered to them in a preset order by people who specialise in different stage of the production process. The curriculum is broken down into bite-sized pieces and added in stages. The products of this system are assessed using a variety of different quality control measures, and any that don't "measure up" are rejected and allowed to drop off the production line. Teachers are technicians who "add value" to the system's products by "bolting on" various bits of knowledge as they pass through. In this model, learning is something that "happens to" the products as they move through the system. It is a relatively passive process that occurs in much the same way at different ages or stages in the process.

Elements of this model can be seen in the New Zealand Curriculum—the current "official policy for teaching, learning and assessment in New Zealand schools" (Ministry of Education, 1993, 2006a). This document, which applies to all years of schooling from new entrants to the end of secondary school, outlines progressions of learning (levels) that students are expected to move through in various key areas. Each learning area is broken down into "achievement objectives" that become increasingly complex as a student progresses through the levels. Teachers are expected to plan programmes that "cover" the curriculum and to assess their students against the "achievement objectives". At the senior secondary level students also participate in a variety of high-stakes internal and external assessments to judge how well they have met the required standards.

However, within this one-size-fits-all model, teaching is *also* supposed to be "learner-centred". Teachers are supposed to understand, draw out, and develop the particular talents and abilities of each and every individual, and learners are supposed to play an active role in constructing meaning (i.e. learning). The current curriculum document sets out a common direction for learning and assessment in New Zealand: however, it also explicitly gives schools the flexibility to choose contexts and design programmes that are appropriate to the individual learning needs of

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[117] See, for example, Egan (1997) or Gilbert (2005) (among others).
[118] See, for example, Beare (2001), Beare and Slaughter (1993), Gilbert (2005).

their students. The recently released draft new curriculum document (Ministry of Education, 2006a) expresses this idea as follows:

> All students' identities, cultures, languages, and talents are recognised and affirmed. Their learning needs are identified and addressed. (p. 9).
>
> Teachers work every day with groups of students from diverse backgrounds and cultures. They must continually respond to the needs of individuals (p. 24).

Learner-centred teaching is "best practice" in primary schools: however, compromises are inevitable. In reading instruction, for example, children are assessed and placed in groups with other children with similar needs so that teaching can be targeted at the individual rather than at the class as a whole. When choosing reading material teachers try to find books that are at an appropriate level for the child, and to use contexts that are likely to have meaning for the particular children involved. In science education attention is paid to uncovering students' prior knowledge and there is an emphasis on doing and "discovery learning". This emphasis on individual need is also reflected in assessment practices that are designed to identify what a child can do and what his/her next learning step might be—as opposed to measuring individual performance against the performance of others. Some schools involve students in self-assessment and encourage students to become increasingly "self-regulated", to take more responsibility for their own learning. The affective dimension of learning is reflected in the importance teachers place on relationships. There is a holistic approach to teaching and learning where an individual's interests, prior knowledge, and social and cultural background are all considered important and relevant to learning at school. Given all this, however, it is rare (with the possible exception of students with very high "special needs") for students to follow completely personalised programmes of learning. More often, personalising learning is taken to mean the class studies some predetermined topic or unit of work and teachers make an effort to make adaptations within that to cater for different levels of attainment. The organisation of schools into classes, and then into smaller groups, makes genuinely learner-centred teaching difficult to achieve. Groups are, however, very important for schools in that they are essential for meeting another different goal, the goal of socialisation.

Socialisation involves the initiation of children into an adult social environment. Schools promote and require children to take on particular sets of knowledge, values, and skills—those that are considered important (at least by the dominant group) in the wider society. At one level this is important in building social cohesion: however, at another level, socialisation also necessarily involves developing a certain amount of homogeneity.[119] Schools are supposed to teach students how to get along with different people, to learn to be part of a group, and to promote democratic values. As the curriculum document puts it:

[119] For a discussion of this idea see Egan (1997).

> These values include honesty, reliability, respect for others, respect for the law, tolerance (rangimārie), fairness, caring or compassion (aroha), non-sexism, and non-racism (Ministry of Education, 1993 p. 21).

Many of the teachers and principals interviewed for this study saw the socialisation function of schools as central to what schools do. For them, teachers are important role models who exemplify the espoused values. Thus relationships are vital, and a certain amount of interdependence between the school family and the home family is widely seen as being essential to the school's ability to do this work.

So to summarise: there are thus at least three quite different things that schools are supposed to do. They are supposed to:

1. deliver a standardised curriculum to groups of students and assess students according to whether or not they have learnt this material
2. meet the individual learning needs of each and every one of the students they find in their classes
3. socialise students to accept prevailing social norms.

How does the family metaphor hold these ideas together?

As outlined above, the teachers and principals we interviewed for this study talked about schools as being like families. We think this family metaphor is an important means by which teachers make sense of these three very different ideas.

The emphasis on relationships allows schools to reconcile the "meeting individual needs" goal with the "socialisation" goal. The "this is how we do things in this family" idea justifies the group focus necessary to fit with the production line model and the socialisation goal—even when the individuals making up "the family" come from very diverse backgrounds.

Families, like schools, are supposed to fulfil a whole range of often conflicting purposes. They are supposed to meet the individual physical and emotional needs of their members, and to provide the conditions for optimal cognitive development of the young. They are also supposed to set boundaries, and to control or channel the development of the young into certain socially accepted trajectories. Families are also supposed to build a group identity: a way of doing things and a space to belong to. Like schools, families have individual, group, and wider social functions, and, also like schools, their members constantly have to balance the individual rights or needs of their members with the "greater good": of the group. For all this to work, the members usually have to have a deep sense of connection and long-term commitment to each other.

We think the "standard" model of schooling works in much the same way. If schools are to attempt to fulfil the different purposes outlined above, the family metaphor is a useful template. Balancing all these different purposes is probably only possible in a context of deep connections and long-term commitments, a shared belief in the idea of being "in this together", "for the long

haul", "for better or worse". The difficulty is that if the family metaphor is to work in the school context it requires a stable school population.

How does mobility disrupt the family metaphor?

Integral to belonging to a family is a sense of long-term commitment. Much of the socialisation that occurs in families is only possible because of the relative permanency of the relationships. People have to learn to get along because they are going to be together for long periods of time. When differences occur, ways need to be found to resolve them—walking away is (in general) not a feasible solution. The shared histories members of a family have are important and considerable emotional energy is put into sustaining relationships.

In the school setting where there are low levels of mobility many of the positive features of families can be mirrored. However, when students constantly leave and new ones appear the sense of social cohesion of the school family is upset. It can become difficult for the school family to continue to promote the values and attitudes they feel are important. Newcomers to the school are like members of a "blended family"—they do not share the memories and experiences of the "natural family". Large numbers of newcomers require constant adjustment for all involved, and the importance placed on relationship building means that when students leave, teachers understandably feel an emotional response. To maintain this sense of family in a constantly changing school population puts considerable emotional demands on teachers. Frequently moving children "break the rules": they disrupt the smooth working of the "family" system. The consequence of this, as we have found in this study, is that the system responds by pathologising them, treating them as the problem when, if the ideas outlined here are accepted, the problem lies in the system.

We think that much of the perceived problem with mobile students has to do with how schools are organised, but, more importantly, it is a result of how we think about what it is that schools are supposed to do. What then should we do about this? We want to argue that the "problem" of mobile students is just one aspect of a much larger problem currently being faced by the education sector—the problem of how to go about reforming (or more accurately, transforming) the current education system so that it can meet the needs of post-Industrial Age, 21st century society. Developing a solution to this problem requires us to rethink past ideas about what education was for. Solving the mobility problem requires similar strategies. The next section looks briefly at some ideas from the 21st century education discussions that could usefully inform the mobility debate.

Seeing mobility differently

New Zealanders move a lot by international standards, and some schools in New Zealand have high rates of student movement. How can we think about schooling in ways that take account of this and allow it to be seen positively?

The draft *New Zealand Curriculum* aims to ensure that when students leave school "they are equipped for living in a world where *continual change is the norm*" (Ministry of Education 2006a, p. 7). If this is what our schools are for, then mobile students can be seen as an asset. Students who move a lot have first-hand experience of change and their presence in schools has the potential to expose less-mobile students to different experiences and ways of looking at the world.

The draft *New Zealand Curriculum* states that each school will design and implement its own curriculum (within the direction set by the *New Zealand Curriculum*), and that learning could be organised around "significant themes". According to this document:

> Significant themes offer schools opportunities for engaging students and integrating learning across the key competencies[120] and the different learning areas. Such themes include sustainability, citizenship, enterprise, globalisation and critical literacies (Ministry of Education, 2006a, p. 26).

This approach signals an emphasis on the "big picture" of what is being learnt. It focuses on building understanding of some key "big ideas" that have relevance to students' lives—both now and in the future. Subject content knowledge is still important, not in itself, but because it allows students to understand the bigger picture. For instance, taking the theme of sustainability as an example, an important big idea is the concept of the environment as a delicately balanced system where a change to any one aspect impacts on other aspects of the system. Classes may still study a particular ecosystem—a stream for example—and all the things that live in it, but the *purpose* of learning about these things would be to help students see the *relationships* between these things, and how the system is affected by change. Students arriving in the class partway through a unit of work such as this could then be challenged to think about an ecosystem they have previously studied and look for similarities. In this way the prior knowledge of new students can be appreciated and used to provide richer contexts for the big ideas being studied. Such an approach to teaching and learning builds on much of the excellent work already being done in classes but shifts the emphasis slightly, allowing more diverse and flexible learning pathways to be opened up. This approach can also allow learning to become more personalised. If the emphasis moves from how much knowledge students have to what they can *do* with this knowledge then learning becomes much more transportable, especially if students themselves are aware of what the "big picture" is.[121]

This approach could be strengthened further if the families of mobile students are also aware of the "big picture". They can then help students to draw on experiences from their own lives to complement what is being learnt in schools. This would help give some coherence to students' learning as they transfer between different schools. The challenge here is in finding ways of

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[120] Key competencies are defined as the "capabilities people need to live, learn, work and contribute as active members of their communities. Competencies are more complex than skills. Capable people draw on and combine all the resources available to them: knowledge, skills, attitudes and values" (Ministry of Education, 2006a, p.11).

[121] See Gilbert (2005) for an elaboration of this view of knowledge in the school curriculum, and the Ministry of Education's recent (2006b) work on the "personalising learning" concept.

strengthening relationships between schools and mobile families. The Ministry of Education's *Best Evidence Synthesis on Community and Family Influences on Children's Achievement* argues that for home–school collaboration to be successful, families need to be treated with respect and programmes need to complement and *add to* existing family practices. (Biddulph, et al., 2003). Following from this, it might be useful to look more deeply at how successful home–school collaborations are best established.

The purpose of building closer relationships between school and families is to facilitate learning and raise achievement. It is to build connections for students between school and other aspects of their lives, and to allow teachers to build relationships that facilitate learning. Teachers need to be clear as to their role. They are not social workers or counsellors—their job is to *teach.* Where mobility is associated with other issues in families, support is required from social services. Teachers cannot be expected to be all things to all people.

We have argued here that it is the way we currently think about schools and their purposes that makes mobility a problem for schools. Induction programmes, the timely transfer of assessment data, and funding changes for schools (especially small ones) with large numbers of mobile students may all be helpful. However, these strategies do not address the real issue. We argue that, rather than developing strategies aimed at "normalising" mobile students, we need to take a step back, to look at the system itself and to find ways to capitalise on the positive aspects of mobility.

Where to next?

In a number of places in this report, we identify areas in need of further investigation. By way of conclusion we list these (in no particular order) in the form of questions. Our focus here is on investigating the *educational* effects of changing schools frequently.

1. Is frequent moving linked with lowered educational achievement in high-decile areas?[122] Do teachers in high-decile schools have similar or different views, and are there differences in students' sense of belonging to or engagement with school? We think it is important to try to disentangle the effects of mobility on its own from other, possibly related factors (socioeconomic deprivation, for example).

2. Do high mobility rates in low-decile schools affect the achievement of *all* students in the school? How do achievement patterns in these schools compare with those in low-decile schools with low mobility rates?

3. Are there differences in achievement patterns in schools with high mobility rates and strategies to manage this, and other high-mobility schools with no particular strategies?

4. Would the patterns we found (that weren't statistically significant in our sample size) be clearer with larger data sets? (For example, would the small differences in mathematics

[122] This study did not include high-decile schools, and two-thirds of the study schools were decile 1.

achievement we found be larger?) Would other patterns emerge—e.g. are there differences by gender or ethnicity? We know that Māori students were overrepresented in the group of mobile students in this study, but we do not know whether mobility is more or less of a problem (or no different) for Māori than for other groups.

5. Does moving have more of an effect at particular ages or school stages and less at others? Or does it depend more on the individual and/or their particular circumstances at the time of moving? What factors make a difference? Why are some children more resilient than others? Do all changes have a similar—and cumulative—impact, or do some changes have more effect than others? Nearly all teachers and principals in this study told us that some students were not adversely affected by mobility. About a quarter of these teachers and principals said they had been "transient" as children themselves and that it hadn't been a problem for them. A longitudinal study designed to track individual students could help answer these questions, and would also allow an investigation of changes in achievement and/or engagement levels over time. Our study found greater differences (between mobile and non-mobile students) in school engagement at Year 11, and a recent (and, at the time of writing this report, unpublished) study by Strand and Demie (cited in Strand & Demie, 2006) indicates that in Britain pupil mobility may be associated with lower attainment at Key Stage Three and Key Stage Four[123] (secondary level) after controlling for prior attainment and pupil background. They suggest a number of reasons for this: for example, older pupils could have more problems adjusting to school life and fitting in with the new school's curriculum and "examination pathways", or the family's reasons for moving could be more serious/disruptive when students are older (in general, mobility rates are lower at secondary level than at primary, suggesting that families are less likely to move when their children are older).

6. What are the experiences and perceptions of mobile children and their families of the process of changing schools? How (if at all) do they think this experience could be improved?

[123] Key Stage Three covers ages 11 to 14 approximately and Key Stage Four covers ages 14 to 16 approximately .

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Appendix A: Student questionnaire

Name: _____

What is this questionnaire about?

This questionnaire is part of a research project being done by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research about whether changing schools often, affects how well students do at school.

It is about your "sense of belonging" to your school.
Please think about each question and be honest when you answer.
Your answers are private. No-one else from your school will see what you write.
There are no right or wrong answers.

Information about you

Please circle the correct answer.

1. Are you a ... boy [1]/ girl [2]?
2. Year level at school: Y5 Y8 Y11
3. Were you at this school last year? Yes [1] No [2]
4. Were you at this school at the beginning of this year? Yes [1] No [2]
5. How many schools have you been to before this one ? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6+
6. How many houses have you lived in? 1 2 3 4 5 6+
7. Have they all been in [name of area]? Yes [1] No [2]

8. What is the *main* reason you chose to come to this school?

☐ [1] It is the closest school
☐ [2] It is the only school for my age group in the area
☐ [3] My family think this is a good school
☐ [4] Other members of my family come here
☐ [5] My friends come here
☐ [6] I wanted to come to this school
☐ [7] Other: (Please give the reason)

_____

9. Which ethnic groups do you belong to? *(you can tick more than one group)*

☐ [1] Pakeha
☐ [2] Mäori
☐ [3] Pacific peoples (like Samoan, Tongan, Cook Islander)
☐ [4] Asian (like Indian, Chinese, Thai, Japanese)
☐ [5] Other (please write where your family comes from)

_____

10. How I feel about school

Please tick the box you agree with.

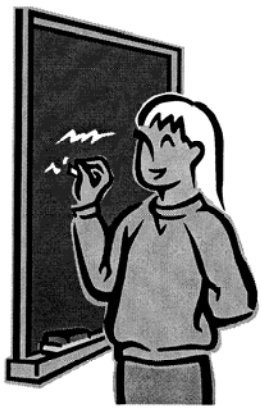
Put only one tick on each line.

	All of the time 1	Most of the time 2	Some of the time 3	Never 4
a) I have lots of friends at this school.	☐	☐	☐	☐
b) Other students seem to like me.	☐	☐	☐	☐
c) I feel that I belong to this school.	☐	☐	☐	☐
d) I feel safe at this school.	☐	☐	☐	☐
e) I get involved in lots of sports or other activities at school.	☐	☐	☐	☐
f) I know the rules at this school.	☐	☐	☐	☐
g) I feel proud of my school.	☐	☐	☐	☐
h) I feel shy at school.	☐	☐	☐	☐
i) I feel scared at school.	☐	☐	☐	☐
j) I know who to go to when I need something at school.	☐	☐	☐	☐
k) I have all the gear I need to do my work at school.	☐	☐	☐	☐

11. How I feel about school work

Please tick the box you agree with. Put only one tick on each line.

	All of the time 1	Most of the time 2	Some of the time 3	Never 4
a) I like this school.	☐	☐	☐	☐
b) At school I learn about things I am interested in.	☐	☐	☐	☐
c) I know how to do the work.	☐	☐	☐	☐
d) I feel OK asking questions in class.	☐	☐	☐	☐
e) Doing well at school is important to me.	☐	☐	☐	☐
f) I try hard to do my best work.	☐	☐	☐	☐
g) I enjoy English.	☐	☐	☐	☐
h) I do well in English.	☐	☐	☐	☐
i) I enjoy maths.	☐	☐	☐	☐
j) I do well in maths.	☐	☐	☐	☐
k) I am repeating work I have done before.	☐	☐	☐	☐
l) I am bored in class.	☐	☐	☐	☐



12. How I feel about my teachers

Please tick the box you agree with. Put only one tick on each line.

	All of the time 1	Most of the time 2	Some of the time 3	Never 4
a) I like my teacher[s].	☐	☐	☐	☐
b) My teacher[s] treat[s] me fairly.	☐	☐	☐	☐
c) My teacher[s] understand[s] how I feel.	☐	☐	☐	☐
d) My teacher[s] think[s] I can do well at school.	☐	☐	☐	☐
e) My teacher[s] is [are] interested in what I think.	☐	☐	☐	☐
f) My teacher[s] talk[s] to me about how I am doing at school.	☐	☐	☐	☐
g) My teacher[s] is [are] interested in the things I do outside school.	☐	☐	☐	☐
h) My teacher[s] respect[s] me.	☐	☐	☐	☐
i) My teacher[s] talk[s] to my family.	☐	☐	☐	☐
j) My teacher[s] understand[s] my family.	☐	☐	☐	☐
k) My teacher[s] respect[s] my family.	☐	☐	☐	☐

13. How I feel about school and family

Please tick the box you agree with. Put only one tick on each line.

	All of the time 1	Most of the time 2	Some of the time 3	Never 4
a) My family and teachers think the same things are important.	☐	☐	☐	☐
b) My family and teachers have the same ideas about what I should learn.	☐	☐	☐	☐
c) My family come to school events.	☐	☐	☐	☐
d) My family talk to my teachers.	☐	☐	☐	☐
e) My family often talks to me about what happened at school.	☐	☐	☐	☐
f) My family often talks to me about what I learned at school.	☐	☐	☐	☐
g) My family helps me with my school work if I need it.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Appendix B: Student questionnaire (te reo Māori)

Tō ingoa: _____

He aha te kaupapa o tēnei uiuinga?

He uiuinga tēnei no tētahi kaupapa rangahau e whakahaerehia ana e Te Rūnanga o Aotearoa Mō Te Rangahau i Te Mātauranga. Ko te kaupapa o tēnei rangahau e hāngai ana ki ngā tamariki e hūnuku haere ai mai i tētahi kura ki tētahi atu, me tōna pānga ki ngā whakatutukitanga a ngā tamariki i roto i ngā kura.

Ko te whāinga matua o tēnei uiui, e pā ana te taunga o tō wairua ki tō kura.
Tēnā koa, kia āta whakaaro mai koe mō āu whakautu ki ēnei pātai, kia pono hoki.
He kōrero huna āu whakautu. No reira, e kore e kitea āu whakautu e ētahi tāngata no tō kura.

Ko te mea hoki, kārekau he whakautu tika, he whakautu he rānei.

He pātai e pā ana ki a koe anō

Porohitatia te whakautu tika.

1. He tama rānei koe, he kotiro rānei?	Tama[1] Kotiro[2]?
2. Kei tēhea reanga koe i te kura?	Tau 5 Tau 8 Tau 11
3. I tēnei kura koe i tērā tau?	Āe[1] Kao[2]
4. I tēnei kura koe i te tīmatatanga o tēnei tau?	Āe[1] Kao[2]
5. E hia ngā kura kua haere nei koe i mua i tēnei?	0 1 2 3 4 5 6+
6. E hia ngā kāinga kua noho nei koe?	1 2 3 4 5 6+
7. Kei tēnei takiwā aua kāinga katoa, kāre ranei?	Āe[1] Kao[2]

8. He aha te take <u>matua</u> i kōwhiria ai tēnei kura hei kura māu? (Tohua kia kotahi anake)

- ❒ [1] Tata tonu tēnei kura ki tōku kainga
- ❒ [2] Kārekau he kura mō tōku reanga atu i tēnei kura
- ❒ [3] E āi ki tōku whānau he kura pai tēnei
- ❒ [4] Haere mai ai ōku whanaunga ki tēnei kura
- ❒ [5] Haere mai ai ōku hoa ki tēnei kura
- ❒ [6] I tino pīrangi āhau ki te haere mai ki tēnei kura
- ❒ [7] I te mea, ko tōna kaupapa matua, ko te kaupapa Māori
- ❒ [8] T/ētahi atu take: (Tēnā koa tuhia mai)

_____

9. No t/ēwhea iwi koe? *(Ka taea te tohu kia nui atu i te kotahi)*

☐ [1] Pākehā
☐ [2] Māori
☐ [3] Ngā moutere o Te Moana Nui ā Kiwa (arā, no Hamoa, no Tonga, no Kuki Airani)
☐ [4] Ahia (arā, no Inia, no Haina, no Tairana, no Hapana)
☐ [5] T/ētahi atu (Tēnā koa, tuhia mai no whea tō whānau)

_____

10. Ōku whakaaro mō te kura

Tohua te pouaka e whakaae ake nei koe. Kia kotahi te tohu mō ia rārangi.

	Ngā wā katoa 1	Te nuinga o te wā 2	Ētahi wā 3	Kore rawa 4
a) He nui ōku hoa i te kura.	☐	☐	☐	☐
e) He whanaunga ōku kei tēnei kura	☐	☐	☐	☐
h) Ka rata mai ngā ākonga ki a au.	☐	☐	☐	☐
i) Rata ana tōku wairua ki tēnei kura.	☐	☐	☐	☐
k) Pai te manaaki i a au ki tēnei kura.	☐	☐	☐	☐
m) Ka tino uru nei au ki roto i ngā hākinakina me ētahi momo mahi pērā i te kura.	☐	☐	☐	☐
n) Kei te mōhio au i ngā tikanga ā tēnei kura	☐	☐	☐	☐
ng) Ki ōku whakaaro, he rawe tēnei kura.	☐	☐	☐	☐
o) Ka whakamā au i te kura.	☐	☐	☐	☐
p) Ka mataku au i te kura.	☐	☐	☐	☐
r) Mena au ka pīrangi i tētahi mea, ka mōhio au pēhea e tīkina atu ai i te kura.	☐	☐	☐	☐
t) Kei a au ngā taputapu katoa ki te whakatutuki pai i āku mahi katoa.	☐	☐	☐	☐

11. Ōku whakaaro mō te mahi kura

Tohua te pouaka e whakaae ake nei koe. Kia kotahi te tohu mō ia rarangi.

		Ngā wā katoa 1	Te nuinga o te wā 2	Ētahi wā 3	Kore rawa 4
a)	Pai ki a au tōku kura	☐	☐	☐	☐
e)	He rawe ki a au ngā mea ka ako mātou i te kura.	☐	☐	☐	☐
h)	Kei te mōhio au me pēhea te whakatutuki ai i āku mahi.	☐	☐	☐	☐
i)	Kāre au i te whakamā ki te patapatai i ngā kaiako.	☐	☐	☐	☐
k)	He mea nui ki a au kia pai rawa atu āku mahi i te kura.	☐	☐	☐	☐
m)	Ka ngana tonu au kia pai rawa atu āku mahi i te kura	☐	☐	☐	☐
n)	He rawe ki a au te reo Māori.	☐	☐	☐	☐
ng)	He pai rawa atu āku mahi reo Māori.	☐	☐	☐	☐
o)	He rawe ki a au te pāngarau.	☐	☐	☐	☐
p)	He pai rawa atu āku mahi pāngarau.	☐	☐	☐	☐
r)	Ahakoa no whea te tangata, ka ako mātou i nga mea e pā ana i ō mātou whakapapa	☐	☐	☐	☐
t)	Ka ako mātou i ngā kōrero tuku iho, arā, ā kui mā, ā koro mā.	☐	☐	☐	☐
u)	Ka ako mātou i ngā tikanga ā kui mā, ā koro mā.	☐	☐	☐	☐
wh	) Hōhā katoa au i ngā mahi i roto i te akomanga	☐	☐	☐	☐

12. Ōku whakaaro mō ōku kaiako

Tohua te pouaka e whakaae ake nei koe. Kia kotahi te tohu mō ia rārangi.

		Ngā wā katoa 1	Te nuinga o te wā 2	Ētahi wā 3	Kore rawa 4
a)	Pai ki a au ōku kaiako	❐	❐	❐	❐
e)	He pai te manaaki a tōku kaiako i a au.	❐	❐	❐	❐
h)	Ka mārama tōku kaiako ki ōku whakaaro	❐	❐	❐	❐
i)	Ka whakapono tōku kaiako, ka taea e au te eke ki ngā taumata o te mātauranga	❐	❐	❐	❐
k)	Ka pīrangi tōku kaiako ki te ata whakarongo ki āku whakaaro ake.	❐	❐	❐	❐
m)	Ka kōrero mai ai tōku kaiako ki a au mō āku mahi i te kura.	❐	❐	❐	❐
ng)	He rawe ki tōku kaiako, te mahi ka mahia e au i waho atu i te kura.	❐	❐	❐	❐
o)	Ka whakanuia au e tōku kaiako.	❐	❐	❐	❐
p)	Ka kōrero ai tōku kaiako ki tōku whānau mō āku mahi i te kura.	❐	❐	❐	❐
r)	Kei te mōhio tōku kaiako ki tōku whānau	❐	❐	❐	❐
t)	Ka whakanuia tōku whānau e tōku kaiako.	❐	❐	❐	❐

13. Ōku whakaaro mō te kura me tōku whānau

Tohua te pouaka e whakaae ake nei koe. Kia kotahi te tohu mō ia rārangi.

		Ngā wā katoa 1	Te nuinga o te wā 2	Ētahi wā 3	Kore rawa 4
a)	Ko ngā mea nui ki tōku whānau, he mea nui hoki ki ngā kaiako, ōtirā ki te kura.	☐	☐	☐	☐
e)	Ko ngā mea ka akohia i te kura, he mea nui hoki ēnei ki tōku whānau.	☐	☐	☐	☐
h)	Puta mai ai tōku whānau ki ngā kaupapa i te kura, ahakoa te kaupapa.	☐	☐	☐	☐
i)	Ka kōrero ōku matua ki tōku kaiako.	☐	☐	☐	☐
k)	Ka pātai mai tōku whānau mō ngā mahi i te kura.	☐	☐	☐	☐
m)	Ka pātai mai tōku whānau mō ngā mea ka akohia i te kura.	☐	☐	☐	☐
n)	Ka āwhina tōku whānau i a au ki te whakaoti i āku mahi kainga.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Appendix C: Principal interview schedule

Principal interview

In phase 1 of this study principals told us that high levels of mobility impacted negatively on school performance.

1. Is this the case in your school?

2. What strategies or processes do you currently have in place in your school to deal with high mobility?

3. Do you think they are effective? Why? Why not?

Last time principals said that high levels of mobility disrupted class programmes. We are interested in finding out more about this.

4. How exactly does high mobility disrupt programmes?

5. In your opinion which of the following enrolments is most likely to disrupt the class programme?
   - A *new* student who arrives part way through the year;
   - A student who arrives part way through the year and has previously been enrolled in the school;
   - A student who arrives at the beginning of the year but has been to several other schools.

   Why do you think this?

6. In your opinion, what is more disruptive to classroom programmes:
   - A new student who arrives part way through the year, and perhaps only stays for a term and has good attendance whilst with you, OR
   - A student who has been at the school for a long time but has irregular attendance, eg a day's absence most weeks?
   - Why do you think this?

7. New entrant classes always have children entering at many points during the year. Is this any more or less disruptive to the programme than new students entering during the year in older classes? Why do you think this?

8. Some people talk about schools as being like families and that children need to feel an attachment to the school "family" if they are to benefit from going to school. How do you feel about this? Are there some students that belong to this school more than others?

9. Why, in your view should children/ young people go to school?
   - In an ideal world what attributes would you hope children/ young people would develop during their schooling? Why are these things important?
   - If children/ young people were home-schooled or enrolled in distance education do you feel they would miss out on anything they gain from being in a school such as this one? Why?
   - Do you believe technology such as computers could ever effectively replace teachers? Why/ why not?
   - In schools students are part of class groups. What are the pros and cons of this?

Another problem identified by principals in phase one of this study was schools' ability to meet the individual needs of highly mobile students.

10. What do you believe are the critical factors that determine how well a student succeeds at school? Why are these things important?

11. What sort of information do you need about a student entering during the year?

12. Ideally, how would this information best be obtained? From the previous school or from your own testing? From formal assessments or other sources eg looking at the student's books, talking to family? How much information do you gather during the enrolment process? Who does this?

13. How would you use this information?

14. What would help you as a school to meet the individual needs of mobile students? How would this help?

Some principals in phase 1 of this study suggested that more flexible funding arrangements for schools would help them work with highly mobile students.

15. What are the costs to a school of having a large percentage of highly mobile students?

16. From data collected last time we know that schools in this area have a large number of highly mobile students. Is it the **numbers** of students moving in and out, **when** they move or the **characteristics** of the individuals who are moving that makes this difficult to cope with? Can you give me a specific example that illustrates this? How does this affect your ability to plan?

17. Some principals said that individualised funding packages that followed students round wherever they went would be a good idea in areas with high student mobility: however, others advocated whole-school funding packages where local needs/trends indicated that it was necessary. What do you think about these ideas?

18. In what ways could more flexible funding help you maintain programmes and meet the needs of individual highly mobile students?

19. What kinds of data would you be prepared to provide to get more resources if funding was individualised to each student?

20. Do you have anything else you would like to add about the effects of mobility on students, schools and communities?

Thank you for your time. If it is all right with you I will email you in a few weeks just to check whether there is anything else you might like to add to today's ideas.

Appendix D: Teacher interview schedule

Teacher interview

In the first phase of interviews principals said that high rates of mobility are disruptive to school programmes. During this phase we want to look a little more deeply at why this might be. We also want to look at different kinds of mobility.

1. Have any students left your class so far this year?
   - If yes, how did you feel when they left? Why was that?
   - Did their departure impact on the rest of the class? Why do you think this was?
   - How do you think each of them will adapt to their new schools? What challenges do you think they will face, if any? Why do you think this?

2. Have you had any new students join your class so far this year?
   - If yes, how did you feel when they arrived? Why was that?
     a) Did the new student's arrival impact on social dynamics of your class? Why do you think this was? How important are the social dynamics of the class? Why do you think this? How do the social dynamics of the class affect your teaching?
     b) How did you go about establishing the learning needs of your new student? Did you use assessment data from previous school? Why? Why not?
   - In the ideal world what sort of assessment data about a student would you want from the previous school? How would you use this data? What data, if any, would you want to collect yourself? Why?

3. In your opinion, which of the following enrolments is most likely to disrupt your class programme?
   - A *new* student who arrives part way through the year,
   - A student who arrives part way through the year and has previously been enrolled in the school
   - A student who arrives at the beginning of the year but has been to several other schools
   - Why do you think this?

4. In your opinion, what is more disruptive to your class programme:
   - A new student who arrives part way through the year, and perhaps only stays a term but has good attendance whilst with you, OR

- A student who has been at the school for a long time but has irregular attendance, eg a day's absence most weeks?
- Why do you think this?

5. Think of a specific child you have taught for whom you think your teaching really made a difference? In what ways do you think your teaching was successful? What makes you think this? What contributed to this success? How long did it take to see evidence of this success? How well do you feel you knew this child? Was this a mobile child? If so, at what stage of the year did they arrive at your school?

6. Can you think of a specific **mobile** child you have taught for whom you think your teaching really made a difference? At what stage of the year did the child arrive at your school? In what ways do you think your teaching was successful? What makes you think this? What contributed to this success? How long did it take to see evidence of this success? How well do you feel you knew this child? Did the student's mobility impact on your success?

7. Think of a specific child you have taught for whom you think your teaching did **not** really make a difference? In what ways do you think your teaching was not successful? What makes you think this? What contributed to this? How well do you feel you knew this child? Was this child mobile? If so, at what stage of the year did they arrive at your school?

8. Can you think of a specific **mobile** child you have taught for whom you think your teaching did **not** really make a difference? At what stage of the year did the child arrive at your school? In what ways do you think your teaching was not successful? What makes you think this? What contributed to this? How well do you feel you knew this child?

9. What, in your view, is **absolutely crucial** to effective learning and teaching? Why do you think this?

10. Some people talk about schools as being like families and that children need to feel an attachment to the school "family" if they are to benefit from going to school. How do you feel about this?

11. Why, in your view, should children/ young people go to school?
    - In an ideal world what attributes would you hope children/ young people would develop during their schooling? Why?
    - If children/young people were home-schooled or enrolled in distance education do you feel they would miss out on anything they gain from being in a school such as this one? Why?
    - Do you believe technology such as computers could ever effectively replace teachers? Why/ why not?

- In schools students are part of classes. What are the pros and cons of this?

12. Teaching is a really demanding job. What motivates you/keeps you going?
    - How do you judge the day-to-day success of what you are doing?
    - What do you find most frustrating about working with mobile students?
13. Do you have anything else you would like to add about the effects of mobility on students themselves, on schools and on you as a teacher?

Thank you for your time. If it is all right with you I will e-mail you in a few weeks just to check whether there is anything else you might like to add to today's ideas.

Appendix E: Information sheet for schools

Building Attachment in Families and Communities Affected by Transience and Residential Movement.

Dear

Thank you for supporting the initial phase of this research project. We hope you found the report on the initial research interesting and that you are happy to consent to your school's continued involvement in this project.

Below is some background information about the project and some information about what your continued involvement in the project would mean for you and your school.

The Wider "Building Attachment" project

The project as a whole is investigating the effects of high mobility on individuals, families and on the community infrastructure. It is funded by the Foundation for Research Science and Technology (FoRST) through a grant to the Centre for Research, Evaluation and Social Assessment (CRESA). The project has several parts. One group is looking at health issues, while others are looking at employment and labour market issues. The NZCER (New Zealand Council for Educational Research) group's focus is on the educational issues that arise in communities with high levels of mobility.

The research is being carried out in four 'case study' communities: Waitangirua/Cannons Creek in Wellington; Kawerau and Opotiki in the Bay of Plenty; and Amuri (a rural area in North Canterbury). It is hoped that the results of this work will be used by government—particularly the Ministries of Social Development, Education, Health, Labour and Youth Affairs, and Te Puni Kokiri—and community organisations to develop strategies designed to reduce the negative effects of transience on individuals, families and communities.

The NZCER sub-project

The NZCER part of the project involves research in 20 schools across the four 'case-study' communities. They include contributing schools, full primaries, intermediates, secondary schools, area schools and Kura Kaupapa Māori.

We are collecting attendance information, achievement data on Year 5, Year 8 and Year 11 students (in the English medium schools only), interviewing principals and some teachers, and surveying Year 5, Year 8 and Year 11 students.

What do we need from you?

We would like to return to your school in term 3 this year to do the following things:

- Look at your school's **attendance registers** so that we can calculate the percent movement in and out of your school as a whole for the 2005 (and 2004 if this information has not yet been received).
- Look at progress cards so that we can collect information on **individual student mobility rates** of students in Year 5, 8 and 11.
- Collect STAR and PAT maths results for Year 5 and 8 students;
- Survey Year 5, 8 and 11 students about their 'sense of belonging' to school. A questionnaire will be given out by, and handed back to the NZCER researcher and will take about half an hour;
- Interview one teacher of Year 5 or Year 8 or Year 11 students from your school about her/his views of the effects of student mobility;
- Interview you, the principal, about your perception of the effects of student mobility.

What does the school get out of this?

The results of the student survey on their "sense of belonging" to the school will be aggregated and sent to the school. Any patterns that emerge in relation to the aggregated responses of mobile students compared with other students will be identified.

Confidentiality

Neither the school nor any individuals will be identified in any reports that are written.

Any questions?

If there's anything else you'd like to know that we have left out, please contact Ally Bull (contact details at the top of the previous page). She will be happy to answer your questions.

Other information you might like

The wider project has a dedicated website. http://www.whypeoplemove.net.nz/

For details of the NZCER sub project see: http://www.nzcer.org.nz and follow the links to the "student transience" project.

The researchers in the NZCER team are:

Ally Bull Researcher

Dr. Jane Gilbert Chief Researcher and Project Leader

If you agree to continue helping us with this project by allowing us to collect the data described above could you please sign the attached consent form and return it to Ally Bull at NZCER in the reply paid envelope. Thanks for reading this far!

Building Attachment in Families and Communities Affected by Transience and Residential Movement.

NZCER Sub-project.

Consent form for school principals

I have read the information about this project. I understand what is involved for the school and myself and agree to allow this school to continue to be involved in this research project.

Name of school:

Name of principal:

Signature:

Date: