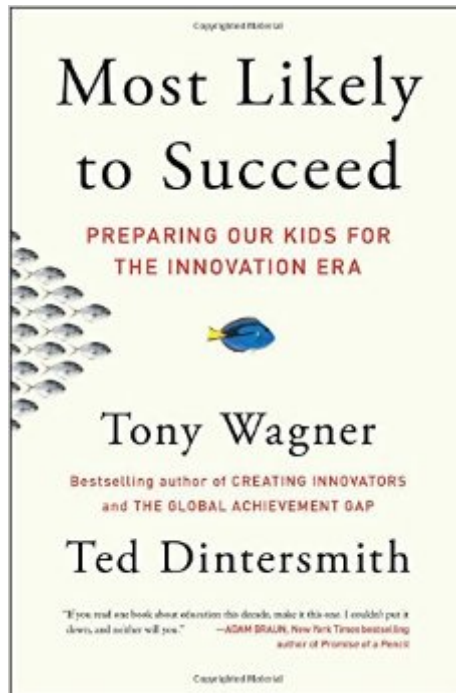


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# Most Likely To Succeed: Preparing Our Kids For The Innovation Era



## Synopsis

The basis for a major documentary, two leading experts sound an urgent call for the radical reimagining of American education so we can equip students for the realities of the twenty-first-century economy. "If you read one book about education this decade, make it this one" • (Adam Braun, bestselling author and founder of Pencils of Promise). Today more than ever, we prize academic achievement, pressuring our children to get into the "right" colleges, have the highest GPAs, and pursue advanced degrees. But while students may graduate with credentials, by and large they lack the competencies needed to be thoughtful, engaged citizens and to get good jobs in our rapidly evolving economy. Our school system was engineered a century ago to produce a workforce for a world that no longer exists. Alarming, our methods of schooling crush the creativity and initiative young people really need to thrive in the twenty-first century. Now bestselling author and education expert Tony Wagner and venture capitalist Ted Dintersmith call for a complete overhaul of the function and focus of American schools, sharing insights and stories from the front lines, including profiles of successful students, teachers, parents, and business leaders. Their powerful, urgent message identifies the growing gap between credentials and competence and offers a framework for change. *Most Likely to Succeed* presents a new vision of American education, one that puts wonder, creativity, and initiative at the very heart of the learning process and prepares students for today's economy. "In this excellent book...Wagner and Dintersmith argue...that success and happiness will depend increasingly on having the ability to innovate" • (Chicago Tribune), and this crucial guide offers policymakers and opinion leaders a roadmap for getting the best for our future entrepreneurs.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book is a great start for seeing what's wrong with education. I love the authors' assessment that the way we teach is outdated, and that the current education system (including college) fails to produce innovative thought leaders for the next generation. They paint an exciting picture of what 'could be', citing several possibilities stoke your enthusiasm. Where I will somewhat disagree is that their frequent mantra that teachers are forced to 'teach to the test' is a bit short-sighted. While I agree, teachers have a huge task to accomplish in today's schools, teaching to the test shouldn't be a litmus for anything but bad teaching. When good teachers teach, they intentionally ignore the state standards, and as a result, teach far ABOVE them. Teachers who teach to the test are lazy, and are only following misaligned incentives. I think this is intentional on the part of the authors. They don't want to abandon ANY teachers when inspiring the next-generation teaching reform, but the problem of poor teachers and teaching to a 'low bar' should be addressed in any education reform because: 1) These teachers are a large part of the problem. and 2) Any teachers interested in maintaining the status quo won't be swayed by any logic (idealistic or otherwise). I don't say this to be callous. My mother was a teacher. My wife is a teacher. And the stories I hear of kids who hate school subjects are frequently connected to teachers who failed to make their subjects interesting to begin. Personally, I'm a big fan of doubling (at least) teacher's salaries, and making it easier for schools to fire underperforming teachers... but I digress. My point is that the issue of underperforming teachers was never addressed in this important book about teaching reform.

MOST LIKELY TO SUCCEED invokes many of the beliefs that really work towards transforming education - creativity, collaboration, ability-based tasks, connection as well as negotiation. The authors back their arguments up with a wealth of evidence about what is wrong with the US education system and how it might be reformed. The overall thrust, which is a good one, is for individual educators, boards and groups to initiate change from the ground upwards, rather than expecting any centralized reform. The more educators embrace change and resist the standardized, test-based formula that dominates education today, the more encouragement will be stimulated for the future. And yet the book is marred by certain assumptions which seem to undermine the very fabric of a good education. One of the authors is an entrepreneur who has 'made it big' through individual initiative, and desires to put something back into the communities that nurtured him. A

laudable intention indeed; but that does not mean that education as a whole should be geared towards business and/or commercial success. Learners should be encouraged to develop in whatever way they choose; it might not be fruitful for some people to pursue business related projects, but rather to concentrate on a liberal education, or on the arts, appealing to the imagination rather than the practical side of our brains. Educators should be encouraged to help learners develop in any way they please, without having any real goals or 'successes' in mind: sometimes people turn out to be late developers in whatever they believe is their particular field of interest.

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