



The Children in Room E4: American Education on Trial

By Susan Eaton

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With our nation's urban schools growing more segregated every year, Susan Eaton set out to see whether separate can ever really be equal. An award-winning journalist, Eaton spent four years at Simpson-Waverly Elementary School, an all-minority school in Hartford, Connecticut. Located in the poorest city in the wealthiest state in the nation, it is a glaring example of the great racial and economic divide found in almost every major urban center across the country.

The Children in Room E4 is the compelling story of one student, one classroom, and one indomitable teacher, Ms. Luddy. In the midst of Band-Aid reforms and hotshot superintendents with empty promises, drug dealers and street gangs, Ms. Luddy's star student, Jeremy, and his fellow classmates face tremendous challenges both inside and outside of a school cut off from mainstream America.

Meanwhile, across town, a team of civil rights lawyers fight an intrepid battle to end the de facto segregation that beleaguers Jeremy's school and hundreds of others across America.

From inside the classroom and the courtroom, Eaton reveals the unsettling truths about an education system that leaves millions of children behind and gives voice to those who strive against overwhelming odds for a better future.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. The separate but equal doctrine may have been repudiated by the Supreme Court, but as Eaton cogently demonstrates in this stirring and sobering account of the school system in inner-city Hartford, Conn., major educational inequality still exists in many inner-city schools. Eaton chronicles the progress of *Sheff v. O'Neill*, a case brought against the state in 1989, charging that school districts in Hartford and its environs were rigidly drawn to ensure segregation of poor and minority students. By encapsulating these students in racially isolated, underfunded schools, the state has created a self-perpetuating cycle of poverty and substandard academic achievement. A graceful and fluent writer, Eaton reviews the circumstances in which local and state politics allowed this situation to arise and worsen over time. She follows the inception and progress of the court case, creating suspense about its outcome. (Though the case was decided in favor of the plaintiffs, appeals are still pending after 18 years, since the state has failed to meet its mandated goals.) As long as there is racial isolation, Eaton convincingly demonstrates, schools will not improve and students will be denied the chance to learn at the same rate as their suburban neighbors, thereby impeding their chances to improve their lives and their futures. By bringing this situation to light, she has significantly articulated the problems that challenge politicians, school boards and concerned citizens. (Jan. 19)

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From Booklist

Eaton, a former journalist who followed an 18-year-long lawsuit involving the school district of Hartford, Connecticut, brings to life all of the complex social issues in the separate-but-equal debate that has roiled the nation since *Brown v. Board of Education*. Eaton focuses on a dedicated teacher and the students in Room E4 of the Simpson-Waverly Elementary School, all struggling to overcome the inequities that leave the children without adequate supplies, courses, and services to get a decent education in a decaying town, one of the nation's poorest, surrounded by wealthy suburbs. The teacher, Ms. Luddy, pushes her students, from the brightest to the most challenged, to meet the marks set for student achievement under No Child Left Behind, knowing that the school has little of the resources necessary to help the children achieve. As Eaton details the day-to-day struggle in the classroom, she chronicles the courtroom battle waged by the Connecticut Civil Liberties Union to equalize the balance between the poor black and Puerto Rican students in the city and the more privileged students in the suburbs. *Vanessa Bush*

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Review

"[Eaton] has written a book that goes to the heart of who we are as a nation, of what we mean when we ask our children to pledge allegiance to the flag of 'one nation, indivisible.'"—The Boston Globe

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Dawn Williams:

Here thing why that The Children in Room E4: American Education on Trial are different and trustworthy to be yours. First of all reading through a book is good nevertheless it depends in the content from it which is the content is as yummy as food or not. The Children in Room E4: American Education on Trial giving you

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Daniel Campbell:

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Edward Donnelly:

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