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# Blaming Teachers

Professionalization Policies and the Failure of Reform in American History

by Diana D'Amico Pawlewicz

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## DESCRIPTION

**Winner of the 2021 Society of Professors of Education Outstanding Book Award**

Historically, Americans of all stripes have concurred that teachers were essential to the success of the public schools and nation. However, they have also concurred that public school teachers were to blame for the failures of the schools and identified professionalization as a panacea.

In *Blaming Teachers*, Diana D'Amico Pawlewicz reveals that historical professionalization reforms subverted public school teachers' professional legitimacy. Superficially, professionalism connotes authority, expertise, and status. Professionalization for teachers never unfolded this way; rather, it was a policy process fueled by blame where others identified teachers' shortcomings. Policymakers, school leaders, and others understood professionalization measures for teachers as efficient ways to bolster the growing bureaucratic order of the public schools through regulation and standardization. Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century with the rise of municipal public school systems and reaching into the 1980s, *Blaming Teachers* traces the history of professionalization policies and the discourses of blame that sustained them.

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## AUTHOR/EDITOR BIOGRAPHY

DIANA D'AMICO PAWLEWICZ is a historian of education reform and social policy and an assistant professor in Educational Foundations and Research at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks supported by the Elnora Hopper Danley Professorship.

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