



Ravitch, D. (2020). *Slaying Goliath: The passionate resistance to privatization and the fight to save America's public schools*. NY: Alfred A. Knopf.

Pp. 337

ISBN: 978-0525655374 (hardcover)

ISBN: 978-0525655381 (ebook)

Reviewed by Gene V Glass and David C. Berliner
Arizona State University
United States

In a Post-Truth era, one must consider the source. In this case, the source is Diane Rose Silvers, the third of eight children of Walter Silverstein, a school drop-out, and Ann Katz, a high school graduate. The Silvers were a middle-class Houston family, proprietors of a liquor store, and loyal supporters of FDR. After graduation from San Jacinto High School, she enrolled in Wellesley College in September, 1956.

Working as a “copy boy” for the *Washington Post*, Diane met Richard Ravitch, a lawyer working in the federal government and son of a prominent New York City family. They married on June 26, 1960, in Houston, two weeks after Diane’s graduation from Wellesley. The couple settled in New York City where Richard took employment in the family construction business. He eventually served as head of the Metropolitan Transit Authority and Lieutenant Governor in the 2000s, having been appointed by Democratic Governor David Paterson.

Diane bore three sons, two of whom survived to adulthood. Diane and Richard ended their 26-year marriage in 1986. She had not been idle. For a period starting in 1961, Diane was



employed by *The New Leader*, a liberal, anti-communist journal. She later earned a PhD in history of education from Columbia in 1975 under the mentorship of Lawrence Cremin. Diane was appointed to the office of Assistant Secretary of Education, in the Department of Education by George H. W. Bush and later by Bill Clinton. In 1997, Clinton appointed her to the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB), on which she served until 2004.

Ravitch worked “... for many years in some of the nation’s leading conservative think tanks. I had hoped that privatization and



testing would produce sweeping improvement ...” (p. 7). Her collaboration with Chester Finn, director of the Thomas B.

Fordham Institute, ended in a dispute over Finn’s unwillingness to accept the facts about the failure of charter schools in Finn’s own hometown of Dayton. For Ravitch, a historian, there were facts, not “alternative facts.”

It may have been a five-year long blog debate with Deborah Meier that shaped Ravitch into the active intellectual fighting the reformers documented in *Slaying Goliath*. More significantly, perhaps, in 2012, Diane married Mary Butz, a New York City educator with 35 years of experience in the world’s most complex school district. Every PhD needs a post-doc; Ravitch has had more than one. Today, she is curator of the most influential communications medium in the history of public education. Her blog, dianeravitch.com, features as many as 10 postings each day, 365 days a year. In 2012, with the help of Anthony Cody, she founded the Network for Public Education, which now numbers more than 300,000 members.

The point of this lengthy biography is to challenge the reader to find a political bias behind the narrative of *Slaying Goliath*. We can find none. There is nothing but the efforts of a historian to find the facts and follow where they lead.

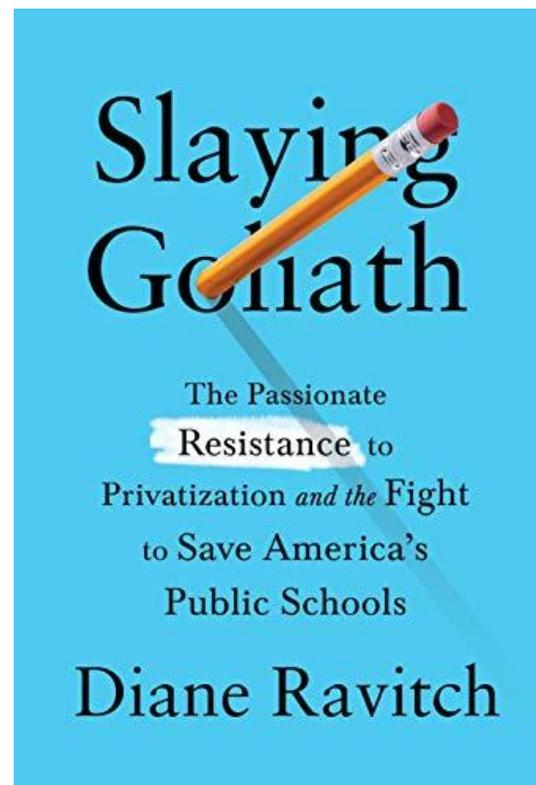
Other reviews of *Slaying Goliath* have recently appeared (Publishers Weekly, 2020; Shepherd, 2020; Ultican, 2020). It is unnecessary to duplicate what has already been written except to note that we agree with the praise the book has received. We sincerely thank Ravitch for her careful documentation of the greed, anti-democratic actions, and just plain stupidity displayed by so many of our

nations’ leading political and business leaders who attempted to fix education. She excoriates various villains – Eli Broad, Bill Gates, Arne Duncan, Betsy DeVos, David Welch, the Waltons, Reed Hastings, and others – showing that this group has repeatedly advanced wrong-headed opinions about schooling. They backed up their advice with cash, enormous amounts of cash. Ravitch has shown how they have promoted dangerous and undemocratic ideas.

In the following, we provide a flavor of the book by brief examples from each chapter. We hope that this whets the appetite for a full reading by anyone concerned with the attacks on public education by those whom Ravitch calls the Goliaths. With her slingshot and stone, she joins a noble battle to preserve this uniquely American invention, which Horace Mann called the greatest invention of mankind.

Chapter 1. Disruption Is Not Reform!

Ravitch calls the corporations and individuals who so arrogantly want to make



the public's schools into private schools the Disrupters. Somewhat prematurely perhaps, she pronounces their movement a failure. What the Disrupters view as reform "... has diminished the status of the teaching profession. It has created national teacher shortages. It has discouraged creative and thoughtful teaching. It has undermined the transmission of knowledge and skill in history, science, literature, foreign languages and the arts. It has reduced time for physical education, recess, and play, and given in to testing and test preparation. It has demoralized students and teachers alike. It has crushed the spirit of learning. It has failed to produce the miracles and benefits that it promised" (p. 11). Schumpeter's "creative destruction" of capitalism sometimes merely destroys.

Ravitch's mentor, the Pulitzer prize winning historian Lawrence Cremin (1990), noted 30 years ago this month that public education will always have its discontents. They are built into our system, because it is the people's system. The populous will always comprise those who want conflicting things and who will judge the schools' accomplishments differently. But the Disrupters today are different. They are wealthier, more powerful, and more politically connected than in the past. They are of three types: billionaires confident that their success in business qualifies them to repair a broken public institution; ideologues wedded to discredited economic theories; and greedy "edupreneurs" following Rupert Murdoch's advice of 2010: "When it comes to K through 12 education, we see a \$500 billion sector in the U.S. alone that is waiting desperately to be transformed" (<https://tinyurl.com/rf3bwd9>). Goliath wears three faces.

Chapter Two: The Odious Status Quo

"The theory of action behind [No Child Left Behind] was that schools and districts that didn't get the expected results should be

punished. Fear of punishment, fear of failure, fear of losing one's job and career were supposed to cause the staff to try harder and the schools to get better" (p. 21). Such policies are favored by the powerful and imposed on the politically weak. The powerful are allowed to fail with impunity.

Ravitch sees the Obama administration's Race to the Top as a mere continuation of the wrong-headed policies of the Bush-43 administration. Under Secretary Duncan's leadership, Race to the Top actually compounded the errors of NCLB. Her argument holds water.

Chapter 3: What Do the Disrupters Want?

"So long as billionaires, hedge fund managers, and their allies are handing out money, there will be people lined up to take it. But their transactions cannot be confused with a social movement. Years from now, historians will look back and wonder why so many very wealthy people spent so much money in a vain attempt to disrupt and privatize public education and why they ignored the income inequality and wealth inequality that were eating away at the vitals of American society" (p. 51). By and large the billionaire Disrupters hold on dogmatically to the ideas they imagine made them rich. The ideologues seek validation of their theories; the edupreneurs want money. All three types of Disrupter find a receptive audience: White and Asian middle-class parents uncomfortable with the rising diversity of American society and wishing to shield their children from it. The battle for privatization of public education is rooted in fear, bigotry, and the search for special privilege.

Chapter 4. Meet the Resistance

Ravitch's "Resistance" are persons with a "genuine connection" to education: teachers, school administrators, students, parents, scholars, lawyers, even some religious leaders. "The Resistance agrees on several central ideas. First, it opposes the privatization of

public schools. Second, it opposes the misuse and overuse of standardized testing. Third, it respects the teaching profession and believes that teachers and other school staff should have appropriate professional compensation. Fourth, it wants public schools to have the resources needed. Fifth, it wants schools to cultivate the joy of learning and teaching. Sixth, it places the needs of children and the value of knowledge above the whims and theories of politicians and philanthropists. Last, it understands that students' lives are influenced by conditions outside the control of the school, including their access to good housing, medical care, nutrition, and safe neighborhoods" (p. 52). This last point, viz., that the good that schools can do may be less than the bad that society has done, is particularly hard for professional educators and the public to comprehend. Politicians sometimes exaggerate the power of schooling as a way of criticizing teachers for their students' failures. If teachers can work wonders, then they are at fault when miracles don't happen. Blame follows blandishments.

Chapter 5. The Beginning of the End of Disruption

Bush's No Child Left Behind and Obama's Race to the Top were "without doubt the least popular, most damaging federal education initiatives in American history. They lowered the quality of American education, they forced the firing of untold numbers of teachers whose only crime was to teach in impoverished districts, they forced the closure of hundreds, or perhaps thousands, of public schools that operated in high-poverty areas and enrolled disproportionate numbers of students with disabilities and students who were English language learners" (p. 86). Moreover, the programs pushed by Bush and Obama, through their Secretaries of Education Spellings and Duncan, failed by the very measure they valued most: test scores. For nearly two decades, test scores were flat or declining, and the gaps between the wealthy

and the poor did not shrink. Disruption created only chaos.

Ravitch professes to have witnessed the beginning of the end of three decades of destructive efforts at reform. It is not clear whether she sees the end as imminent or in a distant future. It would be naïve to believe that the political interests that have driven the reform movement have left the battle.

Chapter 6. The Resistance to High-Stakes Standardized Testing

Ravitch documents the many acts of resistance to high-stakes testing. She supports the parents, teachers, and students in this effort. She closes this chapter eloquently: "We are not Singapore; we are not South Korea; we are not China. We are America. We should cultivate the wit of Ben Franklin, the thoughtfulness of Abraham Lincoln, the ingenuity of Thomas Alva Edison, the spirit of the Wright brothers, the eloquence of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Were they good test-takers? Who knows? Who cares? I bet that the financial wizard Bernie Madoff (now in jail for his crimes) and the guys at Enron had great test scores" (p. 114).

The shortcomings of standardized tests are many. They measure children's socio-economic status more than what happens to them in school. Ravitch is wise to oppose their use in high-stakes contexts. However, at times she invokes flat NAEP trends as evidence of reform failure. But the criticism of testing cuts both ways: if test data are invalid, they neither indict nor support reform. In our decades' long involvement with NAEP scores, we are confident of the interpretation of only two trends. Young black students in the Southeast are better off as a result of desegregation; and science teaching has shifted gradually from physical science to biological science. NAEP has taught us nothing about the value of vouchers, charter schools, or value-added measurement of teachers. Teachers view standardized tests as an irritant, not an asset.

It was the opposition to state assessment that first revealed the power of the Resistance. In 2012, parents in Long Island organized to oppose the New York assessment in their district. Their opposition took the form of opting their children out of the annual testing. This opt out movement was driven on Facebook and Twitter. In 2014, 23,000 persons had joined the Facebook group known as Long Island Opt Out. By 2015, 20% of students in New York schools were opted out of the state's Common Core assessment. Officials were chagrined. Normally compliant teachers and parents were calling the shots. The Governor suspended use of the test results.

Ravitch richly details the Resistance's opposition to standardized testing. The historian's craft is apparent in every chapter of *Slaying Goliath*. It is not another polemic. It will serve as perhaps the authoritative history of education policy in the first quarter of the 21st century.

Chapter 7. Rewards and Punishment Are Not Good Motivators

Here Ravitch channels John Dewey: "No Child Left behind and Race to the Top borrowed the wrong lessons from corporate America. They relied on carrots and sticks to motivate teachers. They set goals that were unattainable. They disrespected the people who did the daily work of education. They discounted the importance of teamwork. They forced teachers to compete with one another for ratings. They treated children as interchangeable widgets whose sole purpose was to generate high scores on standardized tests that were designed to produce winners and losers. Neither the NCLB law nor Race to the Top valued education as an end in itself, worthy of pursuing for the joy it imparts. They valued data, not education" (p. 129).

Chapter 8. Bait and Switch: How Liberals Were Duped into Embracing School Choice

The charter school movement promised creativity, innovation, and excellence as a result of deregulation. It has produced discrimination, segregation, union-busting, and corruption. Among the damage inflicted on public education by the charter school movement, resegregation of the system is perhaps the most egregious. Not since the creation of Southern white academies, post *Brown v. Board of Education*, has White flight been so prevalent. Scholars have documented massive amounts of discrimination on the basis of race, socio-economic status, and disability by charter operators.

The creative energy released by deregulation was supposed to lead to amazing discoveries in teaching that the traditional public school sector would happily adopt. The rising tide would lift all boats. In reality, the only innovation adopted by the public schools has been to advertise their schools to parents to counter the aggressive promotion of charters in newspapers and on Super Bowl telecasts.

"... a task force of the National Education Association reviewed federal data and found that 40 percent of all the charter schools opened since 1992 had closed. As private entities, charter schools are as likely to close as any other business, such as shoe stores, book stores, restaurants and department stores (p. 137). Some defenders of the charter movement have had the gall to argue that the invisible hand of the market was at work insuring that only the best shall survive.

Charter school proponents promised much; what they delivered was disappointment. Carol Burris, executive director of the Network for Public Education, conducted a year-long study of charters in 2017. She found charter schools operating in storefronts in strip malls. Students met teachers when they needed assistance; otherwise they never saw them. One-fifth of

one state's charters were called "independent learning centers" where students rarely saw a teacher or fellow students. In some of these independent learning centers the graduation rate was zero, and turnover in lower grades was 100%.

The 15 pages of Chapter 8 are a shocking catalog of failure and corruption, peopled by rapacious edupreneurs, a Muslim imam, and allegations of state education funds bankrolling a coup in Turkey. Despite closures and scandals galore, the charter industry is supported by "both parties in Congress, Republican governors, many Democratic governors, multiple billionaires, and most state governments" (p. 144). As Ravitch properly notes, it is indeed a Goliath with whom the Resistance fights.

Chapter 9. School Choice, Deregulation, and Corruption

Ravitch draws on an enormous corpus of examples of corruption, gross manipulation of data, misuse of public funds, and schemes to move public monies into private hands. She documents shocking instances of corruption that have resulted from the lessening – and in some instances obliteration – of the state regulations that the charter school industry devotedly wished. Nearly the entire first half of this chapter is devoted to stories of abuses in Arizona charter schools. That the charter industry in Arizona is the least regulated in the United States exposes the true motive behind the pleas for deregulation. Edupreneurs wished not to release creativity; they wished to loosen the purse strings. A former charter school administrator discovered "rigged" finances in 77% of Arizona's charters.

Ravitch thoroughly documents how billions of dollars have left public coffers and enriched the owners of private and charter schools. It is a scandal of monumental proportions. It survives due to the compliance, neglect, or outright corruption of legions of politicians. Ravitch reminds us that every one of the billions of dollars that

annually go to charter schools and vouchers is subtracted from public school budgets, where more than 80% of America's children are enrolled. The so-called school "reform movement" may be one of the biggest failures of contemporary public policy; but finally, slowly, Goliath may soon be slain.

Chapter 10. The Resistance Fights Back

Ravitch applauds and profiles the educators and parents alike who have fought back, and are now slowly winning. "The challenge of the Resistance is to break the beneficent mask that conceals the true face of Corporate Disruption and to reveal its actual goals: privatization and profits" (p. 162). "Not even the billionaires and their hired mouthpieces [can] overcome the grassroots volunteers of the Resistance, who [are proving] democracy can be a powerful weapon when wielded on behalf of the common good" (p. 162).

Chapter 10 features a lengthy history of the Douglas County (Colorado) episode, a veritable Battle of Elah, where the David faced off against the monster Goliath. Ravitch's account exposes how the Disrupters will fight to win control. Money is no object, nor is veracity. And yet, they lost.

Chapter 11. The Resistance Goes National

The Resistance of Chapter 11 are lawyers working through organizations such as ACLU, NAACP, Southern Poverty Law Center, and the UCLA Civil Rights Project. Their efforts put the lie to the Disrupters claim that the school choice is the "civil rights issue of our time." In fact, in an oddly obverse way, school choice is an important civil rights issue. Charter schools and voucher recipients are commonly known to screen and select their students while protesting that they are open to all comers. Some few may randomly draw their students from a pool of applicants, but the pool has been groomed so that only certain kinds of children become applicants.

Chapter 12. Dark Money in Massachusetts and Connecticut

On November 8, 2016, the voters of Massachusetts overwhelmingly (62% to 38%) rejected a referendum that would have removed the cap on the number of charter schools permitted in the state. Ravitch, the historian, is at her best, unraveling the twisted tentacles of the dark money providers whose millions of dollars of backing came to naught.

Chapter 13. The Miracles That Weren't: New Orleans and Florida

Hungry for some good news, the charter school industry lauded the miracle of the turnaround of the New Orleans school district after the Katrina hurricane disaster. In the wake of hurricane Katrina in late August 2005, two events significant in the history of school reform took place: 1) tens of thousands of poor families were relocated outside New Orleans and outside of Louisiana; and 2) thousands of public school teachers (mostly black and nearly all union members) were fired and the entire New Orleans school district was turned over to charter school companies. Milton Friedman, in one of his last public writings (an op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal* in November 2005), wrote “Most New Orleans schools are in ruins as are the homes of the children who have attended them. The children are now scattered all over the country. This is a tragedy. It is also an opportunity.” Some view this staggering insensitivity as typical of the attitudes of the Disrupters toward all public institutions.

Researchers at Tulane University undertook a study of the New Orleans miracle. They saw only success. The Trump administration, led by DeVos, rewarded them with a \$10M grant to establish the National Center for Research on Education Access and Choice. Other researchers saw things differently. Bruce Baker of Rutgers University decimated the Tulane report. It was a sieve, and the good news swiftly filtered through it.

The New Orleans scenario was played out subsequently in Florida. Under Jeb Bush’s politicking, Florida spent billions of dollars on vouchers for private and religious schools and in support of charter schools. Loud declarations of a Florida miracle threatened to drown out the facts. Ravitch documents in great detail how the Resistance – parents, PTAs, teachers’ unions, the Florida League of Women Voters – exposed the miracle to be the Florida disaster.

The Resistance is a presence throughout *Slaying Goliath*. An important new player in the education policy game is the Network for Public Education (NPE). Ravitch is the perfect chronicler for NPE; in 2012, in cooperation with Californian Anthony Cody, she created it. Today, NPE is a non-profit charitable organization with more than 300,000 members. It now stands as a powerful voice that can place thousands of protesters on the street to protest actions that would damage public education. Its existence before the ubiquity of social media would have been impossible. NPE also functions as an early warning system alerting its members to bills in state legislatures that would cut against the welfare of students and teachers.

Chapter 14. Common Core and a Gaggle of Other Failed Reforms

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) was a dream in the mind of Microsoft founder Bill Gates. It stands as the singular failure of the Disruptors. To politicians and a few greedy opportunists, the CCSS promised to be the solution to all that was wrong with public education. To teachers, the CCSS were an irrelevant intrusion, a collection of things that either could not be taught or were not worth learning. “For exponential models, express as a logarithm the solution to $ab^t = d$ where a , c , and d are numbers and the base b is 2, 10, or e ; evaluate the logarithm using technology.” “Explain and use the relationship between the sine and cosine of complementary angles.”

When the nation's schools did not rush to adopt the CCSS, the Gates foundation decided to sell them to the schools. But Gates didn't exactly sell the CCSS; they paid to have them adopted, and they paid foundations and media to shill for them. Teachers remained adamant. They had not created the standards; teachers were ignored in their creation. The standards were created by people who never spent a day in charge of a group of third-graders. The CCSS offered teachers nothing useful.

“Despite failure after failure, the Disrupters kept driving forward, uninterested in analyzing their failures. There was so much money undergirding their multiple and overlapping organizations that the failure of their experiments did not matter. ... Their continued forward momentum was guaranteed by the many millions of dollars available to keep trying. There would always be people eager and willing to promote Disruption, regardless of its track record, because that's where the money was” (p. 249). The fate of Bill Gates's attempts to remake public education should be a lesson to all who labor to make schooling in America more humane, more equitable, and more effective.

Gates is just one of many whom we might label “philanthro-capitalists.” They number only a few: Bill and Melinda Gates themselves, DeVos, Koch, Reed Hastings, Steve Jobs's widow, Laurene Powell Jobs, Eli Broad. Without their financial support, the charter school movement, the voucher movement, the Common Core, alternative certification, and other efforts would have died aborning. Sadly, as they have attempted to remake America's public schools, the philanthro-capitalists have refused to face the overwhelming evidence that wealth inequality and housing segregation by both race and income powerfully determine the success of our schools. Nor are they willing to accept their own shortcomings in analyzing education's problems and finding solutions.

Warren Buffett and his partner at Berkshire-Hathaway, Charlie Munger, long shared a private joke they call the Shoe Button Complex. Around 1900, Munger's grandfather cornered the market on ladies' shoe buttons. He became a millionaire. His success in this area led him to believe that he knew all there is to know about everything. He became an insufferable bore at family gatherings. To Buffett and Munger, those successful in one area who thereby assume they could be successful in all areas are suffering from the Shoe Button Complex. They have stepped outside their narrow Circle of Competence, a concept that has guided the two gentlemen's own success.

The philanthro-capitalists attribute their financial success to their intelligence, and not to their inheritance (Kochs), marriage (Laurene Powell Jobs), having a trial lawyer for a father (Gates), or just plain luck. They believe that schools should be run like businesses, their businesses. They ignore the fact that the vast majority of businesses fail. They are incredulous when their schools fail.

Few embody the hubris of the Shoe Button Complex so clearly as does Bill Gates. Speaking to the National Conference of State Legislatures on July 21, 2009, he opined on what is wrong with public education and how to fix it:

When the tests are aligned to the common standards, the curriculum will line up as well — and that will unleash powerful market forces in the service of better teaching. For the first time, there will be a large base of customers eager to buy products that can help every kid learn and every teacher get better.

(<https://tinyurl.com/yewg66ob>)

This vision of education reform is stunningly naïve. It muddles “standards” in education — goals — and standards in manufacture — specifications to insure interchangeability of parts. Gates is not talking about schooling; he

is talking about DOS, the Microsoft disk operating system for which programmers can write programs. Legions of education policy actors have taken him seriously, if there is cash in the deal. As Tevye sings in “If I Were a Rich Man,”

The most important men in town will
come to fawn on me
They will ask me to advise them,
...
And it won't make one bit of
difference
If I answer right or wrong
When you're rich they think you really
know.

Chapter 15. The Teachers Revolt

For decades, teachers endured low salaries, no raises, theft of pensions, class size increases, unfair evaluations; the elimination of art and music and nurses and libraries. Finally, beginning in February 2018, they revolted. In West Virginia, Chicago, Arizona, Colorado, Kentucky, and across the country, teachers walked out. Dressed in Red for Ed, tens of thousands of teachers rallied at state legislatures demanding attention to the needs of their schools and, yes, decent pay. “They united, they demanded to be heard, and they got respect. That was something the Disrupters had denied them for almost twenty years. Teachers learned that in unity there is strength. Some ran for office. Some were elected. ... [T]hey learned that they could achieve their goals if they stood together. ... The politicians thought that they could be silenced by breaking their unions. They were wrong. Teachers learned that together they had power. And they won't forget that lesson” (pp. 266-267).

Why then? What happened at last to drive teachers and their supporters to the streets in protest? Perhaps the Disrupters had pursued their cause a bridge too far. Perhaps one-to-many cheap telecommunications afforded by the Internet began to exercise a democratizing

function that can alter the balance of political power in modern nations for all time.

Chapter 16. Goliath Stumbles

The education “reform” movement turns out to be little more than a privatization movement, relying on deception and propaganda. It seeks lower taxes, private profits, and segregation. Reform has brought demoralization, chaos, and turmoil. It has not produced better education. Its mask is falling away. “Our current education policy is madness. ... [But] people are catching on. Teachers are fighting back. Parents are fighting back. ... [They] are offended by the intrusion of hedge fund managers, politicians, entrepreneurs, corporations, and profiteers into their school board elections and into the daily work of schools. They want ... experienced teachers [and] schools where the healthy development of children and young people is treasured, not their scores on ... standardized tests. They want schools that are child centered not centers of profit.

The great lesson of this story is that billionaires should not be allowed to buy democracy, although they are certainly trying to do so” (p. 282).

We Return to the Author

Ravitch's generation-long dalliance with the Conservatives may have inflicted some damage on public education. She served for seven years on NAGB, the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB). NAGB may have been the single most destructive force undermining the nation's respect for public education. One of us (GVG) served for several years on the Technical Advisory Committee of National Assessment when the program was administered by the Education Commission of the States. ECS was under increasing pressure by the federal government in the late 1970s to forsake its original purpose as defined by Ralph Tyler and adopt “achievement levels”; in effect, to pass judgment on whether the nation's children's

performance was “passing” or “failing.” The Technical Advisory Committee was adamant in the position that the setting of such “cut scores” was arbitrary, irrational, and a mere ploy on the part of certain political interests. The contract was taken away from ECS and given to a competitor who promised to give the government what they wanted, which they did in 1992, five years before Ravitch joined NAGB. Many wrote and spoke against the NAGB achievement levels: Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, Advanced. Some did not. Many refused to lend their scholarship to an effort so tainted with politics. The result has been decades of NAEP results labeling high percentages of American school children’s performance unacceptable and failing.

Perhaps Ravitch cannot be judged entirely blameless for some of the damage suffered by public education through 30 years of conservative and neo-liberal education policy development. Her *mea culpa* (p. 7) confesses as much. For some, redemption is a gift; for others, it must be earned. Today, she works as the most indefatigable voice fighting against the failed policies of the recent past. Whatever motivates her, her production in the last 20 years has been phenomenal: *Left Back: A*

Century of Battles over School Reform (2001); *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice Are Undermining Education* (2010); *Reign of Error: The Hoax of the Privatization Movement and the Danger to America's Public Schools* (2014); *EdSpeak and Doubletalk: A Glossary to Decipher Hypocrisy and Save Public Schooling* (with Nancy Bailey) (2019); *The Wisdom and Wit of Diane Ravitch* (2019). As her age-mates, we marvel at her energy.

At the conclusion of the Constitutional Convention in 1787, Mrs. Powell, a member of a leading Philadelphia family, asked Benjamin Franklin what kind of country we will have. He is reported to have told her, “We have a republic, if you can keep it.” *Slaying Goliath* is a call to citizens to remember Franklin’s words – they can keep the republic if they work to take it back from the Disrupters, who work so hard, every day, and with virtually unlimited funding, to take it from them. Ravitch leaves no doubt that she believes that Goliath is not dead, as she writes in the present tense at the conclusion of *Slaying Goliath: The Resistance* “... are the Davids who will never give up and can never be defeated. And that is why they are winning and why they will prevail” (p. 283).

References

- Cremin, L. (1990). *Popular education and its discontents*. NY: Harper & Row.
- Publishers Weekly. (2020). Retrieved January 10, 2020, from <https://tinyurl.com/wo46bv2>
- Shepherd, B. (2020, January 9). Essential Reading/ Book Review. *Praxis*. Retrieved January 1, 2020, from <https://tinyurl.com/wpgoy84>
- Ultican, T. (2020, January 1). We Are the resistance and we are winning. Retrieved January 10, 2020, from <https://tinyurl.com/stoyauk>

About the Reviewers

Gene V Glass is a Regents' Professor Emeritus at Arizona State University and Lecturer in the Connie Lurie College of Education, San José University. He is a former President of the American Educational Research Association and a recipient of its Distinguished Contributions to Research in Education Award.

David C. Berliner is a Regents' Professor Emeritus at Arizona State University. His most recent book, with Gene V Glass, is *50 Myths & Lies that Threaten America's Public Schools: The Real Crisis in Education* (2014, Teachers College Press). He is a former President of the American Educational Research Association and a recipient of its Distinguished Contributions to Research in Education Award. He is a member of the National Academy of Education. His 1996 publication with Bruce J. Biddle, *The Manufactured Crisis*, is widely regarded as one of the most influential books on education policy of the last 50 years.



 *Education Review/Reseñas Educativas/Resenhas Educativas* is supported by the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College, Arizona State University. Copyright is retained by the first or sole author, who grants right of first publication to the *Education Review*. Readers are free to copy, display, and distribute this article, as long as the work is attributed to the author(s) and ***Education Review***, it is distributed for non-commercial purposes only, and no alteration or transformation is made in the work. More details of this Creative Commons license are available at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>. All other uses must be approved by the author(s) or ***Education Review***.

Disclaimer: The views or opinions presented in book reviews are solely those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent those of *Education Review*.

Connect with *Education Review* on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Education-Review/178358222192644>) and on Twitter @EducReview