



Private Enterprise and Public Education

Frederick M. Hess, Michael B. Horn

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The growth of for-profit providers in the K–16 education sector has generated more than its share of controversy. From the emergence of charter schools to post-secondary options like the University of Phoenix, for-profit providers have been lauded for their capacity to serve historically underserved populations but derided for their pursuit of profit—which, critics argue, is at the expense of the public good.

This important volume takes stock of the debate, neither demonizing nor celebrating the for-profit sector, to understand what it takes for for-profits to promote quality and cost effectiveness at scale. Contributors address how policymakers and other education stakeholders can create an environment where the power of for-profit innovation and investment is leveraged to better serve students. The role that private enterprise can and should play in American education needs to be brought to the forefront of reform discussions. Editors Hess and Horn move beyond heated rhetoric to offer a thoughtful and probing analysis that will enable stakeholders to craft a viable future for public education.

Contributors: John Bailey, Tamara Butler Battaglini, Stacey Childress, KC Deane, Whitney Downs, Todd Grindal, Andrew P. Kelly, Mickey Muldoon, Matthew Riggan, Chris Whittle, Ben Wildavsky

“The public and private sectors often interact in an uneasy and unstable dance of cooperation, but education has come later to the dance hall than other areas of public policy. There is much we still need to learn, and this broad and diverse collection provides an excellent place to start.”

—**Jeff Henig**, Chair, Department of Education Policy and Social Analysis, Teachers College, Columbia University

“No subject in education reform is more polarizing than the role of for-profit enterprises. But as Hess and Horn demonstrate in this volume of remarkably objective analyses, both the for's and the anti's have the issue all wrong. Business has important roles to play, but specifying them takes the kind of nuanced thinking that ideologues hate. Policymakers would do well to read this engaging volume and tune out the noise that has obscured serious debate.”

—**John Chubb**, Interim CEO, Education Sector

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