



# The Rise and Fall of American Public Schools: The Political Economy of Public Education in the Twentieth Century

*Robert J. Franciosi*

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## **The Rise and Fall of American Public Schools: The Political Economy of Public Education in the Twentieth Century** Robert J. Franciosi

This volume provides a comprehensive and balanced survey of the state of American public education. It examines the trend in the quality of the public schools over the past 100 years, and reviews the possible reasons for a decline in quality. The work focuses on the importance of local control in American public education and how it has been steadily eroded. Franciosi advocates school choice as a way of restoring greater control by parents over their children's schools. This work is distinct among calls of reform in that it takes a skeptical attitude towards the centralized school reform movement that has culminated in the No Child Left Behind Act. It discusses important topics that have been the subject of research including the effect of teachers unions, Tiebout competition and local control, and school finance reform.

Franciosi follows the many trajectories taken by America's public schools over the past century. It shows that the United States has been a world education leader in both access for all children and resources spent. Despite this there are still some worrisome trends. While school spending has steadily increased, student achievement has fluctuated, and remains below that of students in other developed nations. Initiatives to close the gap in achievement has fluctuated and remains below that of students in other developed nations. Initiatives to close the gap in achievement and resources among students of various socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds have been only partially successful. Past efforts to reform public education have led to increasingly centralized control over public schools. This piece will be important to those who are active on both sides of the school reform debate. It will also be useful to students who are researching education policy, the economics of education, or public policy.

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