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Hayes has provided readers with a comprehensive look at the controversial No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation in this thoughtful and informative volume. Divided into fifteen chapters, the book summarizes the history and contents of the law while discussing issues for consideration as the law faces possible reauthorization. The book provides a good foundation for readers wishing to increase their understanding of the law's provisions. The book is written from a strictly informative, unbiased perspective.

The first section of the book describes the legislative background for NCLB beginning with the landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, Kansas Supreme Court case that overturned the separate but equal doctrine established in 1896. Next, Hayes traces the milestones of the federal government's involvement in education during the

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twentieth century with the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the development of Head Start, the 1968 Bilingual Education Act, and the 1970s laws that prohibited discrimination against female students and provided educational services to students with disabilities. Hayes provides a background for understanding how the economic landscape helped to pave the way for the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983. *A Nation at Risk* set the stage for the reform efforts in the 1980s and 1990s that eventually led to No Child Left Behind.

These reform efforts included ideas about curriculum standards, testing programs, publicizing test scores, and recommendations on how to improve teaching. In the 1990s under Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton—Goals 2000 and the Improving American Schools Act—materialized the perceived need for educational reform by creating a list of educational objectives for the nation and by including all children in the efforts at school improvement. By the time George W. Bush was elected in 2000, education was seen as a top national priority.

Hayes continues his discussion of the history of NCLB with a chapter on the implementation aspects of the law's requirements. Hayes states, "it is extremely difficult to summarize the hundreds of pages of legal language" (p. 15). However, Hayes manages to provide a clear and concise description of the significant points of this long and complex law. He provides a detailed outline of the implications and sanctions that schools face when failing to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), compares the requirements placed on charter schools versus those placed upon public schools, and defines a "highly qualified teacher." He concludes this section with a brief discussion of the controversy surrounding the funding of NCLB informing the reader that the federal government still pays only a small portion of costs of educating the nation's students.

Hayes explores thoroughly the reasons why various constituencies are critical of the law. Critics include conservative legislators who do not believe that education is

the responsibility of the federal government, progressive educators who feel the test preparation inhibits creative teaching and curtails active learning experiences, and those who complain that non-tested subjects are not given their due. Hayes also points out that some critics do not feel the law goes far enough. These opponents are critical of the current system in which each state sets its own curriculum and testing requirements. They propose, instead, a set of national standards culminating in a national test. The discussion leaves no doubt that there are strong feelings on all sides of the issue.

Hayes compares arguments made by both proponents and opponents to the law's influence on reading and math achievement since the inception of NCLB. He points out that virtually every other content area—foreign language, PE, fine arts, etc—can produce studies showing the decrease in time that students spend on these content areas since NCLB took effect. This debate leaves one wondering about the true costs of any gains in achievement.

Perhaps the most enlightening chapter is on the faith-based initiatives that are endorsed under NCLB. While a voucher program was not part of the final version of the law, vouchers were included in the original draft but were abandoned to gain the bipartisan support of legislators. Additionally, NCLB includes provisions to “expand the role of faith-based organizations by offering significant grants to them for providing educational services” (p.114). Readers may be surprised to learn that NCLB includes provisions that require public school districts to provide certain services to students who attend private and parochial schools. These services may include transportation, textbooks and other learning aids, speech therapy and other special education services, health services, remedial programs, and participation in vocational educational programs. As Hayes states, “most taxpayers are unaware that their local school district is paying for such programs for religious schools located in their community” (p. 118).

Another surprising fact revealed in this discussion is the signing in December 2005 by President Bush of legislation

appropriating 1.6 billion dollars for victims of Hurricane Katrina that allowed parents to pay tuition at parochial schools. Hayes points out that the attitude of the current Supreme Court is unlikely to overturn any provisions relating to faith-based initiatives in NCLB, however, such programs will likely have to prove that they do not violate the First Amendment Establishment Clause. The role that faith-based organizations play in public education is likely to be a topic of debate when NCLB is considered for reauthorization.

Hayes provides background information and discussion on a variety of issues that educators currently grapple with including homeless students, English language learners, Native American students, migrant students, early childhood education, and graduation rates. No issue of concern is ignored by this author who has spent years in our nation's schools and classrooms.

The book concludes with a look at the battle lines that may be drawn when NCLB comes up for reauthorization. He includes opinions from all camps including those who staunchly oppose NCLB's tenets, those who rigorously defend its principles, and those moderates who feel compromise is in order. Hayes paints a detailed, thought provoking picture of the heated debate that is bound to occur.

About the Reviewer

Shelley Merchant is a PhD student at the University of North Texas studying curriculum and instruction. She has been a public school educator for twenty-seven years serving in both classroom and administrative roles. Her current research interest includes the impact of NCLB on gifted programs.

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