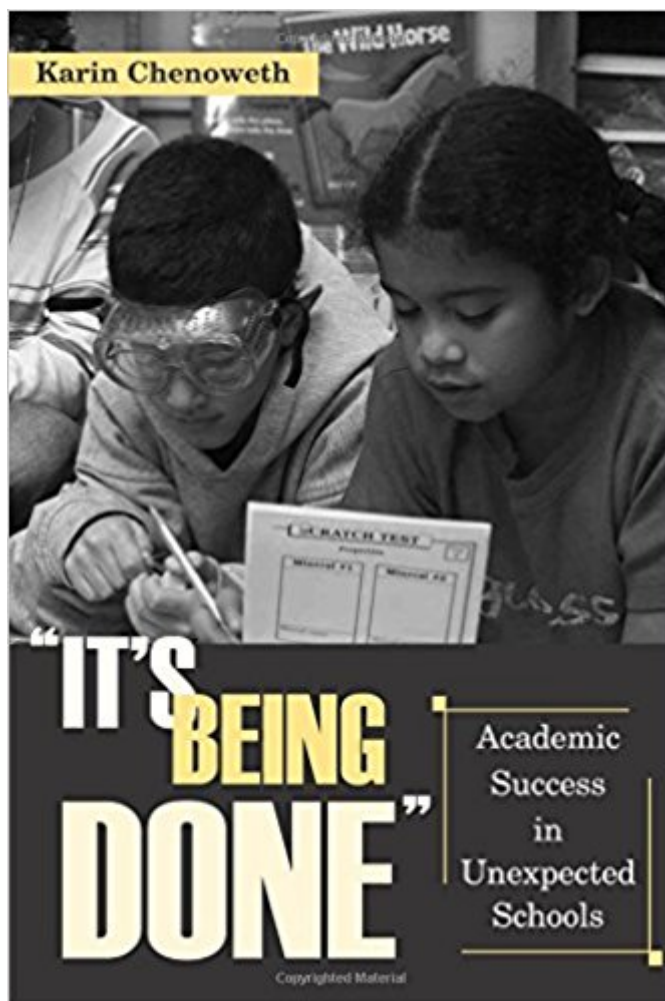


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# "It's Being Done": Academic Success In Unexpected Schools



## Synopsis

This straightforward and inspiring book takes readers into schools where educators believe—and prove—that all children, even those considered “hard-to-teach,” can learn to high standards. Their teachers and principals refuse to write them off and instead show how thoughtful instruction, high expectations, stubborn commitment, and careful consideration of each child’s needs can result in remarkable improvements in student achievement.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Every American must read this book. It demonstrates unequivocally that an unyielding belief in the ability of all children regardless of background to excel at the highest levels combined with a relentless commitment to excellent instruction can radically transform public education in this nation. If every school in America adopted the lessons of *It's Being Done*, then the achievement gap in my view, the greatest injustice facing our nation would be relegated to the history books." --Jason Kamras, 2005 National Teacher of the Year

"Can a good school enable disadvantaged children to catch up? Some say, No, we must change society first. This scrupulous and humane book shows that a good school can make a decisive difference in giving every child a chance to achieve the American Dream. Karin Chenoweth is to be warmly thanked for showing in detail how some schools and their devoted staffs have refuted the idea that demography is fate." --E. D. Hirsch, Jr., Professor Emeritus, University of Virginia

*'It's Being Done'* is a refreshingly honest and thoughtful analysis of

American K-12 education. It comes at a time when so many people are asking if it is possible not to leave children behind, especially children who are poor and of color. Chenoweth's research carefully documents important examples of academic achievement among these children in a variety of challenging circumstances. She identifies the many characteristics of successful schools, including setting high expectations for students, data-driven instruction, the wise use of school time, ongoing professional development of teachers, and comprehensive leadership teams made up of principals, teachers, parents, and community members. It's *Being Done* will contribute significantly to the national conversation on the education of our children. Perhaps more important, it will give us reason to hope." --Freeman A. Hrabowski, III, President, University of Maryland, Baltimore County

This straightforward and inspiring book takes readers into schools where educators believe—and prove—that all children, even those considered “hard-to-teach,” can learn to high standards. Their teachers and principals refuse to write them off and instead show how thoughtful instruction, high expectations, stubborn commitment, and careful consideration of each child's needs can result in remarkable improvements in student achievement. “Every American must read this book. It demonstrates unequivocally that an unyielding belief in the ability of all children—regardless of background—to excel at the highest levels combined with a relentless commitment to excellent instruction can radically transform public education in this nation. If every school in America adopted the lessons of *Being Done*, then the achievement gap—in my view, the greatest injustice facing our nation—would be relegated to the history books.” Jason Kamras, 2005 National Teacher of the Year “Can a good school enable disadvantaged children to catch up? Some say, ‘No, we must change society first.’ This scrupulous and humane book shows that a good school can make a decisive difference in giving every child a chance to achieve the American Dream. Karin Chenoweth is to be warmly thanked for showing in detail how some schools and their devoted staffs have refuted the idea that demography is fate.” E. D. Hirsch, Jr., Professor Emeritus, University of Virginia “*Being Done* is a refreshingly honest and thoughtful analysis of American K-12 education. It comes at a time when so many people are asking if it is possible not to leave children behind, especially children who are poor and of color. Chenoweth's research carefully documents important examples of academic achievement among these children in a variety of challenging circumstances. She identifies the many characteristics of successful schools, including setting high expectations for students, data-driven

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• Freeman A. Hrabowski, III, President, University of Maryland, Baltimore County

Karin Chenoweth is a longtime education writer who currently writes for The Achievement Alliance. From 1999 to 2004 she wrote a column on schools and education for the Washington Post, and before that she was a senior writer and now executive editor of Black Issues in Higher Education (now Diverse).

This is a good read. It's not meant to be used as a stand-alone book for an aspiring education administrator but it has good ideas. If you're into statistics and applying correlations of highly effective practices with the outcomes of turn-around schools, then this might be the book for you. I'm especially in love with the list of key characteristics of turn-around schools at the end of the book. Still, I strongly believe that this is a book best used alongside other resources due to its mostly narrative nature.

Instead of the general assumption that nothing can break the achievement gap, or offering ideas about what "should", "could", "might", etc. work, this author explores schools that ARE breaking the achievement gap and figuring out what they do! So obvious! Yet so rare. There should be tons of books like this. Great resource.

The book, *"It's Being Done"*, focuses on schools that are successful AND have high percentages of students with low incomes and students from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Success is judged based on both consistent high levels of test score performance, and by visits that suggest that these high test scores really do represent high levels of student skills. The bulk of the book is made up of profiles of individual schools based on test score data and Chenoweth's visits to each school and interviews with key stakeholders at the school. The author, Karin Chenoweth, is a former education writer for the Washington Post. She doesn't seem to really have an axe to grind. Compared to other books I have read about how to reform schools, she seems more focused on describing what is going on in these schools than in distorting reality to fit some ideological point. Many of the book's case studies of individual schools are available for free online, under "Success Stories" at [...] . However, the book adds some updates on how the schools have done since they were visited, and

the last chapter has a very useful summation of what the authors feels the lessons are from these case studies. This final chapter of the book does an outstanding job in summarizing the commonalities among these successful schools. These successful schools differ greatly in size, the school calendar and schedule they follow, their use of technology, whether they have uniforms or not, whether they use prepackaged school reform models or not, the extent of parent and community involvement, and many other features. But they do have some commonalities, which, according to Chenoweth, include the following: 1. Focus on making sure they really implement in a high quality way an alignment of teaching and the curriculum with high quality standards. 2. Using both aggregate data and data on individual students. 3. An openness to reexamining what they're doing. 4. Productive use of school time they have, and efforts to expand educational time. 5. A focus on ensuring teacher quality.

I bought this book for a class, but it ended up being really interesting. I definitely recommend it for teachers and aspiring teachers.

This is the first of three incredible books, which share careful research with clear documentation and accessible text. A wide variety of principals who have succeeded in challenging schools are presented, with their various backgrounds and strategies for working with students who have great needs for guidance.

Also be sure and check out "Getting it Done!"

good

very inspiring on how some of the lowest performing schools are turning around!

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