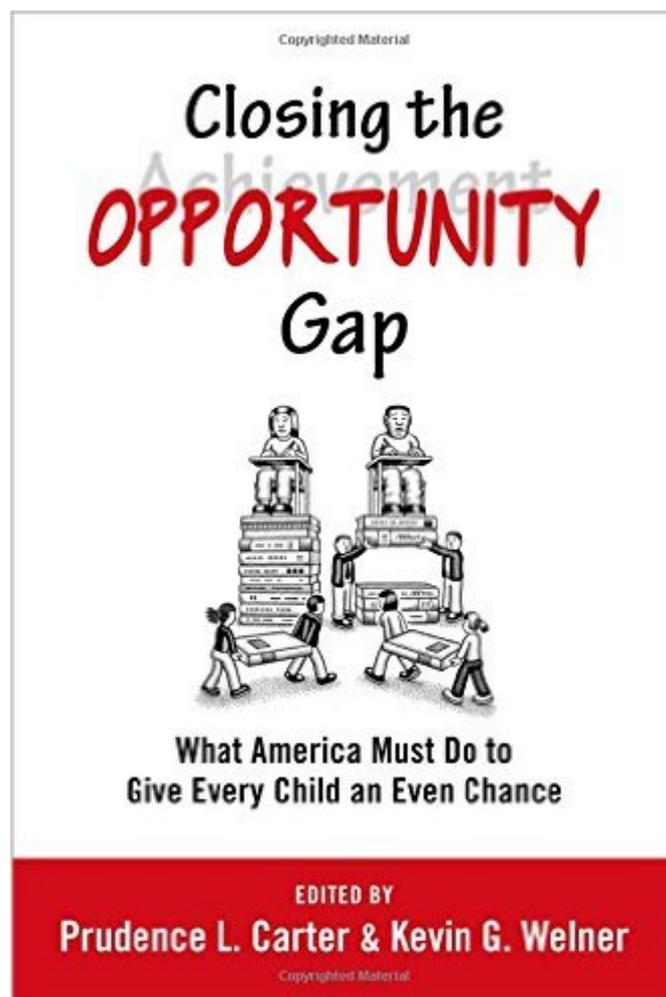


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# Closing The Opportunity Gap: What America Must Do To Give Every Child An Even Chance



## Synopsis

While the achievement gap has dominated policy discussions over the past two decades, relatively little attention has been paid to a gap even more at odds with American ideals: the opportunity gap. Opportunity and achievement, while inextricably connected, are very different goals. Every American will not go to college, but every American should be given a fair chance to be prepared for college. In communities across the U.S., children lack the crucial resources and opportunities, inside and outside of schools that they need if they are to reach their potential. Closing the Opportunity Gap offers accessible, research-based essays written by top experts who highlight the discrepancies that exist in our public schools, focusing on how policy decisions and life circumstances conspire to create the "opportunity gap" that leads inexorably to stark achievement gaps. They also describe sensible policies grounded in evidence that can restore and enhance opportunities. Moving beyond conventional academic discourse, Closing the Opportunity Gap will spark vital new conversations about what schools, parents, educators, and policymakers can and should do to give all children a fair chance to thrive.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (10 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

For those like myself who are not experts in education, "Closing the Opportunity Gap" offers an accessible collection of research-based essays from top experts explaining how US policy has strayed into a series of misguided choices - and how to steer back onto a sane path. The chapters are relatively short, well-documented, and surprisingly well-written (given that the authors are mainly academics). I was also pleasantly surprised at how well the chapters hang together. For those with

more of a passion about what's now going on in the nation's public schools, the book also offers concrete policy guidance. The authors or editors have also created a website (<http://nepc.colorado.edu/book>) that has policy recommendations, success stories and other practical resources. At its heart, the book has a pretty straightforward premise: The nation's excessive focus on measuring outcomes and demanding improvement is out of balance. If we expect to make any real progress, we need to balance the measurement of outcomes with a strong attention to inputs. Specifically, the main body of the book turns to experts in different areas of research, who explain how "opportunity gaps" arise in that given area and how they can be closed. For instance, one chapter makes a compelling case that most of the measured achievement gaps already exist by the time children enter kindergarten or first grade. The authors point to solid research showing the potential of high-quality preschool to make a big difference at the outset. Other chapters point to opportunity gaps in areas like childhood health and nutrition, housing transiency, and teacher experience. Looking at the policy-recommendations document on the book's website, I counted 19 different areas that could be addressed.

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