“Policy Patrons takes us deep inside traditional and venture philanthropies to learn, in the unfiltered words of decision-makers, about profound shifts affecting public education and the practice of democracy. Tompkins-Stange has delivered an eye-opening portrait of this fast-changing field.”

—DALE RUSSAKOFF, AUTHOR OF THE PRIZE: WHO’S IN CHARGE OF AMERICA’S SCHOOLS?

POLICY PATRONS
PHILANTHROPY, EDUCATION REFORM, AND THE POLITICS OF INFLUENCE
Megan E. Tompkins-Stange
Foreword by Robert B. Schwartz

Policy Patrons offers a rare behind-the-scenes view of decision making inside four influential education philanthropies: the Ford Foundation, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation. The outcome is an intriguing, thought-provoking look at the impact of current philanthropic efforts on education.

Over a period of several years, Megan E. Tompkins-Stange gained the trust of key players and outside observers of these four organizations. Through a series of confidential interviews, she began to explore the values, ideas, and beliefs that inform these foundations’ strategies and practices. The picture that emerges reveals important differences in the strategies and values of the more established foundations vis-à-vis the newer, more activist foundations—differences that have a significant impact on education policy and practice, and have important implications for democratic decision making.

In recent years, the philanthropic sector has played an increasing role in championing and financing education reform. Policy Patrons makes an original and invaluable contribution to contemporary discussions about the appropriate role of foundations in public policy and the future direction of education reform.

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