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## Best Books for High School Reform

### Time to Learn: The Story of One High School's Remarkable Transformation and the People who made it Happen

George H. Wood. (1998). New York: Penguin Group.

Wood left academia to become a principal of a poor and struggling rural Ohio high school. Wood and his school community transformed Federal Hocking High School (FHHS) from a mediocre conventional institution to a community where students develop academic and social habits required of citizens in a democracy. Wood draws upon his experiences and observations from FHHS to offer advice, guidelines and practical plans.

### New American High School

Marsh, D, & Coddling, J. (Eds.) (1999). California: Corwin Press, Inc.,

This book provides a blueprint for improving high schools based on high standards, particularly the Certificate of Initial Mastery (CIM). Marsh, Coddling and Associates propose changes to American high schools designed to ensure that all students are prepared for life after school.

### The Power of Their Ideas

Meier, D. (1995). Massachusetts: Beacon Press.

Founder of the Central Park East (CPE) alternative public schools in New York City, Meier gives an account of the two decades she spent pioneering and creating a highly successful educational program. Throughout the book, Meier emphasizes that schools need to develop human beings and citizens rather than skilled workers or academics. Meier outlines a reform effort that calls for autonomous small learning communities, parental involvement in school selection and student participation in school-guided, socially useful work experiences.

### The Students Are Watching: Schools & the Moral Contract

Sizer, T.R., & Sizer, N.F. (1999). Massachusetts: Beacon Press.

Observing that morality is a two-way street, Theodore and Nancy Sizer illustrate how both students and teachers are responsible for creating

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an environment where respect for each other and for learning are paramount. In the school community, students learn not just from their classes but also from their school's routines and rituals, especially about matters of character. The Sizemore and Kohn contend that schools must be places where children will not only meet important academic goals, but also acquire good intellectual habits and develop their own moral agency. This will enable them to be able to make wise and principled decisions once they are on their own.

### **One Kid at a Time: Big Lessons from a Small School**

Levine, E. (2001). New York: Teachers College Press.

This book tells the story of Providence's Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center, (the Met), a five-year-old urban high school that offers a new model for secondary education. At the Met, every student, with support from teachers and parents, follows a highly personalized learning plan and completes interest-based projects and internships. High achievement is expected of all students, regardless of their background. Based on the Met's first four years, this book provides ideas and strategies for improving schools.

### **Making the Grade: Reinventing America's Schools**

Wagner, T. (2001). New York: Routledge.

After decades of school reform efforts a consensus has been reached that American education must be improved to raise the achievement of all students. Unfortunately, most people are confused about what's really wrong with our schools, why large numbers of students are doing poorly, and what it will take to solve the problem. Wagner poses critical questions related to the reinvention of public education and outlines ways that communities, government, teachers, parents, and students can begin talking about how to enact meaningful changes.

### **Rethinking High School: Best Practice in Teaching, Learning, and Leadership**

Daniels, H., Bizar, M., & Zemelman, S. (2000). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2000.

In their previous book, *Best Practice: New Standards for Teaching and Learning in America's Schools*, the authors used the national curriculum standards to define good teaching and learning. Then, they put those standards to the test by starting a new public high school, Best Practice High School, in Chicago. In *Rethinking High School*, the authors describe how Best Practice High School got started, what worked and what didn't work, and what remains to be done. This book

is designed to be a template for change. It offers strategies for improving existing high schools, breaking up larger schools into smaller schools, or starting new high schools.

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