



Leaving to Learn: How Out-of-School Learning Increases Student Engagement and Reduces Dropout Rates

By Elliot Washor, Charles Mojkowski

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"We have a bold strategy for revitalizing schools and for graduating and preparing young people for success in their future learning and work. This "leaving to learn" strategy is driven by our image of that future. Our goal is not merely to graduate every student but to prepare graduates who are uncommonly ready for success in their workplaces and their communities."

-Elliot Washor and Charles Mojkowski

It's an alarming fact: in the U.S., one student drops out of school every 12 seconds. **Elliot Washor** and **Charles Mojkowski**, both of Big Picture Learning, have a proven, innovative solution for stemming the flow of drop-outs and breaking the cycle of disengagement that leads up to it. It's called leaving to learn. *Leaving to Learn* helps us deeply understand the real reasons kids drop out and the essential conditions for productive learning that today's adolescents require. The authors then make a compelling argument: in order to retain students through to graduation, schools must offer experiences where students do some of their learning outside of school.

With common sense "rules of the road," the authors offer nuts and bolts guidelines for implementing a high-quality Leaving to Learn program, including:

- examples of the many forms of out-of-school learning: internships, travel, community service, independent projects, and more
- seamlessly integrating students' outside learning with in-school curriculum
- assigning academic credit for out-of-school accomplishments.

Isn't it time to try more innovative ways to address the challenges of our nation's dropout rate? We can keep kids in school *and* prepare them for life after graduation by delivering authentic learning experiences that matter to them. The first step is taking down the barriers between school and the outside world. The first step is letting them leave, to learn.

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Editorial Review

Review

Elliot Washor and Charles Mojkowski rightly identify student disengagement as the central cause of our nation's dropout crisis. Their solution leaving to learn connects education to the real world of life and work, creating highly engaged learners in the process. Their strategy redesigning schools in fundamental ways is made understandable by this vivid and compelling account.

Linda Darling-Hammond, Charles E. Ducommun Professor of Education at Stanford University

Leaving to Learn puts forth a provocative and powerful argument: A significant number of capable young learners are dropping out of high school not because they can't meet their schools expectations, but because schools don't meet theirs. The authors have worked with these young people and have some exciting insights to share about student engagement and intrinsic motivation. If you're concerned about the dropout problem, you owe it to the young people in your life to pick up this book.

Daniel H. Pink, author of Drive and A Whole New Mind

Washor and Mojkowski make a vital contribution to reinventing high schools for the 21st century in this important book. They understand, far better than most, how critical it is to engage and motivate students to give them a reason to want to stay in school and to learn. This book is a must-read for anyone who truly wants to leave no child behind.

Tony Wagner, author of Creating Innovators and The Global Achievement Gap

This book is for anyone who wants to understand how schools can ignite the passions and interests of all children and help them make a difference in their world. Supporting learning out in the world is the key to unleashing their potential and to learning who they are and what they want to become.

Susi Amis Cameron, Founder, Board Chair, MUSE School California

School isn't something that kids are trying to do. Rather, they want to succeed at important things. Elliot Washor and Charles Mojkowski show the remarkable transformations in schools and their students when this becomes their focus.

Clayton Christensen, Harvard business professor and author of Disrupting Class: How Disruptive Innovation Will Change the Way the World Learns and How Will You Measure Your Life?

I applaud Elliot and Charles for their passion in serving students, impacting positive change, and ensuring we truly think about the education of our nation and beyond. This excellent book resets expectations and reengages us in the core of leadership in learning!

Stedman Graham, educator, entrepreneur, and author of Identity: Your Pathway to Success

The authors get inside young people's heads and hearts in order to understand why and how they disengage from learning and often drop out. It's deeper than you think, the authors say, and they are right. Their solution is spot on start with students interests to break the cycle of failure. Here's hoping schools will listen.
--Pedro Noguera, Peter L. Agnew Professor of Education, New York University

About the Author

Elliot Washor co-founded and co-directs Big Picture Learning. Involved in school reform for more than 35 years as a teacher, principal, writer and speaker, Elliot has worked all over the world designing and developing innovative schools that provide engaging learning environments. Elliot's interests lie in how schools connect with communities to credit learning that occurs both in and outside of school. The George Lucas Foundation has selected Elliot as one of The Daring Dozen - The Twelve Most Daring Educators.

Charles Mojkowski has worked as a consultant to education and business organizations for over 30 years. He works primarily in the areas of school, program, and curriculum design; leadership and organizational development; and innovative applications of technology in these areas. He has authored numerous articles on unconventional designs for schools and schooling. Charles is a former English teacher, elementary school assistant principal, and administrator in the Rhode Island Department of Education. He was also an Associate Professor in the Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership at Johnson & Wales University.

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Toni Williams:

What do you concerning book? It is not important along? Or just adding material when you require something to explain what your own problem? How about your extra time? Or are you busy individual? If you don't have spare time to perform others business, it is make you feel bored faster. And you have extra time? What did you do? Everyone has many questions above. They have to answer that question because just their can do this. It said that about book. Book is familiar on every person. Yes, it is appropriate. Because start from on kindergarten until university need this specific Leaving to Learn: How Out-of-School Learning Increases Student Engagement and Reduces Dropout Rates to read.

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