



# Struggle For Control Of Public Education

*Michael Engel*

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## **Struggle For Control Of Public Education** Michael Engel

One hundred years ago, children were kept out of school to be used as a cheap factory workforce; today, they are kept in school to become a cheap workforce in the factories of the future. Seduced by the language of the market economy, those making decisions about education today argue that market strategies promote democratic educational reform, when really they promote market reform of education. Michael Engel argues against this tendency, siding with democratic values -- which encourage openness, creativity, social awareness, and idealism, whereas market values uphold individual achievement, competition, economic growth, and national security. Behind the facade of progressive rhetoric, advocates of these corporate models have succeeded in imposing their definition of school reform through federal and state policy makers. As a result, communities lose control of their schools, teachers lose control of their work, and students lose control of their schools, teachers lose control of their work, and students lose control of their futures. Engel attacks the increasing dominance of market ideology in educational policy and extends his critique beyond such trends in school reform as vouchers, charter schools, and contracting out to include issues such as decentralization, computer technology, and standards. The debate over privatization amounts to ideological warfare between democratic and market values. The question is not so much about school choice as it is about the values Americans want at the root of their society. Unprecedented in its value-based challenge to the threat of market ideology to educational policy, *The Struggle for Control of Public Education* is a sophisticated call for a return to community-controlled schools and democratic values. This argument offers theoretical and practical models crafted in the contemporary feminist and social reconstructionist tradition. Readers interested in the study of educational policies, philosophy, and policy will find this book engaging.

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