



Our School: The Inspiring Story of Two Teachers, One Big Idea, and the School That Beat the Odds

Joanne Jacobs

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Honest, engaging, and inspiring, *Our School* tells the story of Downtown College Prep, a public charter high school in San Jose that recruits underachieving students and promises to prepare them for four-year colleges and universities. The average student enters ninth grade with fifth-grade reading and math skills. Many have slid through school without doing homework. Some barely speak English.

Tracking the innovative and pioneering program, award-winning journalist Joanne Jacobs follows the young principal who tries to shake the hand of every student each day, the dedicated teachers who inspire teens to break free from their histories of failure, and the immigrant parents who fight to protect their children from gangs. Capturing our hearts are the students who overcome tremendous odds: Roberto, who struggles to learn English; Larissa, a young mother; Pedro, who signals every mood change with a different hair cut; Selena, who's determined to use college as her escape from drudgery; the girls of the very short, never-say-die basketball team; and the Tech Challenge competitors. Some will give up on their dreams. Those who stick with the school will go on to college.

This gritty yet hopeful book provides a new understanding of what makes a school work and how desire, pride, and community--*ganas*, *orgullo*, and *comunidad*--can put students on track for success in life.

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