



Reign of Error: The Hoax of the Privatization Movement and the Danger to America's Public Schools

Diane Ravitch

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From one of the foremost authorities on education in the United States, former U.S. assistant secretary of education, “whistle-blower extraordinaire” (*The Wall Street Journal*), author of the best-selling *The Death and Life of the Great American School System* (“Important and riveting”—*Library Journal*), *The Language Police* (“Impassioned . . . Fiercely argued . . . Every bit as alarming as it is illuminating”—*The New York Times*), and other notable books on education history and policy—an incisive, comprehensive look at today’s American school system that argues against those who claim it is broken and beyond repair; an impassioned but reasoned call to stop the privatization movement that is draining students and funding from our public schools.

In *Reign of Error*, Diane Ravitch argues that the crisis in American education is not a crisis of academic achievement but a concerted effort to destroy public schools in this country. She makes clear that, contrary to the claims being made, public school test scores and graduation rates are the highest they’ve ever been, and dropout rates are at their lowest point.

She argues that federal programs such as George W. Bush’s No Child Left Behind and Barack Obama’s Race to the Top set unreasonable targets for American students, punish schools, and result in teachers being fired if their students underperform, unfairly branding those educators as failures. She warns that major foundations, individual billionaires, and Wall Street hedge fund managers are encouraging the privatization of public education, some for idealistic reasons, others for profit. Many who work with equity funds are eyeing public education as an emerging market for investors.

Reign of Error begins where *The Death and Life of the Great American School System* left off, providing a deeper argument against privatization and for public education, and in a chapter-by-chapter breakdown, putting forth a plan for what can be done to preserve and improve it. She makes clear what is right about U.S. education, how policy makers are failing to address the root causes of educational failure, and how we can fix it.

For Ravitch, public school education is about knowledge, about learning, about developing character, and about creating citizens for our society. It’s about helping to inspire independent thinkers, not just honing job skills or preparing people for college. Public school education is essential to our democracy, and its aim, since the founding of this country, has been to educate citizens who will help carry democracy into the future.

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