



PRIME MINISTER

CITY TECHNOLOGICAL COLLEGES

Kenneth Baker sent me a copy of his minute to you of 22 September with its enclosure about City Technological Colleges (CTCs). Unfortunately because of the emergency TREVI meeting tomorrow I will not be able to be present when his proposals are discussed.

Nevertheless, I wanted to record my support for Kenneth's main objective of extending parental choice, particularly for the benefit of disadvantaged pupils in inner city areas. There is fairly wide agreement that this is an area where the crisis of confidence in our education system is acute and I think this may help to mute some of the criticism which our opponents will almost inevitably make. I hope that the initiative will be presented as an integral part of our drive to raise standards for all pupils across the maintained sector. If we can do something effective for the young in the inner cities now there will be wider social, economic and political benefits to be gathered later.

I was glad to note that Kenneth proposes that CTCs should be established in each of the eight Task Force areas. I have no doubt that a well targeted educational initiative of this sort will add an important dimension to our work in these areas. I welcome too the philosophical approach which underlies the proposals of a partnership between the public sector and business. In principle, therefore, Kenneth's proposals have my full support; and I welcome the idea of an early announcement.

E.R.

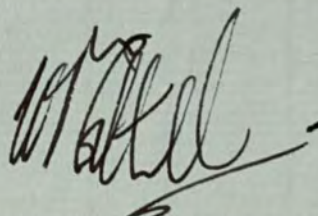
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I understand that there are still many details to be ironed out, particularly in relation to the nature of the "contract" between the DES and potential college "promoters". In discussion of these, I hope emphasis will continue to be put on the desirability of seeking to draw a cross-section of pupils in terms of ability and ethnic origin. If this mix is not achieved then the wider educational lessons may be reduced and we shall not be able to create the knock-on effect in inner city schools in the maintained sector for which I imagine Kenneth is hoping. Of relevance to this, I was a little concerned to see the degree of emphasis put upon parental commitment to the ethos of the school as a criterion for entry; this may serve to perpetuate the disadvantage of some pupils who have potential but whose parents are generally disaffected and unlikely to measure up in this way.

These are all points of detail which I hope Kenneth will feel able to take on board. They do not detract from my support for his attractive and imaginative proposals.

I am sending copies of this minute to Willie Whitelaw, Nigel Lawson, Kenneth Baker, Nick Edwards, Norman Tebbit, Nicholas Ridley, David Young, John MacGregor, Malcolm Rifkind and Sir Robert Armstrong.



APPROVED BY THE HOME SECRETARY  
AND SIGNED IN HIS ABSENCE

24 September 1986

