**FOCUS:** Literature Review on Student Transiency

John Auld
Principal
Lawrence Area School

**PURPOSE:** Transiency, its impact on pupils, class dynamics and school functions has been a significant issue for our school.

An analysis of our school roll, 2001 to 2005 showed transiency rates ranging from 25 % to 44% annually, a mean of  35%.

In 2006 we as a school carried out action research in partnership with academics from the Donald Beasley Institute; reviewing practice, improving practice, and moving toward a school-wide approach to reduce issues linked with transience.

Sabbatical leave allowed time to complete a thesis on Transience, a review of literature which broadened my understanding of this 'universal' issue within education.

What follows is the thesis in its entirety. New Zealand statistics would indicate that transience is a significant issue for many schools, their students, staff and communities.

# TRANSIENCY

## Impact On Students
## And Schools

### JOHN AULD

A dissertation submitted to the Dunedin College of
Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Bachelor of Education
COLL 401
Teaching Practice
Literature Review
Tracy Rohan   Tutor

# October 2006

# ABSTRACT

This study reviewed literature on student transience and its consequential impact on students and schools.

Student transience causes concern in many communities, and indeed in many countries because of the perceived or real effect it has on student learning, on schools, families and communities.

Research literature encompassed North America, United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. This provided a westernized perspective from first world nations.

This study looked at the antecedents, potential causes of transience, at processes, effects on school function, as well as consequences, effects on students (Fisher, Matthews, Stafford, Nakagawa and Durante 2002).

This study noted and acknowledged commonalities across research articles; that mobility of families is increasing, that this increase can be linked to political policies, that many mobile families the causal factors are low income and lack of affordable housing. Many families are moving for negative reasons, such as these.

The literature showed that when families move for negative reasons this 'doubly' impacts on students as they have to cope with family issues as well as the challenge of settling in to a new school. The cumulative effect of this for many students is overwhelming, damaging self esteem and ability to engage academically or socially in a new setting.

Having acknowledged the impact on students, the researchers then assessed the impact on schools. According to the research, transiency impacts negatively on schools for a range reasons, testing resource, resolve and ability to meet the needs of all students.

It is clear that in New Zealand schools are obliged to meet the needs of transient students.

The Education Review Office in 'Students at Risk: Barriers to Learning' (1997, p.14), states that to "overcome barriers to student achievement schools need to address learning needs of transient students."

The literature had a strong focus on 'best practice' for schools, in short those practices that would support transient students, families and schools in coping with issues relating to transiency.

Literature revealed the need for support for schools to ensure that 'best practice' was sustainable and successful.

An intention of this literature review is to highlight issues around student transience and through this provide educators and families with a set of strategies that lead to greater success for the student.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# Chapter 1

# Introduction

" 'Nomad students' pose headache for schools" an emotive headline in the Sunday Star Times, 22nd January 2006. Emotive yes, eye catching yes. As an educator many of the article's statements held true for me.

Within my composite school, students who enroll and leave at non standard times, with frequent school changes acknowledged on their E22/19A's cause real professional concern. In truth, we as a school have not always been successful in meeting the individual needs of these students and additionally these students have often been problematic for teachers and existing students in terms of academic gaps and poor social behaviors.

Acknowledged in the Sunday Star Times article were many of these concerns, including disruption of school programs and routines, extra administration time and cost, funding issues, academic gaps, access to support programs and the underlying issue of 'what to do?' to best help transient students.

Also identified in the article was the possible extent of transiency within New Zealand and its significance as an educational issue.

Auckland Primary Principal's Association president Julien Le Sueur is quoted, "Its' [transience] probably one of the most significant negative indicators in children's learning in New Zealand" (Ross, Sunday Star Times 2006).

This article was the prompt for the present project, which provides a review of available and relevant literature.

(Lee, 2000, p.12) states, "Transient children often need a high level of support for learning and behavior difficulties. Unfortunately there is minimal data in New Zealand about what is really happening to these children which has frustrated those attempting to support transient children"

Neighbour (2000) also indicated frustration due to the lack of information available in New Zealand in respect of transient students.

Transience is not a new phenomenon in New Zealand, for in truth we have always been a mobile society relative to; following seasonal work, migration (rural to urban, south to north), upward social mobility, mobility between New Zealand and Australia and immigration from Europe, the Pacific and Asia over time. Current concern about the impact of transience on education outcomes has spawned research and literature.

During the last decade, the Education Review Office, the New Zealand Principals Federation, the New Zealand Education Institute Te Riu Roa, and the New Zealand Council for Educational Research, all significant education stakeholders, have made reference to transience and the need for greater cognizance and action.

The Education Review Office (1997) outlined each school's responsibility to remove barriers to learning created by transience.

The New Zealand Education Institute Te Riu Roa (1999) presented and passed recommendations at its Annual Meeting in order to negotiate support for transient children.

The New Zealand Principals Federation (2001) sponsored a 'Transiency Survey' undertaken by Murray Neighbour.

The New Zealand Council for Educational Research (Hodgen and Wylie, 2002) undertook an 'Analysis Check' of the NZPF survey. Recommendations from this have lead to a more extensive research project: 'Building attachment in families and communities affected by transience and residential movement' (2003 - 2008) a multi agency study. Phase 1 2003 – 2004 'Education Issues for Communities Affected by Transience and Residential Mobility' researched and written by Jane Gilbert has been published.

The amount of available research data and information about transiency in the New Zealand setting is growing. The extent to which this information reflects and correlates with international research and information will be a focus of the literature review.

The literature review will define transience. It will seek answers to; what is a 'transient student'? It will attempt to answer, what is 'school transiency'? It will look at how each of these are measured and how they are recognized by educational authorities. The antecedents (potential causes) of transiency will be examined, as will issues for students (consequences) and schools (processes).

Existing good practice will be examined, and recommendations for the New Zealand setting made.

Implications for schools, for educational authorities and future direction will form the summary.

# Chapter 2

# Literature Review

## 2.1.0   Definitions of Transience

In New Zealand the term most often applied to frequent school movement by students is 'transience'.  Such movement internationally has a variety of labels: 'gypsy', 'nomad', 'highly mobile', 'itinerant', 'parcel children', 'boomerang students', 'homeless', etc.  Most of these labels have negative connotations as does 'transience' in New Zealand, as it is fairly or unfairly associated with disruption to student and school.

 Finding descriptions of transient students is comparatively easy, finding a formal and accepted definition is not.  In Australia the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training and the Department of Defence, 2000, defines a 'mobile student' as "a student who moves more than twice in a three year period" (Sorin and Iloste, 2003, p.1).

The report prepared for the NZEI Te Riu Roa Annual Meeting of 1999 defined transience as "being where a student has attended two or more schools in the previous year" (2.9.1) a less liberal definition than that of DEST & DEF.

Walls (2003, p.2) defines 'highly mobile' students as those who move six or more times in their twelve years of schooling.

Researchers often link transience to students joining or leaving school at non standard times (Neighbour, 2003), or to students whose "schooling is disrupted by frequent changes of school" (Edwards, 1997 cited in Lee, 2000, p.2).

It is important to note that there is no national definition of 'transience' in New Zealand and few if any accepted definitions internationally,

> an area of difficulty…was that in New Zealand there is no
> nationally established definition of a transient child nor levels of
> transience (Lee, 2000, p.56).

'Transient' students are identifiable as being frequent movers whose education is most often disrupted by this process.


## 2.1.1   Transient students

In reviewing definitions of transience, indications of what a transient student is, emerged.  A transient student is one who moves school frequently for family or school-based reasons. What constitutes frequent and therefore transient varies country to country, study to study, there again being no formally accepted rule.

To better understand what a transient student is an explanation of what a 'stable' student is would be helpful.  A stable student is one who makes school transitions at conventional times.  In the New Zealand setting a pupil transitioning from primary to intermediate at the end of Year 6, then to secondary at the end of Year 8 could be considered a 'stable' pupil.  Gilbert's 2005 research provides evidence that principals see stable, settled students as their school's natural cohort and clearly differentiate this group from transient students.  They [principals] see stable students as "…students

who stay at the school for the whole of their schooling at that level" (p.63). Similarly Strand (2000) defined a stable pupil as "a pupil who has attended the same school for the whole of the key stage" (p.8). In this scenario the student would attend three schools. Stable students could also include those whose family has relocated on few, well planned occasions necessitating school change.

Gilbert (2005, p. ix) states

> Schools are organized – and funded – to meet the needs of
> relatively stable cohorts of students who progress through them
> in a relatively predictable way. When this pattern breaks down,
> there are problems.

As already quoted DEST & DEF defines a transient student as one who moves school more than twice in a three year period (Sorin and Iloste, 2003).

NZEI Te Riu Roa 1999 defined a transient student as one who had had two or more schools in the previous year.

Lee (2000, p.26) classed as 'transient'

> "those students who have attended three schools or more in a
> 12 month period, from the first of January in one year to the
> first of January in the following year."

The Transient and Mobile Student network (TAMS) of South Australia defined a transient child as "a student who has transferred two or more times in one year or three or more times in successive years" (Edwards 1995b cited in Lee 2000, p.57).

## 2.1.2 School transience

The extent to which a school is affected by student mobility can be ascribed to its transience rate. Two related calculations can be carried out to ascertain 'roll turnover' and 'school transience'. Neighbour (2002) when conducting a survey on behalf of the New Zealand Principals' Federation used the Dobson/Henthorne formula to calculate 'roll turnover'.

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

This formula produces a roll turnover percentage. Whilst the figure produced is entirely accurate, consideration should be given to students who 'graduate', for instance, Year 6 pupils at contributing schools, Year 8 pupils at intermediate or full primary and school leavers at secondary schools.

Arnerich (2000) as quoted in Lee (2000, p.52) applied the following formula to calculate 'roll turnover', "withdrawals * 100 over the school's roll. A comparison of these two formulas is revealing when applied to 'School One' in Lee's study.

Lee $\dfrac{213 + 67 * 100}{286}$ = 97.9 %

Arnerich $\dfrac{67 * 100}{287}$ = 23.26 %

Given that intermediate schools, the focus of Lee's study, have normal turnover of close to 50% of their students annually, through graduation, the following calculation

should be considered, 97.9 – 50 = 47.9 %, a figure representing non standard 'roll turnover'.  This is still very high and cause for concern.

Hodgen and Wylie (2002, p.3), in an analysis of data contained in Neighbour's 2001 NZPF Transcience Survey, found that across the 820 New Zealand schools surveyed, the average roll turnover was 43.7 %.  This is surely a clear indicator of the mobile nature of twenty first century New Zealand.

Neighbour (2002) proposes a formula for calculating school transience.

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

The data produced from this formula was also reviewed by Hodgen and Wylie (2002, p.3).  Across the 820 schools they found average school transience to be 29.3 %, which is further testimony to New Zealand's high student mobility.

Mobility or transience is an issue for students, families, schools and communities. Roll turnover and school transience in New Zealand, based on the above figures are high.

Mills (1986) as quoted in Lee (2000, p.13) recommends "that the phenomena of transcience be recognized at national level and that policies be developed and implemented."

Fitchett (1998) as quoted in Lee (2000, p.18) states "the needs of transient children needed to feature in a Ministry [of Education] initiative to raise student performance."

Gilbert (2005) further analysed Neighbour's NZPF Survey and compared roll turnover and transience relative to decile rating.

All New Zealand schools have decile rating 1 – 10, which indicate the extent to which the school draws its pupils from low socioeconomic communities. Decile 1 schools have the highest proportion, Decile 10 schools the lowest proportion. In simplest terms 'decile' reflects the school community's relative disadvantage in relation to; household income, skill level of employment, household overcrowding, educational qualifications and reliance on income support. This information is gained through the national census. Decile 1 communities are the most disadvantaged, Decile 10 the least, on a continuum 1 through 10.

From Neighbour's figures Gilbert found that Decile 1 schools had an average roll turnover of 57 %, and average transience of 43 %. Decile 10 schools had an average roll turnover of 36 %, and average transience of 23 %. This link between transience and low income is reinforced by many studies, both in New Zealand and abroad.

Wylie (1999) found the average national rate on non standard movement to be 26 %. In Decile 1 schools the average rate was 39% compared to 15 % in Decile 10 schools, further evidence of the link between low income and transience.

Wylie and Hodgen (2003) calculated non standard movement using Neighbour's school transience formula finding that over 50 % of Decile 1 and 2 schools had transiency rates of 40% or more whereas only 17 % of Decile 10 had transiency at this level.

"Mobile students are frequently from low-income families", (Audette et al,1993), as quoted in Sorin and Iloste (2003, p.1).

"…the incidence of such transiency is disproportionately higher among certain identifiable groups – in particular, low income" Hartman (2003, p. 227). "In California…mobility is clearly related to family income and socioeconomic status" Hartman (2003, p.228). Fisher et al (2002), in a study based in the United States, also links income difficulties and or poverty to transience.

Family mobility and the consequential transiency for school aged children are of concern, world-wide. School transiency rates in New Zealand are very high, a reflection of our increasingly mobile society. There is limited empirical evidence to demonstrate actual increases in mobility over time in New Zealand. Combining both anecdotal and statistical sources, for example increased concern from educators, perceived and actual consequence of government policy and census to census comparative information gives support to the hypothesis of New Zealand becoming an increasingly mobile society.

Dobson, Henthorne and Lynas (2000), measured school roll turnover in the United Kingdom finding average mobility rates to be between, 10 and 20 % for primary

schools and 8 and 12 % for secondary schools based on information from six Local

Education Authorities, as quoted by Gilbert (2005, p.24).  In the United Kingdom

rates of 20 % are considered high, rates of greater than 30 % very high, (Neighbour,

2003, p.2).   When assessing mobility in California, Hartman (2002, p.227) also uses

the same classification.

Given that Neighbour (2002), confirmed by Hogden and Wylie (2002) found an

average roll turnover of 43.7 % in primary and intermediate schools, New Zealand's

rates are extreme when compared to international figures. Mobility and student

transience is clearly an issue that warrants national recognition and inquiry.

Having no universal definition of what a transient student is, or any agreed measure

for school transience rates, has proved a frustration for researchers.  Strand, a

researcher from the United Kingdom (2000), Temple, Reynolds and Miodel,

researchers from the United States (1998), and Lee, a researcher from New Zealand

(2000) all stressed the need for the development of a nationally accepted definition of

transience and a nationally accepted formula to calculate roll turnover.

Lee, (2000, p.64) recommends,

> The addition and amendment of NZEI Te Riu Roa's
> recommendation 3, 1999 to change the criteria for children who
> change schools frequently to be set as children who have moved
> school two or more times in 12 months or three or more times
> within two years and all children who have attended five or more
> schools by the end of year eight.

Formal recognition by educational authorities is needed.

## 2.2.0  Antecedents of Transience

While there are many potential causes of student transience, they can be broadly grouped, those relating to the family, and those that can be attributed to school-related factors.

## 2.2.1  Causes of family mobility

Employment:  Parents relocating to take up a new position or to otherwise seek employment is an understandable cause of mobility (Sorin and Iloste, 2003, Fisher et al, 2002, p.319).

Gilbert (2005, p.17)) found that for Decile 10 schools employment was the reason given for 74 % of moves compared to 43 % in Decile 1schools.  Bearing in mind that researchers have consistently found much higher non standard movement in low decile schools, 39 % in Decile 1 schools compared to 15 % in Decile 10 schools (Wylie and Hodgen 2003), employment, whilst important may not be the single biggest causal factor of family mobility.  This statement is reinforced by Sorin and Ilostes' (2003, p.15) Australian study.

> Not many families…move for conventional reasons, such as transfers with parents' jobs.  Although some families…do relocate to seek employment or changes to housing…three other reasons for mobility feature strongly in this research…family breakdown…children's behaviors…cultural reasons.

Families, moving to follow seasonal work, would seem to be a less significant factor

than for instance housing and family breakdown in New Zealand.  Information in a

Mitchell Research (2004, p.154) article reflects on a sizeable New Zealand city where

school roll turnover is greater than 100 %.

> The city…is not known for its seasonal work opportunities, so
> there must be other motivations for constant shifting in and out.

There are overseas examples of pursuit of employment being the driving force behind

mobility.


For both Gypsy Traveller and Fairground families, in the United Kingdom, mobility

is an entrenched part of their lifestyle and culture.  In pursuit of employment, access

to education for their children has been tenuous and issue bound as families are

"traveling seasonally" or "week by week" (Kiddle, 2000, p.226).


In the United States, "half of rural homeless households are families with children"

and "currently working" mobility is related to poverty, the pursuit of work, and the

desire for a permanent home (Vissing, 1999, p.2).


Low family income and affordable housing:  Recent government policies in New

Zealand and overseas are causal factors of increased family mobility.


Financial policies initiated by the 1984 – 1990 Labour government, the 1991

Employment Contracts Act, the 1991 welfare benefit cuts, and the 1992 move by

Housing New Zealand to market rentals have compounded to adversely affect low

income families, through reduced levels of employment, especially for unskilled labour, and on the availability of affordable housing.

Families are "constantly on the lookout for what they perceive to be better or cheaper rental properties" (Mitchell Research, 2004, p.154).

"Students and families may be forced to relocate following rent increase or eviction", "many families move constantly to take advantage of move-in specials" (Fisher et al, 2002, p.319).

Low family income, fixed family income, twenty-first century marketing and materialism, as well as costly rentals are all recipes for debt, "…escaping from or evading debt" is a causal factor for family mobility (Mitchell Research, 2004, p.154).

Lee, (2000, p.30) acknowledges current trends in New Zealand for low income families towards reduced levels of home ownership. This is combined with increased household overcrowding, and numbers of families moving in with whanau.  These tenuous arrangements are often temporary and disruptive for all parties.  Bearing these realities in mind it seems likely that housing will continue to be a significant causal factor of transience.

Social or family breakdown:  This is also a significant antecedent of transience. Divorce, separation, disharmony, dysfunction, conflict, family violence, abuse, respite, imprisonment, gang related issues, debt, pregnancy, oar a change in caregiver are all acknowledged by researchers as family causes of transience (Lee 2000,

Neighbour 2000, Bruno and Isken 2000, Mitchell Research 2004, Sorin and Iloste 2003, Fisher et al 2002, Swick 1999).

"Changes to the family that might serve as antecedents to mobility include: financial or social difficulties, death, divorce, separation, disharmony or conflict" (Sorin and Iloste, 2003 p.2). Mitchell Research (2004, p.154) makes similar comment "… escaping or evading debt, difficult situations, family violence, or gang relationships, and the breakdown of marital or de facto relationships". Families and their children who move under these negative circumstances are distinctly under pressure. The consequential and cumulative impact on children may be overwhelming.

Some families move out of "the basic instability which leads adults to believe that things will always be better somewhere else" (Gilbert, 2005, p.64), again not a constructive reason for moving and highly likely to have a negative effect on children's schooling.

When families shift relative to upward mobility, for example a better job, or better housing, and where the moves are the result of a conscious choice the effect on children is likely to be more positive. Fisher et al (2002, p.319) however cautions that it still "affects the continuity of a students educational experience."

Cultural obligation: Literature from New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom gives mention to cultural obligation as being an antecedent to transience.

Gilbert (2005, p.319) states,

> Others commented on the tendency for Maori and Pacific
> Island children to be regularly moved around between different
> family members…this is just a normal feature of extended
> family life in Maori and Pacific Island culture.

The obligation to attend tangi and other cultural occasions also impacts on attendance.

"…this research found a number of cultural issues for mobility…within the Indigenous population." Namely, "to visit relatives, attend funerals or to join cultural celebrations", which can mean, "they [Torres Strait Islanders, Thursday Islanders] can be gone for two or three months at a time"   Sorin and Iloste (2003, p.9).

School attendance of Fairground and Gypsy Traveller children is severely tested by cultural expectation as well as regular movement. Parents fear the sedentary nature of school "might contribute to the disintegration of traditional culture", " "I'll let them go to school to learn to read and write, but then they have to learn our way of life" (Kiddle, 2000, p.262).  In pursuing a nomadic lifestyle continuity of learning and school attendance are severely affected for their children.

Schools however also need to acknowledge and have practices that reflect the culture of their students.  Within New Zealand schools are obliged to recognize and value both Maori and Pacific Island cultures.  It would fair to state that there is considerable variance in the way schools do this.  Most New Zealand schools work to engage their communities and endeavour to reflect the cultures therein.  Some embrace language and culture.  Others go further and invest in professional development around pedagogy that best suits their students learning styles, for instance a focus on cooperative learning which is acknowledged to be effective with Maori students.

The 'school' also needs to understand culture and cultural obligation. Demands on families and students may interrupt schooling, for instance obligation to attend cultural events as acknowledged by Sorin and Iloste (2003, p.9). Similarly within New Zealand Maori students may be required to attend tangi and/or other events of significance. In England Gypsy Traveller students are obliged to move with their family, following well established traditions. Schools need to demonstrate a cultural understanding and work with families to minimize impact on learning continuity.

"A denial of heritage, hiding the cultural differences between home and school, is no base from which a partnership can grow" (Kiddle, 2000, p.273). A poignant message that might equally apply to all educators in terms of the need to better understand and work with children and families of different culture. It reflects the opinion expressed by Bishop and Glynn (1999) with regard to recognition of the importance of Maori culture and self determination, by New Zealand educators (Lee, 2000, p.9).

### 2.2.2 School based antecedents

Often students move school without moving residence. Kerbow (1996) found "that 40 % of primary school students who changed school did not change residences." Whelage and Rutter (1986) state that, "schools are at least partly responsible for high student turnover" (Rumberger and Larson 1998 cited in Sorin and Iloste, 2003, p.2).

A variety of school-based factors exist that lead to students moving schools. These include bullying, friendships, institutional dislike of transient students, difficulty with a teacher, misbehavior, discipline, impending disciplinary procedures, expulsion or

exclusion, difficulties engaging with curricula, academic issues, difficulties with social adaptability, cultural mismatch and/or general dissatisfaction with the school (Sorin and Iloste, 2003, Gilbert, 2005, Lee, 2000, Mitchell Research, 2004, Kiddle, 2000, Sanderson, 2003, Fisher et al, 2002).

Schools need to acknowledge these issues and adopt appropriate policy and practice to encourage students to stay put.

Antecedents, potential causes of transiency, both family and school-based require mitigation to reverse trends of increased student mobility.

## 2.3.0    Issues for schools

Literature shows that transiency impacts negatively on school processes and the way in which schools function, in many ways.

"…student mobility is generally detrimental both to students and to the schools they attend" (Rumberger and Larson 1998, as quoted in Sorin and Iloste, 2003, p.3).

High mobility has, over time, a cumulative affect on schools. "Over the course of four years, overall school stability can fall to under 50 %" (Hartman, 2003, p.227).  The school's and community's stable base and social capital will have changed dramatically having a negative impact on school functioning.

## 2.3.1    Impact on stable cohort

"A high level of transient children within a school was found to negatively impact on the stable children's academic and social progress" (Lee, 2000, p.5).

Reasons for this occurring are well documented. Neighbour 2003, notes that when an influx of transient students necessitates midyear class restructuring, learning programs are disrupted, impacting on the learning of stable children. "This [transience] impacts on their [stable children] instructional continuity as well as the school culture/climate" (p.2).

Sorin and Iloste (2003, pp.11-12) state that when restructuring occurred students had to "…redefine friendship groups and change group dynamics," and that "…newcomers…sometimes disrupt existing class dynamics" producing a situation in which students grieve for "lost" friends.

A cumulative effect of this is a growing reluctance of the stable cohort to form friendships with newcomers. These traits are combined with wariness and resistance which is in no way helpful to any party. The school is viewed as unfriendly by newcomers. Gaps are often broadened by the reaction and poor social behaviours of the newcomer and as they become marginalized they often bond with other less accepted students. Sorin and Iloste (2003, p.3) comment

> Peer acceptance ratings of these students are decidedly lower
> than their non-mobile peers. Children feel socially isolated and
> consequentially take-up with other marginal students who may
> be involved in anti-social behavior.

Lee (2000, p.5) acknowledges Fitchett (1997) who found "constant inflow and outflow is disruptive to classes and the whole school" and that transient students had a "negative influence on the learning and behavior within the school."

Hartman (2002, p.229) indicates that transient students moving to and from schools are "particularly disruptive for non mobile students."

### 2.3.2 Impact on classroom programs

As teachers spend time settling new students in to class routines, and expected classroom behaviors and norms, the continuity of lessons is often disrupted and slowed. "…instructional time is lost settling the child in, reviewing rules, routines and procedures" (Lee, 2000, p.8).

This belief is supported by Neighbour (2003, p.2) who notes that "This impacts on…instructional continuity." Similarly, Fisher et al (2002, p.319) states "Consistent teaching approaches are disrupted when teachers must accommodate new pupils." Sorin and Iloste (2003, p.4) also concur "Effects [of mobility] include disruption to teaching."

The frustration of this is felt by all parties, including the recently arrived child, the stable cohort and the teacher.

### 2.3.3   Impact on teacher

The added workload of settling-in, and assessing and planning to meet the needs of transient students, falls with the classroom teacher.  As well as academic considerations they also have to deal with the behavioral and social issues that may accompany the new student.

Neighbour (2003, p.2) acknowledges the extra time needed for planning, preparation and revision, as well as the need for extra support and the disruption to class programs. These can "…impact on teacher morale."

Extra work, dedication and input from the teacher often lead to transient students progressing academically and emotionally.  The child may then move schools again and "rob the teacher of psychological rewards" again impacting on teacher morale (Lee, 2000, p.19).

Of concern also is that in attending to the needs of mobile students, "teachers' time was being taken away from other students" (Sorin and Iloste, 2003, p.11).  This sentiment is mirrored by Sanderson (2003, p.603) who comments that "the influx of newcomers affected routines…and took time away from other students."

Sorin and Iloste (2003) indicate that teacher effectiveness, creativity and innovation are affected by time devoted to the review and orientation needed by mobile students. Staff may become less caring, and teachers may become frustrated and cynical.  The

impact of transiency on class teachers should not be underestimated. They are, after

all, the professional working with students everyday.

### 2.3.4 Impact on school administration

School administrators, and personnel from the school office, are also challenged by

student transiency. For example transfer of records to and from, attendance, record

keeping, enrolment and communication with parents are tasks that this group

undertake.

Delays in receiving student information, the quality of information received and often

enough the total absence of information, all impact on the recipient school. Lack of

an efficient system to facilitate transfer of student data is a world-wide issue.

Fisher et al (2002, p.320) acknowledges these issues.

> The inefficient system of acquiring school data leads to
> ineffective assessment and placement. There is no uniform,
> nationally used record-keeping system.

Sorin and Iloste (2003, p.4) make a comprehensive statement on this issue.

> Records of attendance, enrolment, assessment and placement
> become more difficult to maintain, both within the classroom
> and by school administration. This can potentially hamper
> administrators' efforts to build a stable sense…of community
> within the school.

Neighbour (2003, p.2) noted that

> Transience is an additional cost to the school in administration
> time, processing enrolments, departures, contacting other
> schools and agencies.

Attendance is also an issue that places pressure on the school office.  Hartman (2002, p.231) notes "Schools' failure to track students who leave and to transfer records promptly doubtless is one important factor affecting attendance."  Hartman also noted that average attendance for a non mobile student was 94 % compared to 84 % for students who had had three or more moves.

Long and unexplained delays in enrolment are not unusual in New Zealand.  When a child moves school there is a delay of twenty school days before notification is made to the Non-enrolment Truancy Service (NETS).  Students "become lost to the education system" (Lee, 2000, p.9).

### 2.3.5   Impact on school resources

Schools in New Zealand are funded on the basis of a stable cohort.  Use of money and personnel is budgeted carefully year to year.  Transient students do not fit this plan and therefore place a burden on the school. "Schools are organized – and funded – to meet the needs of relatively stable cohorts" (Gilbert, 2005, p.ix).

Schools allocate places on remedial programs, for instance, Reading Recovery, and decide on how Special Education Grants (SEG) are to be spent.  They allocate personnel, including teacher and teacher-aide to those classes, groups or individuals who warrant support for remediation or extension.  Transient students challenge this

allocation through need for assessment and placement on programs. According to Lee (2005, p.18) transient students "…need a great deal of extra support for their learning". She also states that "…schools have to commit more teacher-aide and counseling time to these students" (Lee, 2005, p.18). Neighbour (2000, p.2) concurs with these views and further states …"They [transient students] are an additional cost to the school in books, teaching materials and resources." Schools often support these students by meeting costs of stationery and uniforms. Library books and texts are often lost when students depart.

Sorin and Iloste (2003, p.11) also found that mobile students put a strain on monetary resources and on the schools ability to predict, select and allocate places in remedial programs. They however noted that 'time' was the school resource most pressured by transiency. This refers to the time needed for extra work in the school office, extra work carried out by the teacher in assessment, placement, developing individual programs as well as extra time given by the teacher when dealing with disruption to class dynamics.

Time, pressure on finite resources, the unpredictable nature of transience and the inflexibility of funding are of considerable concern to New Zealand schools.

### 2.3.6   Impact on school culture

According to Mitchell Research (2004, p.155)

> The caring, respectful climate the school has been building and nurturing for its students…can be turned upside down by the arrival of…students from elsewhere.

While this is an extreme example, the negative impact on school culture due to transiency is real.  It takes time to form attachment, and commitment to a school's culture.  Neighbour (2003, p.2) also acknowledges the negative impact on school culture and climate of transiency.  It should however be noted that school culture should be such that it welcomes and accepts newcomers.  ERO emphasized the critical importance of a school's culture to assist the transient student to settle in (Schooling in the Far North, 1998).

### 2.3.7    Impact on school results

Sorin and Iloste found that "schools with higher rates of mobility tend to achieve lower on standardized tests" (2003, p.4).  They felt that schools with higher rates of transiency had lower overall school achievement, a fact reinforced by classroom teachers in their study.

Fisher et al (2002, p.320) found average achievement scores to be dramatically lower in schools with high mobility.  Lee (2005, p.19) found that New Zealand principals believed mobile students lowered performance of year groups.

All schools are held responsible for the results of students as individuals or as a collective.  Principals in Gilbert's 2005 study saw transient children as a "nuisance", and as "interlopers who disturb a school's equilibrium" and "disrupt a school's ability to fairly monitor its progress." (p.76)

### 2.3.8   Impact on home school partnership

While not the focus of research questions and therefore not backed by data Lee (2005) questions a highly mobile school's and community's ability to build social capital.  The 2003 NZCER Survey did look at the relationship between high levels of student movement and a school's ability to engage its parents.  While there was little impact on day to day events and activities there was an impact on long-term activities such as parent commitment to be involved with the Board of Trustees, or Parent Teacher Association (Gilbert, 2005, p.15).

Lee (2000) indicated that high roll turnover can make consultation with parents difficult as well as a challenge to the home school partnership.  Sorin and Iloste note that the challenge to the home school partnership can be as simple as the school's inability to contact the parent, "as they may not have a phone, nor contact details" (2003, p.12).

### 2.4.0   Issues for students

Unplanned, non standard family and/or student moves are often associated with negative contributing factors, for instance a disintegration of the family unit. Such moves impact negatively on the majority of transient students in terms of academic success, behavioral outcomes, and social and emotional well being.

### 2.4.1   Impact on academic performance

Hartman (2004, p.229) stated that

> …the long-term effects of high mobility include lower
> achievement levels and slower academic pacing, culminating in a
> reduced likelihood of high school completion.

His review of American research found transiency linked with an "increased risk of
failing a grade" (p.231).  Interestingly, he cited a Chicago study that found "even
after controlling for socio-economic status, mobile students on average have lower
student achievement scores than their stable counterparts" (p.231).  This is interesting
because many researchers struggle to disentangle the effect transiency has on
academic performance from the effect other aspects of the students background might
have, for instance, low income, or inadequate housing, family dysfunction.   Hartman
also found that "Students who changed high schools at least twice were more than 30
% less likely to graduate than stable students" (p.231).

Kiddle (2000) found that, despite significant interventions, highly mobile students
from Fairground and Gypsy Traveller families only 5 % were still at school at age
sixteen.  This was attributed to cultural perception and expectation that "…takes pride
in self-employment, [therefore] paper qualifications have little relevance" (p.268).
Mobility impacted on the academic performance of Fairground and Gypsy Traveller
children across all ages due to irregular and broken attendance.

> This break in continuity meant that inevitably the children
> returned to their winter base schools each year further behind
> their peer groups in academic terms (p.269).

Sorin and Iloste (2003, p.1) found that,

> Student mobility can adversely affect children's success in school, leading to lower levels of engagement and reduced chance of high school completion.

In reviewing other literature they found that student achievement, such as scores on achievement tests, grade-level reading scores, literacy and numeracy performance were all negatively affected by transiency. Students struggled with new procedure, new instructional practices and a different pace at their new school (p.3). Their research in Cairns noted that transient students had "gaps in their skills and knowledge" and that mid-year moves stymie learning with students becoming "disenfranchised" (p.9). In their conclusion they find that "there are a great many negative affects [of transiency] that impede upon learning and socialization" (p.15).

Fisher et al (2002) found likewise that, "many mobile students are at increased risk for negative social and academic consequences" (p.320). High mobility impacts to such an extent that "By the time students reached fourth grade, curriculum was often one grade behind that at schools with low mobility" (p.320).

Sanderson (2003, p.602) found that,

> high mobility students, defined as students who had moved three or more times before the fifth grade, are disengaged from their learning.

Such students "have an unsteady foundation and weak basic skills…[as well as] educational gaps in learning" (p.602).

Walls (2003, p.2) comments are similar,

The academic consequences of high mobility are severe. It may take four to six months for mobile students to recover academically from a transfer. They are half as likely to graduate from high school as their non-mobile peers.

New Zealand researcher Murray Neighbour (2003) states "The [transient] children were generally behind their peers academically" (p.1). In his 2002 (p.2) publication he quoted Crisswell (1998),

They [transient students] are two times more likely to score lower on a standardized test, three times more likely to be placed on a special education program, four times more likely to drop out of school and nine times more likely to repeat a grade [than non mobile students]".

Lee (2000) indicated that "Transience…contributed to delayed academic and social development" (p.5). She quoted Bruno and Isken (1996) who found a "nearly uniform negative impact of student transience on academic attainment, with the most negative effects occurring in the early years" (p.5). This statement is of significance as it has been found that families are most mobile when their children are at primary school.

Unlike other researchers Gilbert (2005) found few differences when comparing academic achievement of transient and stable students. She did acknowledge the limitations of a small sample and the difficulty of 'disentangling' transience from other factors that influence educational attainment (p.viii).

Literature and research findings overwhelmingly point to the fact that high mobility negatively impacts on student academic performance.

**2.4.2  Impact on behavior and social and emotional well-being**


Given positive circumstances for mobility, for example relocating for a better job or house it is still a challenge for students to make new friends, adapt to a new school environment and flourish.  Given however the negative circumstances which surround the majority of family movements the barriers and risks for students are more substantial and as often as not the child does not flourish in their new school.


Swick (1999) sees mobility as a challenge to Maslow's (1968) concepts of "the basic needs of love, security and trust essential to the growth of healthy persons" (p.195). The need for friends and participation in social activities, the need for a peer group, as well as the need for a warm and nurturing classroom are challenged by mobility which limits a child's ability to form attachments.


Hartman (2004) links mobility with a decrease in social attachment.  He sees mobile students as being "subject to social and emotional stress caused by disruption in their relationships with classmates and teachers" (p.232).


Sorin and Iloste (2003) noted the affect mobility has on behavior and social interactions.  They quoted Field's 1995 Queensland study which found 70 % of highly mobile ten to fifteen year olds "had experienced significant social and school adjustment problems" (p.3).  Peer acceptance of these students is low.  The social isolation this created often lead to friendships with other marginalized, poorly functioning students, escalating the presenting issues.  In their own study feedback from teachers often mentioned behavioral issues, disengagement and disruption of

friendships.  Teachers acknowledged some positives; moving away from 'bad' friends, making a new start, and the building of resilience and independence (p.10). Neighbour (2002, p.3) also acknowledges circumstance in which transience can be positive, especially "where the needs of a child can be better met at a different school".

Fisher et al (2002) notes the negative consequences of mobility.  "Mobile students have often missed the opportunity to initially bond with teachers, [and] classmates" and "…will not have the benefit of any formal orientation regarding the school's expectation for their conduct" (p.320).   Findings from their study highlight the need for personal development for mobile students especially in terms of enhancing social skills in order for students and classrooms to function better (pp.327-328).

Vissing (1999) outlines very serious issues for homeless children and youth "…most homeless students will develop physical, behavioral and emotional problems" (p.3).

Mitchell Research (2004, p.154) states that,

> …the transient child is in a state of constant transition, always vulnerable…always having to establish new relationships with teachers and peers.

Neighbour (2002, p.2) acknowledges that transient children, "…often suffer psychologically, socially and academically.  They often experience difficulties making friends and fitting in socially".  For these children "low self esteem is common" and they are "often disruptive and withdrawn" (p.2).

In Lee's 2000 study principals of Decile 1 schools voiced concern about "transient children manifesting behavioral problems and the difficulties such children have in…settling and making new friends, to the difficulty of fostering the inclusion of such children" (p.130).

In Gilbert's 2005 study, responses from principals included these concerns.  Students are often relocated with "no regard to their educational and emotional security" (p.65).  After an influx of transient students "the school suddenly had major behavioral issues" (p.66).  Once, a child is behind in their studies "this impacts on the child's behavior" (p.67).   Principals also felt that "children need a strong, long-term attachment to a school 'family' if they are to benefit from going to school" (p.72).

Transiency impacts on schools and their processes.  It impacts on students in terms of academic, social and emotional development.  It impacts on communities, their stability and social capital.  These impacts are most often negative and universally undesirable.

What strategies can reduce transiency and its negative impact?

**2.5.0   Examples of good practice**

Despite limited research, literature, recognition and resources, many schools, school districts and educators have initiated practices aimed at reducing transiency and at limiting its negative effects in order to promote greater success for mobile students.

### 2.5.1 Local body initiatives

There are examples of local government and education district initiatives which seek to limit and reduce transiency.

Hartman (2004) reflects on local initiatives. The "One Child, One School, One Year" policy adopted in Houston provides a free bus service to allow students to stay at their 'home' school after their family has shifted house. The "Staying Put" program in Chicago is "designed to make educators and parents aware of the damaging academic and social consequences of student mobility" (p.234).

McGilvra (2000) acknowledges Florida's use of 'Parent Educators' who work to implement numerous practical strategies, a key one being "Stress the importance [to parents] of educational continuity" (p.7).

Within the United States there is recognition at least that, housing and welfare policies should seek to reduce family mobility. In urging authorities to be proactive Hartman (2004) states "Local public housing authorities should be made aware of the impact of forced displacement on children's education" (p.236). He goes on to suggest … "In the area of welfare reform, greater awareness of and attention to the classroom turnover problem are warranted" (p.237).

### 2.5.2   Special support teams

There are examples of specialist teams working with mobile students to promote improved outcomes.

Kiddle (2000) describes United Kingdom's Traveller Education Support Services (TESS's) funded by central government and Local Education Authorities (LEA's). TESS work with Gypsy Traveller and Fairground families.  These very mobile groups have in the past been denied fair access to education.  TESS teams help bridge the cultural divide, between school and family.  They help promote attendance, and help schools shape programs.  They provide assessment data, support classroom teachers, and support families and students.  They provide individualized distance education, to best support students who may change schools as frequently as week by week, through continuity of instruction.  The success of this program is acknowledged at primary school level.  Strong cultural beliefs currently curtail secondary success.

South Australia sponsors a Transient and Mobile Students network (TAM's) to track and support mobile students, their families and their schools.

Education districts in the United States, to a greater or lesser degree, 'employ' Parent Educators to work with mobile students and their families. Their role often reaches outside the bounds of education as they help families deal with homelessness and poverty.

In New Zealand children and families are supported by Group Special Education (GSE), Resource Teachers of Learning and Behavior and Truancy Services (RTLB). In reality these are generic services that have a broad focus and do not attend to the specific issues of transiency.

### 2.5.3    Record Keeping and prompt transfer of information

A frustration for schools and teachers of transient students is the delay in receiving and often the inadequacy of information about their recently arrived student. Most often there is no consistent policy or practice within and between schools with regard to record keeping and transfer of student information.

Schools need to review policies, procedures and practices around record keeping, and the receipt of and forwarding of school records.  Identifying personnel to undertake these tasks is a very simple first step.  To ensure consistency of student information and data decisions around format, and standardized assessment should also be acknowledged in policy.  The need for a centralized data base and electronic transmission of student data is key recommendation from research (Fisher et al, 2002, Sorin and Iloste, 2003, Neighbour, 2000, Lee, 2000).

Thorough and timely assessment of transient students is also a priority.  Literature suggests the use of SENCO (Neighbour, 2003), as well as full time curriculum resource teachers (Fisher et al, 2002) and extra time for classroom teachers (Sorin and Iloste, 2003).  Consistency of testing and uniformity of assessment information is the key to having and being able to pass on useful student data.  The data should enable

accurate placement of the student and enable teachers to provide a program that meets

individual needs.

The Ministry of Education has initiated two key projects. The 'Student Management

System' project (SMS) and 'Enrol'. These projects are based around standardized

electronic storage, transmission and access to student information. Achievement

information should be available in a more timely and user friendly way. These

projects are still in their formative stages.

### 2.5.4    School and classroom based initiatives

Out of necessity many schools and teachers therein have initiated practices to help

reduce issues that accompany transience. A number of these initiatives are based

around welcoming system for families and students. Fisher et al (2002, p.329) state,

> …making parents feel welcome at school is essential. It was
> common practice to greet parents with a smile, and to treat them
> informally yet respectfully.

They commented (p.329), that these practices were noted and appreciated by
parents,

> Parents have indicated that the caring, supportive and
> nonjudgmental interaction with our staff have helped them
> remain involved with our school.

Swick (1999) acknowledges the formalized way some schools welcome and give

support to parents through assigning a parent educator, assigning a liaison teacher,

helping the family access services and providing the child with peer helper (p.196).

Sorin and Iloste (2003) stress the importance of staff being welcoming to and getting to know families. Involving parents in extra curricula activities, parent teacher evenings and familiarizing families with school and community, are good practices. "Other strategies included buddy systems and continued support for the child" (Sorin and Iloste, 2003, p.12).

A practice consistently mentioned in literature is "the establishment of a 'buddy system', to assist the child to establish friendships easily and dissipate bullies" (Lee, 2000, p.61). The buddy helps orientate (Fisher et al, 2002) or induct ((Neighbour, 2003) the new student "to classroom rules and procedures, as well as to school facilities and resources" (Fisher et al, 2002, p.321).

Other acknowledged classroom strategies include, adapting curriculum especially 'chunking' "into smaller, more manageable pieces", as well as recognition of and accommodation of, gaps in learning that transient students often have (Sanderson, 2003, p.604).

Neighbour (2003) suggests having streamed or multi-level classes in which remediation can occur more easily. This is reinforced by Swick (1999) who places value on the family learning atmosphere promoted by the vertical grouping that can take place in multi-level classes.

Fisher et al (2002) and Sanderson (2003) note the value of cooperative learning. Sorin and Iloste (2003) make mention of using 'group inclusive activities' to support the acceptance of transient students.

Collaboration between teachers, sharing of information, shared planning, creation of Individual Education Plans, and sharing of best practice are additional strategies advocated by researchers.

Fisher et al (2002) acknowledges the importance of developing the social skills, self esteem and interpersonal skills, of transient students in order to help build more positive student to student, and student to teacher relationships. Involving students in extra curricula activities, for example after school clubs, and sport teams, combined with cooperative learning in class are suggested strategies.

High expectations for academic achievement, clear expectations about behavior, development of caring relationships, teacher empathy and interest are also considered pivotal to enhancing success for transient students.

### 2.5.5 Other initiatives

Fisher et al (2002) found schools providing much more than education to the extent that schools were viewed as the 'community hub'.

> We offer medical assistance, legal advice, family counseling, and maintain a food and clothing bank. Such comprehensive services helped families address the consequences of mobility as well as providing them with resources that could allow them to become more stable (p.329).

The net impact of this approach might encourage families to stay put thus helping the continuity of instruction for their children. Helping families link with support agencies is also a role schools can play (Swick, 1999, McGilvra, 2000, Lee, 2000). Provision of free transport in order to avoid moving school at a non standard time is also advocated (Neighbour, 2003, Sorin and Iloste, 2003, Hartman, 2004). Having stationery and uniforms available at no cost demonstrates empathy with the family as it overcomes barriers surrounding perceived difference for the transient student (Neighbour, 2003, Fisher et al, 2002, McGilvra, 2000).

Before school and after school care is advocated to help parents in their employment goals. OSCAR programs go some way to meeting this need in New Zealand. Fisher et al (2002) acknowledges schools in the United States providing similar services.

Home school liaison officers are advocated in Sorin and Iloste, 2003 (p.14). These are not to be perceived as truancy officials. Their job is similar to the role played by Parent Educators as mentioned in Swick, 1999 (p.196), McGilvra, 2000 (p.5). Working with the family to overcome a myriad of issues is a proactive step in facilitating the likelihood of improved outcomes for children. A holistic approach is likely to work best for students, their families, schools and their communities.

# Chapter 3

# Discussion and Conclusions

**3.1.0   Discussion**

Transiency, its negative effect on students, schools and indeed communities is acknowledged by researchers and educators alike, in New Zealand, Australia, North America and Europe.  In spite of the vastly different settings in which the different researcher based their studies, commonalities and universal findings are the norm.

For example Sorin and Iloste's Cairns based research, Kiddle's United Kingdom based research, Hartman's North American based research, Gilbert's New Zealand based research all noted the need for culturally appropriate school and classroom practices.  These were necessary in order to best meet the needs of transient students from minority cultures.

Antecedents are universal, be they community, family or school based.  The impact on students, transient or stable, is universal.  The impact on the school, its' culture, image and operations is universal.  The impact on home/school/community relationships is universal.

Researchers acknowledge the barriers to learning that, transiency creates.  None however allowed transiency to be used as an excuse.  All researchers acknowledge or otherwise advocate positive and proactive approaches to overcoming challenge. While many practices can be found 'world-wide' they are generally the result of educators sponsoring innovation in response to local needs rather than a nation-wide

initiative. This development in isolation is of concern when one considers that transience impacts on all schools. Researchers and the educators they interviewed all recognize the urgent need for intervention at a national level. Teachers for instance want professional development on strategies that help build an inclusive classroom culture. Administrators want systems that enhance prompt transfer of relevant student data. Schools want to adopt enrolment and classroom entry procedures that help students fit into their new school.

The pressing need is for a national initiative.

### 3.1.1    Recognition, research and funding

Transiency is an issue that warrants intervention. There are barriers to effective intervention none more important or more obvious than; 'recognition', 'research' and 'funding'.

Recognition: There is an urgent need for 'Transiency' to be recognized in government policy, and in the policies of its departments, especially the Ministry of Education. As part of this there needs to be recognition of the impact some government policies have had in terms of escalating transiency (Hartman, 2004, Lee, 2000). Out of this recognition, a nationally accepted formulae for identifying and qualifying what is a 'transient student' and what is 'school transience' needs to be established (NZEI, 1999, Lee, 2000).

Recommendation: Transiency and issues around this require recognition by government agencies and should be evidenced in their strategic planning. Central

government should reflect on housing and/or economic policies that have sponsored a dramatic increase in family mobility.

Current projects sponsored by government such as 'Enrol' provide some hope of proactive intervention by the government and its agencies. Electronic systems need to be further developed within schools and nationally for storage and transfer of student data.

Research: There are many aspects of 'Transiency' that need investigation and research. NZEI (1999) acknowledge that… "There should be an independent research program." Neighbour (2003) indicates that research; into 'strategies' for schools' and 'best practice' is needed. Research into long-term effects is needed, for instance, is transience generational? Research seeking the perspectives of transient children and their caregivers, as carried in the United Kingdom by Kiddle (2000) is needed in New Zealand. Research, into strategies that assist children 'fitting-in', is needed (Lee, 2000). Hartman (2004) states that the "extensive literature on problems with the country's [United States] education system, along with the many proposed and needed reforms, has paid too little attention to the issue of transiency or high classroom turnover" (p.227). Comprehensive multi-disciplinary research within New Zealand is being undertaken. 'Building attachment in families and communities affected by transience and residential movement' is a project that aims to "investigate the causes of high levels of mobility and the impacts it has on individuals, on families, and on communities" (Gilbert, 2005, p.89). Gilbert's 2005 study represents Stage 1 of this project.

Recommendation:  Research should be focused on helping schools identify and adopt best practice.  Schools need to be able to develop policy and procedure that reflect these areas of good practice, in order to reduce the negative effects of transiency.  Schools need to foster and demonstrate belief in high expectation.  Teachers and support staff need professional development around strategies to engage with transient students and their families.  Fisher et al (2003, p.331) feel that professional development could encompass,

> …knowledge of curricula…flexible instructional strategies, multiple methods of assessing student's learning needs, and the unique challenges facing mobile families.

Funding:  Funding issues need investigation.  In simple terms school funding in New Zealand is formula driven based on roll numbers at March 1 and July1 of any given year.  Transient students arriving at non standard times are often missed in these roll counts and are therefore expensive for schools.  To accommodate their sudden appearance some degree of flexible funding should be considered.

NZEI (1999) advocated for a monetary grant to be attached to transient students relative to their learning needs.  Funding of $1250 per term for two terms was sought to meet teacher-aide and or other support costs.  Transient students often need extra learning support and often require much pastoral care.  Specialist teacher time, teacher-aide time and counseling time are expensive.  Schools with high transiency are currently significantly disadvantaged.

In terms of funding and resourcing a New Zealand comparative can be made with provisions for ESOL, English for Speakers of Other Languages.  ESOL is well

funded and supported by the Ministry of Education.  Schools can access funding to support individual students.  ESOL is supported by many resources.  Learning Media publishes 'Many Voices', a journal that is a rich supply; of research information, of examples of best classroom practice, of available professional development and resource, and of celebration of success.  'TKI', 'Minedu', and 'Leadspace' websites have dedicated 'pages' which offer considerable information and support to ESOL.

ESOL has a high profile.

In contrast there is no formal support for "Transiency', scant reference on official websites and little recognition of it in Ministry of Education literature or policy.  There is no ERO handbook on 'Transiency'.

Recommendation: Consideration should be given to developing teams to help students, their families and schools affected by transiency.  RTLB services might provide a suitable model.  Projects like Strengthening Education in Mangere and Otara (SEMO) may be an appropriate vehicle on which to model research and proactive intervention.  For this to happen government monies would have to be forthcoming to fund schools directly and to fund the establishment of regional agencies to provide schools and families with specialist assistance.

These measures will help reduce school-related antecedents to transiency.  Schools and educators need to be better equipped to best meet the needs of transient students.  Feeling comfortable, welcome and supported within a school environment is likely to reduce school-based antecedents to changing school.  Antecedents around bullying

and cultural mismatch could be greatly reduced. Learning related antecedents to changing schools could also be addressed and reduced.

A cynic might comment that 'Transiency' carries no political or economic clout and therefore has been largely ignored. Cynicism aside there is an immediate need for advocacy to promote recognition, to encourage research and gain needed funding.

### 3.1.2 Summary

It is clear that transiency has a significant negative affect on children, on schools, on families and on communities. New Zealand is a mobile society. With average national school roll turnover at 43.7 %, and average rate of non standard movement at 26 % (Hodgen and Wylie, 2002) this is indeed a matter for urgent attention.

Transient students are behind their peers academically. They often manifest poor behaviors and often lack essential social skills. They battle with home, and school issues. Their learning is disrupted. They impact negatively on their peers at school. They are powerless to change their circumstances and their outcomes.

Hartman (2004) states "there is a clear need for recognition of the problem of transiency: its magnitude, incidence, causes and results" (p.228).

If we are as a nation determined to help reduce issues associated with transiency, recognition, research and funding are needed.

"I believe that in New Zealand, through no fault of theirs transient children are not receiving the support they receive in other countries" (Neighbour, 2002, p.1)

"Schools need is support in finding solutions to the problem of transient children – they cannot do it alone, this is more than a school problem and it must be tackled now (Neighbour, 2003, p.3).

# References

Bishop, R. & Glynn, T. (1999). *Culture Counts: Changing power relations in*

    *education.* Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.

Education Review Office. (1997). Students at Risk: Barriers to Learning. *Education*

    *Evaluation Report.* Wellington: Author.

Education Review Office. (1998 August). Schooling in the far north. *Education*

    *Evaluation Report.* Wellington: Author.

Fisher, T.A., Matthews, L., Stafford, M.E., Nakagawa, K., Durante, K. (2002).

    School Personnel's Perceptions of Effective Programs for Working with Mobile

Students and Families.  *The Elementary School Journal:* 102 (4), 317-333.

    Chicago: The University of Chicago.

Gilbert, J. (2005). *Educational Issues for Communities Affected by Transience and*

    *Residential Mobility.* Wellington: New Zealand Council For Educational

    Research.

Hartman, C. (2004). High Classroom Turnover: How Children Get Left Behind.

    *Citizens' Commission on Human Rights, Part Two: Discriminatory Practices in*

    *Education* (pp.227-244)

Hodgen, E., & Wylie, C. (2002). *NZPF 2001 Transiency Survey: NZCER analysis*

    *check.* Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.

Kiddle, C. (2000). Partnerships depend on power sharing: an exploration of the

    relationship between Fairground and Gypsy Traveller parents and children's

    teachers in England. *International Journal of Educational research:* 33, 265 –

    274. London: Pergamon.

Lee, A. (2000). *Transient children: perceptions of how often transient children come and go.* Unpublished BSocSc dissertation, Auckland College of Education. Available at www.nzei.org.nz

McGilvra, B. (2000). *The Culture of Migrancy.* ED 469 141. Washington: U.S. Department of Education.

Mitchell Research (2004). 5.15 Transience. *Tamariki and Rangitahi with Severe Behaviour Difficulties.* 154 -155

New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI) Te Riu Roa (1999). *Special education report: - a way forward: report to the annual meeting of NZEI 1999.*Wellington: Author.

Neighbour, M. (2000). *Developing an understanding of transient pupils.* Whangerei: Te Tai Tokerau Education Centre.

Neighbour, M. (2002). *A World Wide Problem To Be Faced By Educators And Those Who Hold The Purse.* Available at www.nzpf.ac.nz

Neighbour, M. (2003). Transient children: what works best? *New Zealand Principal.* Available at www.nzpf.ac.nz

Neighbour, M. (2003). *Transience 4 Recommendations for New Zealand Educators.* Available at www.nzpf.ac.nz

Ross, T. (2006, January 22). 'Nomad students' pose headache for schools. *Sunday Star Times*

Sanderson, D.R. (2003). Engaging Highly Transient Students. *Education:* 123 (3), pp. 600 – 605. Pro Quest Education Journals.

Sorin, Dr. R., Iloste, R. (2003). *Student mobility – reasons, consequences and interventions.* Unpublished dissertation, James Cook University, Education Queensland.

Strand, S. (2000) *Pupil mobility, attainment and progress during key stage 1: A case study in caution.* A paper presented at the BERA Annual Conference Cardiff University, September 7-10, 2000.

Swick, K.J. (1999). Empowering homeless and transient children/families: An ecological framework for early childhood teachers. *Early Childhood Education Journal,* 26 (3), 195 -201

Vissing, Y.M. (1999). *Homeless Children: Addressing the Challenge in Rural Schools.* ED425046. Washington: U.S. Department of Education.

Walls, C.A. (2003). *Providing Highly Mobile Students with an Effective Education.* ED482918. Washington: U.S. Department of Education.