



NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND: A PRIMER

By Frederick M. Hess and Michael Petrilli

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The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) is the most influential piece of federal education legislation in American history. Signed into law in 2002, NCLB trumped two centuries of state primacy in K–12 education by setting standards for measuring student performance, ensuring the quality of teachers, and providing options for students in ineffective schools.

In *No Child Left Behind: A Primer* (Peter Lang, February 2006), coauthors Frederick M. Hess of AEI and Michael Petrilli of the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation have produced a concise yet comprehensive citizen's guide to this complex and controversial law. They trace the heritage of the law's major provisions, explain how they are designed to work, and discuss the practical challenges of the law's implementation. *No Child Left Behind: A Primer* will serve as an invaluable resource for students, teachers, policymakers, and journalists as the effects of NCLB continue to unfold in schools across the country and as Congress considers the law's reauthorization in 2007.

The act seeks to ensure that all American students are proficient in math and reading by 2014. But teachers, policymakers, and journalists are often confused about its expansive provisions, even as it has roiled the nation's schools and classrooms:

- The 2005 Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll reported that 59 percent of those surveyed said they knew little or nothing about the law, including 54 percent of parents of public school students.
- More than thirty states have considered or adopted measures that either challenge, demand changes, or call for increased flexibility in implementation of the law.
- The U.S. Department of Education reports that more than 24,000 schools failed to make "adequate yearly progress" in 2004–05, representing roughly 27 percent of all public schools.

No Child Left Behind: A Primer is essential reading for those who work in the education field and feel the effects of this sweeping legislation on a daily basis.

Frederick M. Hess is a resident scholar and director of education policy studies at AEI. He is the author of *Tough Love for Schools: Essays on Competition, Accountability, and Excellence* (AEI Press, 2006) and *Common Sense School Reform* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2004). **Michael Petrilli** is vice president for national programs and policy at the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation.

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