



Tilting at Windmills: School Reform, San Diego, and America's Race to Renew Public Education

Richard Lee Colvin

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Between 1998, when Alan Bersin became superintendent of the San Diego Unified School District, and 2005, when he left that post, San Diego undertook a sustained and comprehensive effort to reform its public school system. As an early and ambitious instance of the types of reforms that by now have been implemented in city schools across the nation, San Diego has received scattered attention within the scholarly and policy worlds. Yet till now there has been no comprehensive account of Bersin's tenure and the reforms he undertook during those seven stormy years. *Tilting at Windmills* fills that gap.

A book that draws equally on Richard Lee Colvin's deep acquaintance with contemporary education reform and the unique circumstances of the San Diego experience, *Tilting at Windmills* is a penetrating and invaluable account of Bersin's contentious superintendency. At the heart of Colvin's research are years of interviews with Bersin, who provided Colvin with unprecedented insight into his experiences and thoughts about the reforms he initiated. The result is a detailed and nuanced narrative of the reform process in San Diego and its relationship to comparable school reform efforts throughout the country.

A definitive account of the San Diego story, *Tilting at Windmills* is also a crucial contribution to our more general understanding of the education reforms that have swept the nation during the past fifteen years.

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