



Destined to Rule the Schools: Women and the Superintendency, 1873-1995 (Sunny Series, Educational Leadership)

Jackie M. Blount

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Tells the story of women and school leadership in America from the common school era to the present. Offers an historical account of how teaching became women's work and the school superintendency men's.

In 1909, when she became the superintendent of the Chicago schools, Ella Flagg Young proclaimed that women were "destined to rule the schools of every city." After all, women accounted for nearly eighty percent of all teachers by 1910 and their ascendance into formal school leadership positions could not be far behind. After World War II, however, a backlash against single women educators and a rigid realignment of gender roles in schools contributed to a rapid decline of women school administrators across the country, a decline from which there has been little recovery to the present.

Destined to Rule the Schools tells the story of women and school leadership in America from the common school era to the present. In a broad sense, it offers an historical account of how teaching became women's work and the school superintendency men's. Blount explores how power in school employment has been structured unequally by gender. It focuses on the superintendency because an important component of the effort to establish control of schools has occurred in contesting the definition of this position. Unique and important contributions of this volume include: the only published comprehensive statistical study describing the number of women superintendents throughout the twentieth century, an analysis suggesting that the superintendency may have become an appointive position in part to remove it from the influence of newly enfranchised women voters, a discussion of the role of homophobia in creating and perpetuating rigid gender divisions in school employment, and a broad analysis that integrates the histories of teaching and school administration.

"Jackie Blount's work is both painstakingly researched and originally conceptualized, as it mines a field historians may have thought they knew. This important book on women who administered schools discusses identity, sexuality, power, authority, and educational practice. And it's a first-rate read!" -- Sari Biklen, Syracuse University

"Jackie Blount's intellect, scholarship, writing skill, and sensitivity to gender inequity and its tenacious hold on our society combine to give us a powerful book that is unparalleled in the literature on the topic to date." - Sandra L. Gupton, University of Southern Mississippi

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