FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Clarion Review

Diseconomies of Scale in Public Education: A Rational for School Vouchers
Donald P. Lade
Xlibris
978-1-4134-1096-9
One Star (out of Five)

Diseconomies of Scale is billed as a rationale for school vouchers, which author Donald P. Lade considers part of the free market system missing in public education. He argues that school budgets themselves can provide fodder for those in favor of the voucher system to use in its "assault on the public school monopoly."

School systems in the U.S. suffer from "diseconomies of scale" that result in poor management and use of taxpayer money, Lade says. He criticizes the budgeting process, saying school boards are composed of people woefully unfamiliar with building budgets, and alleging that school administrators mingle budget compartments together in a way that obscures the bottom line.

The slim book, which might better have remained a research paper, mainly provides historical information that shows how public schools evolved the budgeting process they (presumably) use today. Readers, it's assumed, will already understand the voucher issue as it relates to education and will be familiar with economic terms and concepts that relate to budgeting. Lade uses statistics from the California public school system, claiming that similar findings exist across the country.

Although the book was published in 2003, the three charts at the back of the book show statistics for the Los Angeles school system with data current to 1968. The book is retrospective rather than forward looking. Lade mostly gives assurances; very little real advice on how to advance the voucher issue is provided. He writes:

> *School vouchers can pass if the voting public can be brought to appreciate the discretionary nature of district funding given district operational whats and whys in a budget climate of economic cost-plus taxing and internal (district) budget preferences. The World War II developments in California merely*

make this easier to understand.

The elephant in the room is a spelling mistake on the book's cover. In fact, the word "rationale" is spelled incorrectly throughout the book, although it's correct on page forty-three. Mistakes happen, and no doubt the author is unhappy about this one. There are more—"veil [sic] of tears," in particular, stands out. The book cries for an edit in other ways as well: punctuation, organization, and clarity. While Lade includes M.B.A. and Ph.D after his name, he shares nothing else that would allow readers to assess his assertions in light of his credentials. He does, however, provide a bibliography.