Overcoming barriers to learning and raising standards of achievement are central efforts in education. In the UK the government has made education its leading domestic priority and it has made education the center of its drive to improve public services by using the private sector to bring about improvements in performance and to break the status quo. Likewise, throughout the world private interests are now impinging heavily upon how state education is perceived; the 'educational apartheid' between state and private is diminishing across schools and local authorities. This book provides an incisive commentary on this rapidly changing phenomenon through clarification, analysis and evaluation of a variety of policy initiatives and implementation issues in the UK and by assessing parallel developments elsewhere in the world. The ways in which change is being forced along in a range of guises from public partnerships to private company deals are illustrated with many real and contentious examples.

Partnership arrangements, sponsorships, new categories of state independent schools and private sector take-overs of schools and education authorities form the patchwork of how state education is becoming privatized. Will these changes bring more choice and improved standards? How valuable to parents is the information presented in league tables and inspection reports? How will this impact on the future of education? This provocative and critical book moves forward this highly topical debate by providing a direct, in-depth and jargon free commentary on what is happening under the banner of privatization.

Author: Green, Chris Publisher: Routledge Illustration: N Language: ENG Title: The Privatization of State Education Pages: 00000 (Encrypted PDF) On Sale: 2005-08-17 SKU-13/ISBN: 9780415354738 Category: Social Science : General
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