

No Child Left Behind and the Transformation of Federal Education Policy, 1965-2005 by Patrick J. McGuinn. Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 2006. 260 pp. Cloth, \$40.00; paper, \$19.95.

Washington's increasing attention to American schools suggests three interesting puzzles that Patrick McGuinn explores in this study of federal education policy. Why have liberals and conservatives both supported a more active federal role in education? Why did this expanded role unfold during a period when devolution and deregulation were gaining momentum? How does one account for major policy changes that often seem unlikely to occur in the American political system?

McGuinn answers those questions by focusing on the evolution of federal education policy since 1965. Analytically, he uses a "policy regimes" approach that he argues is better at capturing change than other models such as punctuated equilibrium theory (pp. 11, 209) or approaches that focus narrowly on specific causal mechanisms (pp. 16, 17). The book is informed by rich sources, including elite interviews, primary and secondary documents, and public opinion polls. McGuinn marshals his evidence to briefly summarize policy changes from 1965 to 1988, before offering detailed chapters on the 1988 to 2005 period, the book's primary focus.

McGuinn argues that the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) signaled the clear emergence of a new policy regime that had been building since 1988. No longer do federal policymakers simply focus on ensuring equity for disadvantaged students and monitoring policy inputs, he says. Rather, McGuinn sees a fundamentally new regime that now stresses excellence for all students, backed by high-stakes accountability for results. That shift, McGuinn notes, was built by conservatives and liberals who charted a middle path while sidestepping the preferences of key interest groups in their respective coalitions.

This book is required reading for students, scholars, and policymakers who seek a historical account of the evolving federal role in education. McGuinn provides great launching pads for several discussions about the policy and politics that Washington's efforts have fostered. Consider, for example, his view that the equity regime guiding the original Elementary and Secondary Education Act was "eviscerated" (p. 50) by events during the 1980s and eventually replaced by a new regime focused on educational excellence for all students. While federal officials now discuss achievement for all, it may be that excellence has not replaced, but rather joined, equity as an additional federal concern in a hybridized equity-excellence policy regime. Even today, leaders such as President George W. Bush, Representative George Miller (D-CA), who was a key architect of NCLB, and others who McGuinn quotes (for example, pp. 136, 141, 142, 159) emphasize the need to eliminate glaring achievement gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged student groups. Also, NCLB's authorizing provisions still distribute funds based primarily on economic need. In short, an equity impulse remains, even as excellence has

become more important. McGuinn's account will help focus debates over the tensions between equity and excellence and the government's ability to promote both.

The book will also inform discussions about how federal education policy has influenced the American federal system more generally. McGuinn argues that NCLB represents a "new educational federalism," in which Washington is now a "national schoolmarm . . . whacking those states that fail to record satisfactory and timely progress toward federal education goals" (p. 195). Clearly, federal policymakers now act more aggressively in K-12 education. But some authors (myself included) have argued that Washington's willingness to offer the states flexibility on NCLB's key requirements, and its reliance on the states to develop curriculum standards and tests, illustrate how state preferences remain powerful forces that help shape federal policy. By addressing the federalism issue, though, McGuinn provides a great vehicle for informing debates about how subsequent federal education efforts will likely affect relationships across the American federal system.

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School's In: Federalism and the National Education Agenda by Paul Manna. Washington DC, Georgetown University Press, 2006. 209 pp. \$26.95.

The case for a new view of federalism is given credence through an exhaustive analysis of the national education agenda in the twenty-first-century United States. The author's "borrowing strength" (p. 5) model highlights a new way to view the politics of power within the federal system. In the past, power was often studied in terms of its distribution and use. The preferences of those with a significant amount of power tended to sideline the preferences of those with little or no power. Even developments in network theories of federalism have a tendency to look at significant hubs as loci of power and influence, implicitly identifying weaker network regions and areas of minimal influence.

Paul Manna's analysis, however, invites the reader to consider federalism at a more complex level. The "borrowing strength" model argues that while actors within a federal system can be identified nominally, power can be shared for greater influence at particular policy moments. According to Manna, borrowing theory can be studied by focusing on two dimensions of policy: the capacity and the license of government to act. When a government has both the capacity and the license to act, then government is likely to create policy. When a government has neither the capacity nor the license to act, then policy entrepreneurs are "standing by" (p. 34), anticipating the opening of a policy window. In most instances, however, the distinctions are not as sharp. A government may have the capacity but lack the license to act or vice versa; government then seeks to borrow strength from other actors who are likely to