

**A Word from the Headmaster**  
*“Privatized Education Success in Sweden”*  
By Daren M. Houck

This past summer, the Associated Press printed an article regarding privatized education in Sweden. In 1992, Sweden’s private school enrollment was 1.7% in high school and 1% in elementary. Families interested in private schools were required to pay public education taxes on top of their private tuition. All public schools in Sweden are required to use nationalized methods and curricula, and a small number of families wanted a different choice for their children.

During that same year (1992), the government passed a new law allowing parents to use public funds to pay for private education. “Friskolor,” or independent schools, received the same national tuition rate as public schools and became government financed. Today, private school enrollment has risen to 17% and 9%, respectively.

The success of these government financed independent schools—enrollment is still on the rise—has attracted the attention of other European nations, including Britain. Michael Fallon, who worked in Britain’s former Conservative government, visited Sweden in May. “It is a model that is clearly working, and we need to learn from that,” said Fallon.

We are fortunate that 20 Town Academies in New England and hundreds of other publicly funded Charter Schools throughout the country have already realized the value of choice. Public schools—**where an average of one in three students drop out each year**—might possibly learn from their private counterparts if all families were provided an option. Simply put, independent schools *must* be successful, or they go out of business. Somehow public education remains one of the few businesses that can fail 33% of the time and still make more money the following year. Perhaps the rest of the world will learn what Sweden—and New England—already knows.