

SAVING SCHOOLS

From Horace Mann to Virtual Learning

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PAUL E. PETERSON

Saving Schools traces the story of the rise, decline, and potential resurrection of American public schools through the lives and ideas of six mission-driven reformers: Horace Mann, John Dewey, Martin Luther King Jr., Albert Shanker, William Bennett, and James Coleman. Yet schools did not become the efficient, egalitarian, and high-quality educational institutions these reformers envisioned. Indeed, the unintended consequences of their legacies shaped today's flawed educational system, in which political control of stagnant American schools has shifted away from families and communities to larger, more centralized entities—initially to bigger districts and eventually to control by states, courts, and the federal government.

Now, under the impact of rising cost, coupled with the possibilities unleashed by technological innovation, schooling may be transformed through virtual learning. The result could be a personalized, customized system of education in which families have greater choice and control over their children's education than at any time since our nation was founded.

“Paul E. Peterson has written a deep and rich history of public education in America and the people and forces that shaped it. He brings together policy, research, and political issues with genuine sophistication and hard-edged thinking. He believes we're finally poised for a big step forward, using technology to customize the learning experience and empower both students and their families.”

—Chancellor Joel Klein

New York City Department of Education

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