



# Left Behind: Urban High Schools and the Failure of Market Reform

*Edward P. St. John, Victoria J. Milazzo Bigelow, Kim Callahan Lijana, Johanna C. Massé*

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In *Left Behind*, a team of education scholars led by Edward P. St. John argues that American cities have been engaged for the past three decades in a radical—but failing—effort to transform general and vocational high schools into college preparatory institutions. By examining the educational reforms in four urban charter schools across the United States and four public high schools in New York City, *Left Behind* reveals how educators contend with the challenge of developing new courses while providing social support for students to build college-going cultures.

The research shows that district schools struggle to comply with standards that leave little room to develop advanced thematic curricula and that charter schools have not succeeded in substantially raising student test scores. Many students who start in rigorous charter schools transfer back to public schools while both public and charter schools struggle to prepare their students for college-level work.

*Left Behind* provides crucial insights into the troubling trajectory of public policy while offering teachers and administrators effective strategies for overcoming barriers.

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