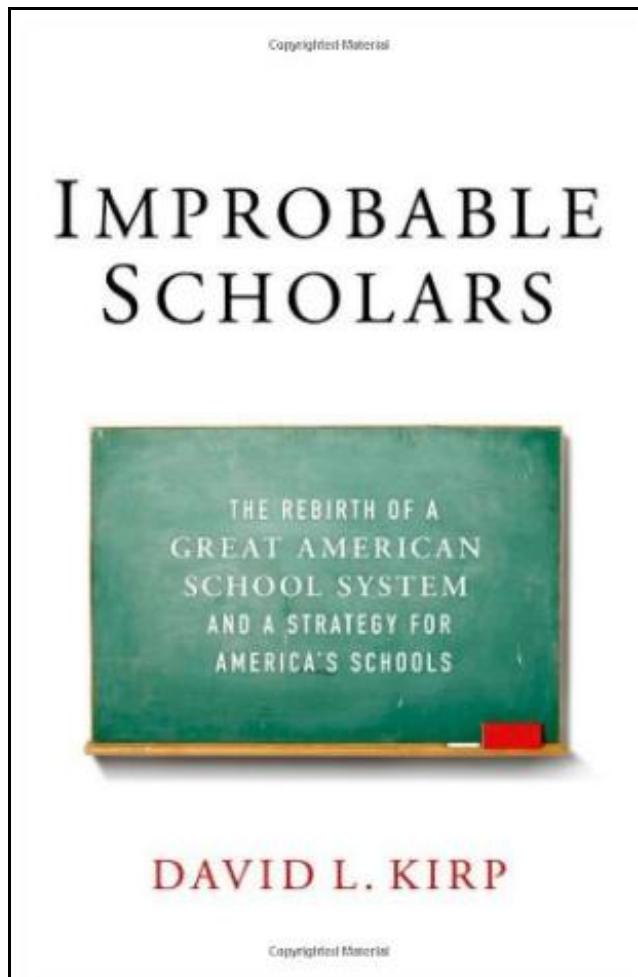


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Reviews

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IMPROBABLE SCHOLARS: THE REBIRTH OF A GREAT AMERICAN SCHOOL SYSTEM AND A STRATEGY FOR AMERICA'S SCHOOLS

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Oxford University Press Inc. Hardback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Improbable Scholars: The Rebirth of a Great American School System and a Strategy for America's Schools, David L. Kirp, The conventional wisdom, voiced by everyone from Bill Gates to Education Secretary Arne Duncan, is that public schools are so terrible that simply reforming them won't do the trick. Instead, they must be "transformed," blown up and then rebuilt, if they're going to offer students a good education. We relish stories about electrifying teachers like Jaime Escalante, who made math whizzes out of no-hoper teenagers in East LA, or inner city charter schools like the KIPP academies. But success in the public schools of an entire city—a poor, crowded city, with more than its share of immigrant Latino youngsters, the kind of kids who elsewhere will likely drop out or flunk out? That sounds as elusive and improbable as the Loch Ness monster. But no school district can be all charismatic leaders and super-teachers. It can't start from scratch, and it can't fire all its teachers and principals when students do poorly. Great charter schools can only serve a tiny minority of students. Whether we like it or not, most of our youngsters will continue to be educated it is in mainstream public schools. Improbable Scholars shows that there's a sensible way to rebuild public education and close the achievement gap for all students. Miracles aren't required—instead, we need to make smart use of what we already know can work. This is precisely what's happening in a most unlikely place: Union City, New Jersey. What makes Union City so headline-worthy is its ordinariness, its lack of flash and pizzazz. The school district has ignored trendy, blow-up-and-rebuild reforms in favor of old school ideas like top-drawer early education, a word-soaked curriculum and...



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