

## **Editors' Introduction: The Growing Nexus between Education and the Private Sector: Implications for Teacher Preparation and Development**

I would like to extend my appreciation to Bruce A. Jones, who over a year ago approached me with an idea that eventually led to this issue of *Teacher Education Quarterly*. Throughout this project he has provided resources and references that have helped me better understand the ways in which private interests have come to influence public education policy and to recognize that public schools have emerged as new consumer-based markets.

Ever since the Industrial Revolution the private sector has had an interest in helping shape public education policy. However, only recently, especially since the publication of *A Nation at Risk* by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) under the presidential leadership of Ronald Reagan, have public schools become so vulnerable to corporate intrusion and commercial interests, and on such a grand scale.

In deliberating about this theme for a special issue of *Teacher Education Quarterly* Bruce and I engaged in lengthy conversations, shared extensive reading lists, and sought out those scholars whose work addresses the growing issue of private influences in public education policies and practices. We then compiled a list of potential authors and began inviting those we felt would make critical connections between private and public interests within the context of teacher education. The credit for the explication of these connections lies with the authors

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who accepted the invitation to participate and contribute to this volume. All of us at *Teacher Education Quarterly* are infinitely grateful for their contributions.

—Thomas Nelson, Co-Editor  
University of the Pacific

I give eternal thanks to Tom Nelson for providing *Teacher Education Quarterly* as a venue to explicate the issues associated with the growing role of private sector interests, philosophy, and practice in public education, and what this means for the teaching profession. We face seemingly insurmountable problems in public education regarding our inability to effectively address the needs of our most historically disenfranchised children; our inability to lead and target solutions to persistent problems of racism, poverty, and education inequity; and our inability to move out of our academic silos to advance the best purposes of education as a collective. This inability has helped open the door to the private sector opportunism that we face today. In the dead of the night the train left the station, eliminating all that is meant by being “public” in public education. Educators did not see the train leave because they did not see the train arrive.

This is no coincidence. Key elements of our private sector are well-known for demanding public accountability from educators, while at the same time acting in a stealth-like fashion—engaging in decision-making practices around education that are devoid of public transparency. Key elements of our private sector are known for complaining about the lack of connections between schools and the community, while at the same time becoming involved in public education in an exclusive fashion that is devoid of human diversity. And, key elements of our private sector are known for demanding that public schools engage in quick-fire structural change, while at the same time failing to engage in the structural change needed to eliminate the economic inequities and Third World conditions that exist in many of our school communities. The gulf between what is being said and being done about our nation’s schools and children is vast and hypocritical. All of the private sector sponsored Teacher-of-the-Year Awards and Urban School District of the Year Awards will not change this mind-boggling reality.

The celebration of the achievements of our children and teachers does not mean that public education has to be bought and sold by symbolic gestures and insults that emanate from the private sector. The onus is on educators in both our K-12 and higher education settings to take back the education profession by defining the problems, leading the discussion, and finding the solutions that are necessary to effectively educate all of our children. It is my hope that this issue of *Teacher Education Quarterly* will assist in that vital endeavor.

—Bruce A. Jones, Co-Editor  
University of South Florida