This new edition of The Political Dynamics of American Education is a major revision of the most widely used text in the politics of education. The authors have devised an original conceptual framework to organize and chart the increasingly complex political web of American education. These competing forces of challenge and steady state now affect all levels of policymaking and administration. Combined, these conflicting forces constitute the “dynamic” nature of American education.

The fourth edition of The Political Dynamics of American Education places more emphasis on school choice, reflecting the political conflict and stress evident in recent reform challenges. The authors expand both on the current increase in local political activity and on the external context of local schools to analyze the political momentum behind education standards. At the same time, the limits of both deregulation and centralized strategies are stressed as academic standards policies confront complex local politics.

The most contemporary issues are treated: the 2008 election, politics of charter schools, mayoral control, and the evolutionary politics of NCLB. Each chapter covers the latest school politics research and reviews new “political” research dimensions and the current state of education politics scholarship.

This text is designed in part for practitioners involved in education—administrators, teachers, state officials, and lay groups. It will also be valuable to scholars of educational administration, political science, and sociology because of its comprehensive framework and extensive synthesis of current research.

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1. Overview of the Education Political System. Describes the forces that have caused increased political conflict in schools. Overviews the political systems theory and how it relates to the book. Provides the organizational and conceptual basis for the volume. 2. Conflict, Politics, and Schools. Discusses the challenges that produce conflict in schools today.

Part II: Politics at the Local Level.
3. The Origins and Agents of School Demands. Presents the concept of interest groups and the nature of conflict, coalition, and formation of educational groups. Explores the influence of the media on school politics. 4. School Policy Access: Elections and Referenda. Examines the relationship of school board elections, community power, and political participation to school policies and politics.

7. The Chief Administrator as Professional and Politician. Explores the role of the superintendent as both a professional educator and politician. Describes superintendent behavior amidst educational change. 8. The Micropolitics within Schools. Examines the politics within the local schools, describes interactions between citizens and professionals, looks at the role of the principal, and considers teachers as political actors.

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Part IV: Current Political Controversies.
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This book is recommended for use in these courses:
- Politics of Education
- School-Community Relations
- Educational Policymaking
- Educational Foundations

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