

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>List of Tables</i>	xi
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xiii
1 What Are Schools For?	1
Well-Intentioned Adults, Dysfunctional Schools	4
Student Outcomes as Our North Star	9
Chief Justice Earl Warren Was Wrong	12
Looking beyond Money and Unions	13
Politics, Markets – and Hacks	16
Prebunking the Critics	19
A Note on Organization and Style	28
The Cancellation of James Ragland	29
2 Skin in the Game	34
Measuring the Quality of Democracy	38
Assessing Processes and Outcomes	42
Illustrative Example: San Francisco	43
National Data	48
Lesson 1: Voters ≠ Parents	50
Lesson 2: Voters Don’t Care Much about Student Learning	52
Lesson 3: School Board Elections Don’t Provide Voters Much Choice	58
Why Broken Elections Matter	59
Democratic Myths versus Realities	64
3 Adults Follow Partisan Leaders on Education Policy	65
The Trump Effect	67
Obama Derangement Syndrome?	72

	A Top-Down Model of Mass Preferences	74
	A Tale of Two Ballot Measures	77
	A New Era of Polarized Education Politics?	94
4	All Curriculum Politics Is National	97
	Honest History or Political Indoctrination?	100
	Reading World War III	106
	Curriculum in the State House	120
	Lessons Learned?	124
5	Adult Culture Wars and Student Achievement	131
	Measuring Culture Wars	136
	Empirical Strategy	138
	Conflicts and Test Scores	141
	Getting More in the Technical Weeds	146
	It Should Be about the Students, Stupid	148
6	The Color of School Employment	154
	Race and Government Employment	159
	Untold Story of Southern Desegregation	163
	Hurricane and Reform in New Orleans	175
	An Impossible Trinity?	186
7	Bootleggers, Baptists, and Building Closures	190
	Competing Narratives	196
	Coalition Merchants and Narrative Construction	207
	What We Know	211
	Causes and Consequences of Closure: New Evidence	213
	Myths and (Political) Realities	225
8	Housing Markets Create Educational NIMBYs	229
	Policing the Boundaries of Educational Opportunity	234
	Political Power of Homeowners	240
	What Affects Home Prices – and What Doesn't	242
	Residential Sorting versus Gerrymandering	249
	How Housing Markets Undo Education Reforms	251
	Can Homeowners Do Well by Doing Good?	256
9	A Framework for Education Reform	259
	Reform 1: Hold School Board Elections in November of Even Years	263
	Reform 2: Make <i>Good</i> Performance Information More Salient	265
	Reform 3: Promote Smart School Choice Options	268
	<i>10% Less Democracy?</i>	273
	From Satan to Other Deluders	275
	<i>References</i>	279
	<i>Index</i>	303