

# COLUMBIA GLOBAL REPORTS

Dear Reader,

Katie Worth, a superb young journalist and the author of *Miseducation*, grew up in Chico, California, just a few miles from Paradise, site of one of the worst of the massive fires that, as a result of climate change, are devastating the American West. Not long ago she returned to her old middle school, and found that climate change is being taught there as the subject of an unresolved scientific dispute, not a proven reality.

Chico is hardly alone. Worth's intensive, multi-year investigation of the teaching of climate science in American public schools reveals that in much of the country, children learn that climate change may or may not actually be happening—even when alarming evidence that it *is* happening presents itself in their own back yards. There are a number of reasons for this. The oil industry has been organizing for years to sow doubt about climate change; some of its efforts have made their way into school curricula. Climate denialism has become an article of faith for many ideological conservatives, and they have effectively lobbied state legislatures, boards of education, and local school boards to influence how the subject is taught. Textbook publishers have learned that fudging the reality of climate change can enhance their sales in large parts of the country.

Education is about the future—the futures of millions of individual students, and the future of the country as they will collectively shape it. Teaching students the truth about the climate crisis offers the hope that their generation will take more decisive action than past generations have. The situation Worth has uncovered may have the opposite effect. *Miseducation* is a powerful and stirring call to action.

Best,



Nicholas Lemann