



# Big Brother and the National Reading Curriculum: How Ideology Trumped Evidence

*Richard L. Allington*

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New legislation will transform American public education. Basic to the No Child Left Behind Act and the Put Reading First program is a new and substantial federal intrusion into local curriculum control and teacher autonomy. This intrusion is masked in the legislative mandate for "evidence-based", or "scientific", reading instruction. Beyond the distortions of the findings of the National Reading Panel Report that undergird the new federal initiatives, there are other federal mandates, past and current, that have also impeded improving reading instruction - and worse, the public education system - through privatization, teacher disempowerment, and a systemic business model.

In this timely and important book, nationally-recognized reading researcher Richard Allington tracks and questions the 30-year campaign that has focused on testing, accountability, and federalization of education. He and other educators, including Jim Cunningham, Michael Pressley, Elaine Garan, and Patrick Shannon, have contributed articles that provide an overview of past and recent federal education policies, including the NRP Report and associated legislation and policy making, with analyses of the premises of the new national reading plan. By showing how these premises are manufactured - that is, not reliably supported by the research - they explain why this plan is an unwarranted federal encroachment into local educational decision making.

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