



Restoring Dignity in Public Schools: Human Rights Education in Action

Maria Hantzopoulos

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For many students in urban public schools, the routines of standards-based instruction and frequent testing remove the possibilities for sustained inquiry and critical engagement in school and with the larger world. *Restoring Dignity in Public Schools* demonstrates how urban public schools can create thriving, authentic centers of learning. Drawing from rich narratives of human rights education (HRE) in action, the author shows how school leaders can create an environment in which a culture of dignity, respect, tolerance, and democracy flourishes. The book examines the dynamics of HRE in practice, defines its constituent elements, and explains how these components work in tandem to produce schooling that encourages young people to critically interact with the world around them and imagine different alternatives for the future. This timely book provides a viable alternative to the currently favored strategies of increased testing, privatization, and disciplinary control.

Book Features:

- A counternarrative to the mainstream discourses of “failing” public schools in the United States.
- Policies and practices of human rights education in action, including the experiences of students and teachers.
- A framework for school leaders to create a climate of dignity for marginalized students.
- Ethnographic research conducted at Humanities Preparatory Academy, a public high school in New York City.

“This book provides what most of us don’t have: hope that a school based on human rights can actually exist in urban education. It will inspire grassroots activists and educators alike to envision something tangible to fight for.”

—**Sally Lee**, executive director, Teachers Unite

“The testimonies in this book remind us that schools can, in fact, be transformational communities. This is a work of head and heart, a call to reimagine schools as sites of critique and collaboration, purpose and possibility.”

—**Bill Bigelow**, *Rethinking Schools*

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