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
How Out-of-School Learning Increases Student Engagement and Reduces Dropout Rates
Elliot Washor and Charles Mojkowski

Isn’t it time to offer adolescents a pathway to success in school that’s proven to inspire and motivate kids to keep on learning? 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.

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.

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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

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