

# Selling School: Unmasking the Marketing of Public Education



## Selling School: The Marketing of Public Education

by Sarah Butler Jessen

★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 8770 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 208 pages
Paperback	: 96 pages
Reading age	: 8 - 12 years
Item Weight	: 4.8 ounces
Dimensions	: 5 x 0.4 x 7.6 inches



By Jacquelynne Eccles

Public education in the United States is a \$600 billion industry. And like any other industry, public education is marketed to the public. School districts spend millions of dollars each year on advertising campaigns designed to attract students and parents. These campaigns often use misleading and deceptive tactics to sell the public on the benefits of public education.

In her new book, *Selling School: The Marketing of Public Education*, Jacquelynne Eccles analyzes the marketing campaigns of public schools. She reveals how these campaigns are designed to promote a particular

vision of education and sell it to parents, taxpayers, and policymakers. Eccles argues that these campaigns are often misleading and that they fail to give the public a true understanding of the challenges facing public education.

Eccles's book is a timely and important contribution to the debate over public education. It is a must-read for anyone who wants to understand how the American education system is being sold to the public.

## **The Marketing of Public Education**

The marketing of public education is a relatively new phenomenon. It began in the early 1990s, as school districts began to compete for students in a shrinking market. School districts that were losing students to private schools and homeschooling programs began to develop marketing campaigns to attract new students.

The marketing campaigns of public schools have become increasingly sophisticated over the years. Today, school districts use a variety of marketing techniques to reach their target audience. These techniques include:

- **Advertising:** School districts spend millions of dollars each year on advertising campaigns. These campaigns are designed to reach parents and students through a variety of channels, including television, radio, print, and online.
- **Public relations:** School districts also use public relations to promote their schools. They hire public relations firms to write press releases, organize events, and manage their media relations.

- **Marketing research:** School districts conduct market research to better understand the needs of their target audience. This research helps them develop marketing campaigns that are more likely to be successful.

## The Goals of Marketing

The goals of marketing are to create awareness, generate interest, and drive sales. In the case of public education, the goal of marketing is to attract students and parents to public schools.

School districts use a variety of marketing techniques to achieve their goals. These techniques include:

- **Promoting the benefits of public education:** School districts often use their marketing campaigns to promote the benefits of public education. They emphasize the high quality of public schools, the diversity of their student body, and the affordability of their tuition.
- **Targeting specific audiences:** School districts often target their marketing campaigns to specific audiences. For example, they may develop campaigns that are designed to appeal to parents of young children, or to parents who are considering homeschooling.
- **Using emotional appeals:** School districts often use emotional appeals in their marketing campaigns. They may use images of happy children, or stories of successful public school graduates, to evoke positive emotions in their target audience.

## The Impact of Marketing

The marketing of public education has had a significant impact on the American education system. It has led to:

- **Increased competition among school districts:** The marketing of public education has led to increased competition among school districts for students. This competition has driven up the cost of education and made it more difficult for schools to provide a high quality education.
- **Increased focus on standardized testing:** The marketing of public education has also led to an increased focus on standardized testing. School districts often use standardized test scores to promote their schools and to attract students. This focus on testing has narrowed the curriculum and has made it more difficult for schools to teach the whole child.
- **Decreased public trust in public education:** The marketing of public education has also led to decreased public trust in public education. The public is increasingly skeptical of the claims made by school districts, and they are more likely to believe that public schools are not as good as they are advertised to be.

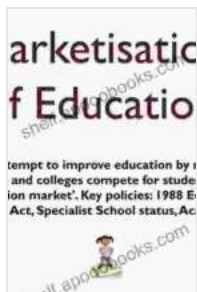
## **The Future of Marketing**

The marketing of public education is likely to continue to evolve in the years to come. As technology changes, school districts will find new ways to reach their target audience. They will also use more sophisticated marketing techniques to drive enrollment and generate revenue.

The future of public education is uncertain. However, one thing is for sure: the marketing of public education will continue to play a significant role in

shaping the future of our schools.

*Selling School* is a timely and important book that challenges the conventional wisdom about public education. It offers a fresh perspective on the future of schooling and is a must-read for anyone who wants to understand how the American education system is being sold to the public.



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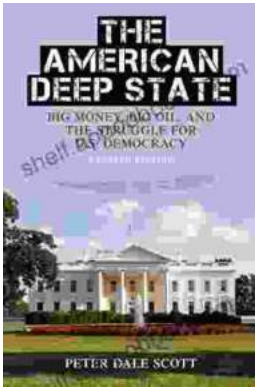
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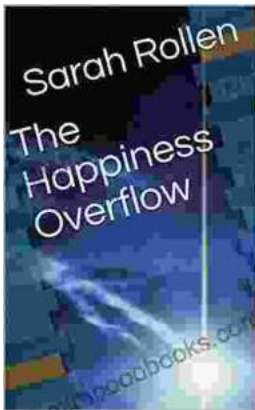
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