1) Freedom / possibility to start schools / to run schools

About starting a school the constitution has a few rules:
• Founding a school: everybody is free to found a school.
• The school can have a religious or non-religious denomination
• Education: freedom of method of education
• To get 100% state subsidy, there are a few conditions:
  • Minimum number of (possible) students
  • Supervision of state inspection
  • Many conditions concerning number of lessons, ability of teachers, quality of education, exams, financial rules and reports.

2) Professional and democratic leadership, Transparency, Accountability

State Control / Auditing

In The Netherlands there are many differences in the way the schools are run. The main basis for the differences is the scale of the units:

- One board > many schools
- Board of paid professionals
- Distance board <-> school
- Headmaster is just executive
- More specialists
- More layers of decision
- Two tier governance model
  (board and auditing committee are two separate bodies)

- One board > one (or few) school(s)
- Board of parents with professional views
- Close contact board <-> school
- Headmaster is representing the board
- More flexibility
- More multitasking
- One tier governance model
  (the board includes the auditing committee)

3) Pedagogical freedom for the single schools

- and the discussion of how and to which extend the independent schools are socially responsibility in the society.

- There is a common responsibility of all schools in a community to take care of enough education of high quality, so every student will be able to find a suitable school within a reasonable distance.
- Every school has the individual responsibility to provide good quality education and to account for it publically “Windows of Accountability” (publishing all kinds of quantitative and qualitative data on a central website)
- Schools are experimenting with the idea of the school as a social enterprise with strong ties with the local community

4) Other topics you think are of greatest relevance and importance for the next 5 years.....

- In many Western European countries the equal treatment of human beings is a growing issue. Aspects are: the increasing right wing opinion on immigrants, connected to “freedom of speech”. In the next few years it will be more difficult to find a balance between the task of a school to teach independent of political opinion and the wish to teach the students to deal with differences between people in a positive way.
- The policy of reducing the number of special schools for children with special needs together with a growing pressure on the regular schools to offer a kind of ‘inclusive’ education for all children.