

WHY TEACHERS AND EDUCATION NEED A UNION VOICE

WHY TEACHER UNIONS ARE GOOD FOR TEACHERS – AND THE PUBLIC

Diane Ravitch, *American Educator*, Winter 2006-07.

Ravitch reminds us of what teaching was like before unions—when cronyism and favoritism determined who got hired and who was fired, before male and female teachers had equal pay and rights, before teachers had anything to say about working conditions and what happened in schools. She marvels at how the current anti-union climate gives virtually everyone but the teachers a pass when things don't work. "If scores are low, the critics say it must be because of the teachers' contract, not because the district has a weak curriculum or lacks resources or has mediocre leadership." She predicts that reform will not succeed when "administrators operate by stealth and confrontation" and "hand down orders from on high." Ravitch calls on unions to support the essentials of good education—such as rigorous curriculum and effective instruction—and for both administrators and teachers to develop an atmosphere of mutual respect.