



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

*Harvey Daniels, Marilyn Bizar, Steven Zemelman, Deborah Meier*

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*We've read educational essays packed with ideas, and we've read narrative accounts of individual schools. Rethinking High School is a rare and delightful marriage of the two. . . . It's hard to imagine anyone involved with high schools who won't come away from this book both impressed and enlightened.*

- Alfie Kohn, Author of *The Case Against Standardized Testing* and *The Schools Our Children Deserve*

*Rethinking High School is an important book for anyone who has ever wondered about what high schools could look like at their best. . . . This is a book for dreamers and doers, a book that shows us that ordinary people working together can accomplish the extraordinary. Daniels, Bizar, and Zemelman show us how.*

- William Ayers, Professor of Education, the University of Illinois at Chicago, Coeditor of *A Simple Justice: The Challenge of Small Schools*

*Secondary educators will cherish this book, as it will promote important conversations in their staff rooms and improved practice in their classrooms. The authors help us reimagine public education with page after page of practical and simultaneously profound ideas. Readers will wish Best Practice High School were just around their corner.*

- Shelley Harwayne, Acting Superintendent, Community School District Two, Manhattan

*Anyone who seriously wants to make high schools better should start right here. Organized around the principles of "best practice," Rethinking High School is packed with rich examples of wonderful learning, great teaching, substantive curriculum, democratic organization, and all the other ingredients of a really good school.*

- James Beane, Author of *Curriculum Integration: Designing the Core of Democratic Education*

Today, as our nation's attention turns to the reform of secondary education, *Rethinking High School* offers a lively guide for that crucial journey of renewal.

In their previous book - *Best Practice: New Standards for Teaching and Learning in America's Schools* - Daniels and his colleagues drew on the national curriculum standards to define good teaching and learning. Then, the authors personally put those standards to work on the West side of Chicago, starting the city's first new public high school in thirty years. Now, in *Rethinking High School*, they take us along on that adventure, from the earliest planning meetings to the school's first graduation six years later. They tell exactly how Best Practice High School got started, what worked and what didn't, where they stumbled and soared, and what is still left to do.

But this is more than the story of one innovative school. *Rethinking High School* is designed to be a template for change. Organized around eleven fundamental choices that all secondary schools must make, the book serves as a checklist, an agenda, and a study guide for high school reform. Instead of dictating right answers, the authors pose key questions and recount a range of creative alternatives developed by schools around the country. By offering this rich array of stories and models, the book speaks directly to readers who wish to improve existing high schools, to break larger schools into smaller ones, or start new high schools from the ground up.

*Rethinking High School* - complete with a companion website - articulates a clear vision of successful secondary school reform. Acknowledging the monumental challenges of renewing high schools, it shows how ordinary but determined people, working together, can accomplish the extraordinary.

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