



Schooling America: How the Public Schools Meet the Nation's Changing Needs (Institutions of American Democracy)

Patricia Albjerg Graham

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In this informative volume, Patricia Graham, one of America's most esteemed historians of education, offers a vibrant history of American education in the last century. Drawing on a wide array of sources, from government reports to colorful anecdotes, Graham skillfully illustrates Americans' changing demands for our schools, and how schools have responded by providing what critics want, though never as completely or as quickly as they would like.

In 1900, as waves of immigrants arrived, the American public wanted schools to assimilate students into American life, combining the basics of English and arithmetic with emphasis on patriotism, hard work, fair play, and honesty. In the 1920s, the focus shifted from schools serving a national need to serving individual needs; education was to help children adjust to life. By 1954 the emphasis moved to access, particularly for African-American children to desegregated classrooms, but also access to special programs for the gifted, the poor, the disabled, and non-English speakers. Now Americans want achievement for all, defined as higher test scores. While presenting this intricate history, Graham introduces us to the passionate educators, scholars, and journalists who drove particular agendas, as well as her own family, starting with her immigrant father's first day of school and ending with her own experiences as a teacher.

Invaluable background in the ongoing debate on education in the United States, this book offers an insightful look at what the public has sought from its educational institutions, what educators have delivered, and what remains to be done.

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