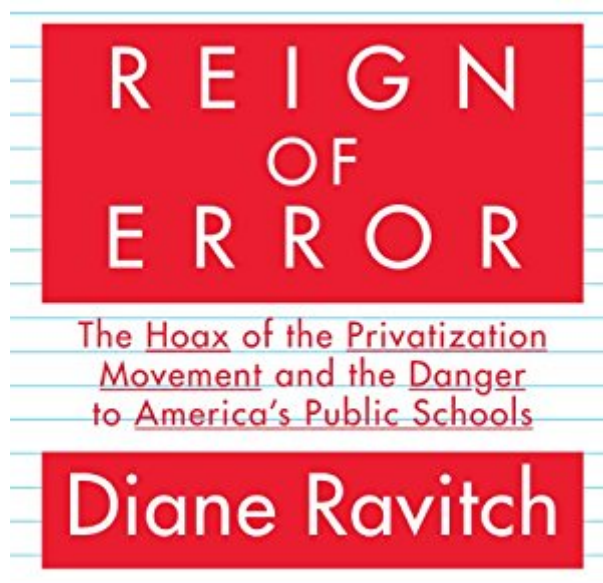


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# Reign Of Error: The Hoax Of The Privatization Movement And The Danger To America's Public Schools



## Synopsis

Diane Ravitch, America's foremost historian of education, says that public education in the United States is one of the pillars of our democratic society. In this eloquent book, she explains that our public schools have been wrongly criticized for low achievement, when federal data show that test scores and graduation rates are at their highest point in history - for black students, Hispanic students, white students, and Asian students - and dropout rates are at their lowest point in history. But for 30 years and even longer, critics have wrongly claimed that the public schools are failing, and this mistaken narrative has set the stage for harmful, even disastrous federal legislation and programs. George W. Bush's No Child Left behind law was passed with bipartisan support, allowing the federal government to impose testing on every child in every school. This is a practice unknown in other nations in the world. NCLB set impossible goals - that 100% of children would be proficient by the year 2014 - and many beloved public schools have been closed because they could not do the impossible. This powerful book challenges a stale and failed status quo. It will give you fresh and important insights about the future of public education and the future of our society.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Dr. Ravitch shatters one corporate reform myth after another with clarity providing excellent background information in the Notes and Appendix of this book. Because of her courageousness and direct approach, expect the corporate media to attack her because no one is left standing in this book, at least on the reform side, from President Obama's support of school privatization to the

machinations of Michelle Rhee. This book is a perfect reference guide to all things ed reform. Don't understand much about test scores? Check out the chapters "The Facts About Test Scores" and "The Facts About International Test Scores". Don't know the history of Michelle Rhee? Go to "The Mystery of Michele Rhee". How about the Parent Trigger? Read the chapter "Parent Trigger or Parent Tricker". (Love the title). The best part is that after Dr. Ravitch explains all things corporate reform, she provides real solutions to the challenges of public education. The answers aren't easy, there is no silver bullet as she explains, but the solutions are based on a wide range and depth of knowledge, history, experience and good old-fashion common sense. And the cover? You can't miss it. A marketing ploy? Possibly. This book will stand out in bookstores and in history as a go-to guide on public education in this decade. Now for some specifics. In the Introduction, Dr. Ravitch states: "The purpose of this book is to answer four questions. First, is American education in crisis? Second, is American education failing and declining? Third, what is the evidence for the reforms now being promoted by the federal government and adopted in many states?"

It was a foreshadowing event in 2011 when Diane Ravitch received the Daniel Patrick Moynihan Prize from the American Academy of Political and Social Science. Moynihan believed that "Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not to his own facts." Diane Ravitch expounds on that philosophy in her new book, *Reign of Error*. Within the first few pages of her book, Ravitch artfully unmasks the agenda of the "education reformers". She states, "Recognizing that most Americans have a strong attachment to their community schools, the corporate reformers have taken care to describe their aims in pseudo-populist terms. While trying to scare us with warnings of dire peril, they mask their agenda with rhetoric that is soothing and deceptive. In *Reign of Error*, Ravitch provides proof, back by solid research, that the corporate reformers have presented their opinions as facts. She addresses every single claim these corporate reforms use as a pretext to attack our nation's public school structure, our nation's teachers, and our nation's unions. She includes the research, charts, tables, and empirical studies that form the strong foundation of her work. Ravitch provides the proof, that our schools are not failing, the achievement gap is closing, we are not falling behind other nations, high school and graduation rates are at all time highs, poverty is being ignored, test scores are not the way to evaluate teachers, merit pay is a failure, and the importance of tenure. Ravitch exposes the audacity of Michelle Rhee, charter schools, parent trigger and virtual schools. Ravitch also lays out a clear concise course of action towards the essentials of a good education. Challenging our nation to reverse the reformists aims towards destruction.

While the title smacks of sensationalism, *Reign of Error* is actually a methodical dismantling of the many myths degrading public education and a detailed historical account of the privatization movement fueling the myths. Ravitch was soul searching in *The Death and Life of the Great American School System*. In *Reign of Error*, Ravitch has found her voice. She is unapologetic in her defense of public schools and takes on the reformers intent on injecting their free market ideology into public education. While Ravitch is a superhero to many discouraged public educators, she rejects superhero solutions to public education problems. "I have no silver bullets--because none exist--but I have proposals based on evidence and experience," writes Ravitch. A life lived looking at schools certainly affords her this perspective. *Reign of Error* spells out the comprehensive, community-wide solutions required to support public schools plagued with socioeconomic problems larger than what public educators can handle by themselves. For those of us who have regularly followed Ravitch's recent work, we do not find anything in her new book shocking. Many of my own blog postings have piggy-backed off Ravitch's thoughtful work. Ravitch calls for tried-and-true reforms focusing on equity, improving early childhood care, ending high-stakes testing, expanding middle class-like enrichment to needy students, developing and respecting educators, reducing class sizes, fully funding public education, and more. *Reign of Error* will hopefully serve as an antithesis to the 1983 *Nation at Risk*, which was the catalyst for thirty years of misplaced blame put on public schools for what in reality are problems caused by trends. Ravitch calls for a re-do on school reform.

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