



Educating Citizens: International Perspectives on Civic Values and School Choice

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The United States is in the midst of historic experiments with publicly funded choice in K-12 education, experiments that recently received a "green light" from the Supreme Court. Other nations have long experience with the funding and regulation of nonpublic schools, including religious schools. This book asks what U.S. policymakers, public officials, and citizens can learn from these experiences. In particular, how do other countries regulate or structure publicly funded educational choice with an eye toward civic values—looking not only for improvements in test scores, but also in tolerance, civic cohesion, and democratic values such as integration across the lines of class, religion, and race?

The experience of Europe and Canada with school choice is both extensive and varied. In England and Wales, public school choice is widespread, as parents play a significant role in selecting the school their children will attend. In the Netherlands and much of Belgium, a majority of students attend religious schools at government expense. In Canada, France, and Germany, state-financed school choice is limited to circumstances that serve particular social and governmental needs. In Italy, school choice has just recently arrived on the policy agenda. In spite of the diversity of national experiences, in all of these countries choice is regulated by the government in significant and varied ways to promote civic values. In several of these countries, school choice policy itself appears to have played an important role in promoting social cohesion and integration. This book presents a wealth of experience designed to aid policymakers and citizens as they consider historic changes in American public education policy.

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