
The Administration Of Public Education In The United States

Dutton Samuel Train

Title: The Administration Of Public Education In The United States

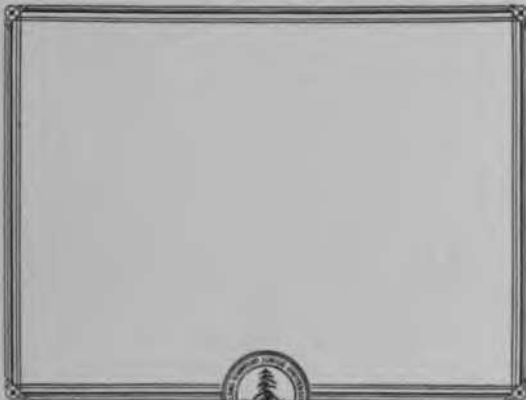
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ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC EDUCATION
IN THE UNITED STATES



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THE
ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC
EDUCATION
IN
THE UNITED STATES

BY

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INTRODUCTION

THE careful and scholarly study of the administration of education in the United States by my colleagues, Professors Dutton and Snedden, is a valuable and timely contribution to the literature of education. In a democratic State, it is of first importance that the relation of the State to the organs and agencies of culture and enlightenment be clearly defined and well understood. The wise and truly representative organization and administration of education is only a little less important than the organization and conduct of the educational process itself.

To understand fully the position and progress of education in the United States, a clear distinction must be drawn between the activities of the State, the American people viewed as an organized unit, and those of the Government, the specific agencies and powers created by the State, through the Constitution, to accomplish certain definite purposes, which, taken together, are the ends or aims of government. Whatever is done by the State or in the State's interest, whether it be carried out by a governmental agency or not, is public; whatever is done by the Government is presumably public, and certainly tax-supported. Much of the educational activity of the United States is truly public but in no wise governmental. For example, the United States possesses no university maintained by the National Government, but it possesses a half-dozen national universities. Important educational undertakings of various kinds are carried on in the sphere or domain of liberty side by side with those which are carried on in the sphere or domain of government. The true test, in the American system, of a public institution or activity is the purpose which it serves, and not the form of its control or the source of its financial support. That is public which springs from the public and serves the pub-

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lic; that is governmental which springs from the Government and is administered by the Government. In other words, the sphere of public activity is larger than that of governmental activity.

By far the largest part, and an increasingly large part, of the educational activity of the United States is governmental. It is this governmental educational activity with which the present volume deals. It brings together, in considerable part for the first time, a large mass of carefully ordered material bearing upon the evolution and present condition of educational administration, and it presents, in a form valuable either for study or for reference, the present state of educational administration in the United States, so far as that administration is governmental in form.

Few things in American history are more impressive than the devotion of the American people to education, and their sincere belief in its efficacy as an agency of moral and intellectual regeneration. This devotion and this belief are at times almost heroic and at times almost pathetic. The sacrifices made both by communities and by individuals on behalf of education in the United States are literally incalculable. To enter the teaching profession as a life career is, in a vast majority of cases, consciously to devote one's self to a missionary undertaking without hope of adequate material reward. This spirit of sacrifice, public and private, gives to American education much of its finest quality, and has thus far kept it elevated above and out of the mire of a blind materialism.

The idealism of the American people is reflected in their educational systems and institutions. To study those systems and institutions in detail is to come to a closer and fuller knowledge of the life and deeper characteristics of the American people.

NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER

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