



# Failing at School: Lessons for Redesigning Urban High Schools (The Series on School Reform)

*Camille A. Farrington*

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"Camille Farrington details how high schools trap students along developmental trajectories distorted by structural factors resources, values and practices beyond their control. Grounded firmly in research, she describes a better way forward. This book is an important contribution to the re-visioning of American high schools."

--**Ronald F. Ferguson**, Faculty Director of the Achievement Gap Initiative at Harvard University

"Why is there such a pattern of failure in urban high schools? This is a vital issue for every city in America. Camille Farrington's analysis of the roots of this problem and suggestions for structural changes to break this cycle is the best I have seen. This book combines research and practitioner wisdom with common sense and heart, and for those of us engaged in this work, presents concrete directions for positive change."

--**Ron Berger**, Chief Academic Officer, Expeditionary Learning

Roughly half of all incoming ninth graders across urban districts will fail classes and drop out of school without a diploma. *Failing at School* starts with the premise that urban American high schools generate such widespread student failure not because of some fault of the students who attend them but because high schools were designed to stratify achievement and let only the top performers advance to higher levels of education. This design is particularly detrimental for low-income, racial/ethnic minority students. To get different results, Farrington proposes fundamental changes based on what we now know about how students learn, what motivates them to engage in learning, and what kinds of educational systems and structures would best support their learning.

**Book Features:**\* Offers concrete strategies for redesigning high schools based on four dimensions of student achievement--structural, academic, developmental, and motivational.

\* Highlights the voices of students to illustrate fundamental problems with the way we currently "do school."

\* Addresses the new Common Core State Standards and the potential of this major reform effort to move us toward equity and excellence.

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