



# **The Neighbor's Kid: A Cross-Country Journey in Search of What Education Means to Americans**

*Philip Brand*

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*The Neighbor's Kid* tells the story of what twenty-four year-old Philip Brand discovered regarding American education when he drove his car cross-country during the 2008-09 school year visiting two schools in each of forty-nine states. The schools were public and private, religious and secular, urban and rural, typical and unusual. Brand wanted to learn first-hand what students, parents, teachers, and principals think about their elementary and secondary schools and what they expect from education. His principal discovery: When it comes to picking a school parents care most about the kids with whom their own children associate. Not the curriculum, not the teachers, but the other kids. That concern has important consequences for how school districts, states and the federal government set education policy. A second conclusion: Government policymakers cannot set standards of educational "achievement" because true education is intimately tied to the cultural and civic experiences of families and communities.

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