



ACCEPTED

DELVE DEEPER READING LIST



This list of fiction and nonfiction books, compiled by Penny Talbert, MLIS and Rebecca Zinner, Development & Community Relations Coordinator, of Ephrata Public Library, provides a range of perspectives on the issues raised by the POV documentary *Accepted*.

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ADULT NON-FICTION

Black, Derek W. *Schoolhouse Burning: Public Education and the Assault on American Democracy*. New York, Hachette Book Group, 2020.

We are in the midst of a full-scale attack on our nation's commitment to public education. From funding, to vouchers, to charter schools, public education policy has become a political football, rather than a means of fulfilling the most basic obligation of government to its citizens. As Derek W. Black illustrates, this assault threatens not just public education, but democracy itself. Black offers both an illuminating history of our nation's establishment of a constitutional right to education, and a trenchant analysis of how such a right is being undermined today. He looks at education history with a wide view, describing both periods when our democracy has been strengthened (when the commitment to public education has been strongest) and weakened, when such a commitment has been lacking. And today, such a commitment is sorely lacking. *Schoolhouse Burning* shows what is at stake: not just the right to public education as guaranteed by the constitution, but an erosion of democratic norms.

Bunch, William. *After the Ivory Tower Falls: How College Broke the American Dream and Blew Up Our Politics – and How to Fix it*. New York, William Morrow, an imprint of HarperCollins, 2022.

The Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist presents a deeply researched look at the broken state of higher education in America and how we can work towards a new model that works for all Americans.

Harris, Adam. *The State Must Provide: Why America's Colleges Have Always Been Unequal – and How to Set Them Right*. New York, Ecco, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers.

Presents a definitive chronicle of the pervasiveness of racial inequality in American higher education, weaving through the legal, social, and political obstacles erected to block equitable education in the United States.

Golden, Daniel. *The Price of Admission: How America's Ruling Class Buys Its Way into Elite Colleges - and Who Gets Left Outside the Gates*. Crown, 2007.

Based on three years of investigative reporting, Pulitzer Prize winner Daniel Golden shatters the myth of an American meritocracy. Naming names, along with grades and test scores, Golden lays bare a corrupt system in which middle-class and working-class whites and Asian Americans are routinely passed over in favor of wealthy white students with lesser credentials—children of alumni, big donors, and celebrities. He reveals how a family donation got Jared Kushner into Harvard, and how colleges comply with Title IX by giving scholarships to rich women in “patrician sports” like horseback riding and crew.

Jack, Anthony Abraham. *The Privileged Poor: How Elite Colleges Are Failing Disadvantaged Students*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2019.

College presidents and deans of admission have opened their doors--and their coffers--to support a more diverse student body. But is it enough just to let them in? In *The Privileged Poor*, Anthony Jack reveals that the struggles of less privileged students continue long after they've arrived on campus. In their first weeks they quickly learn that admission does not mean acceptance. In this bracing and necessary book, Jack documents how university policies and cultures can exacerbate preexisting inequalities, and reveals why these policies hit some students harder than others. If we truly want our top colleges to be engines of opportunity, university policies and campus cultures will have to change. Jack provides concrete advice to help schools reduce these hidden disadvantages--advice we cannot afford to ignore.

Korn, Melissa & Jennifer Levitz. *Unacceptable: Privilege, Deceit & the Making of the College Admissions Scandal*. New York, Random House, 2020.

The inside story of the college admissions scandal that shocked the nation and shattered myths about meritocracy, by the reporters who broke major developments in the story that exposed a rotten system.

Labaree, David F. *Someone Has to Fail: The Zero-Sum Game of Public Schooling*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2010.

What do we really want from schools? Only everything, in all its contradictions. Most of all, we want access and opportunity for all children--but all possible advantages for our own. So argues historian David Labaree in this provocative look at the way 'this archetype of dysfunction works so well at what we want it to do even as it evades what we explicitly ask it to do.' Ever since the common school movement of the nineteenth century, mass schooling has been seen as an essential solution to great social problems. Yet as wave after wave of reform movements have shown, schools are extremely difficult to change. Labaree shows how the very organization of the locally controlled, administratively limited school system makes reform difficult. At the same time, he argues, the choices of educational consumers have always overwhelmed top-down efforts at school reform. Individual families seek to use schools for their own purposes--to pursue social opportunity, if they need it, and to preserve social advantage, if they have it. In principle, we want the best for all children. In practice, we want the best for our own. Provocative, unflinching, wry, *Someone Has to Fail* looks at the way that unintended consequences of consumer choices have created an extraordinarily resilient educational system, perpetually expanding, perpetually unequal, constantly being reformed, and never changing much.

Laporte, Nicole. *Guilty Admissions: The Bribes, Favors, and Phonies Behind the College Cheating Scandal*. New York, Twelve, 2021.

An exposé of the Varsity Blues scandal reveals how an unscrupulous college counselor named Rick Singer preyed on the desperation of wealthy, upper class, insecure parents who sought to have their children admitted to elite colleges to maintain their own social status.

Lewis, R. L'Heureux. *Inequality in the Promised Land: Race, Resources, and Suburban Schooling*. Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 2014.

Nestled in neighborhoods of varying degrees of affluence, suburban public schools are typically better resourced than their inner-city peers and known for their extracurricular offerings and college preparatory programs. Despite the glowing opportunities that many families associate with suburban schooling, accessing a district's resources is not always straightforward, particularly for black and poorer families. Moving beyond class- and race-based explanations, *Inequality in the Promised Land* focuses on the everyday interactions between parents, students, teachers, and school administrators.

Mandery, Evan J. *Poison Ivy: How Elite Colleges Divide Us*. New York, The New Press, 2022.

An eye-opening look at how America's elite colleges and suburbs help keep the rich rich--making it harder than ever to fight the inequality dividing us today.

Nathan, Linda F. *When Grit Isn't Enough: A High School Principal Examines How Poverty and Inequality Thwart the College-For-All Promise*. Boston, Beacon Press, 2017.

Examines major myths informing American education and explores how educators can better serve students, increase college retention rates, and develop alternatives to college that don't disadvantage students on the basis of race or income. As the founder and co-headmaster of the Boston Arts Academy (BAA), an urban high school that boasts a 94 percent college acceptance rate, Linda Nathan could have rested on her laurels. But after ushering in fourteen years of graduating classes, Nathan took stock of the graduates: of those who went to college, 63 percent graduated and 37 percent dropped out. Although these stats are good, given that the national drop-out and transfer rate from college after the first year is 40 percent, Nathan feels like she failed the students who didn't graduate. This led her to reflect on the assumptions she herself has perpetuated about education: that college is for all, that hard work and determination are enough to get you through, that America is a land of equality. Seeing a rift between these false promises and the lived experiences of her students, Nathan argues that it is time for educators to face these uncomfortable issues head-on and ask the tough questions: How can colleges better acknowledge and address institutional racism and increase retention rates? And for those who sought a career without college, how could high school have paved an alternate path to success? Nathan includes the voices of BAA alumni/ae whose lived experiences provide a window through which to view urban education today and help imagine greater purposes for schooling.

Perry, Theresa, Claude Steele, Asa G. Hillard. *Young, Gifted and Black: Promoting High Achievement Among African-American Students*. Boston, Beacon Press, 2003.

Three African-American intellectuals on a crucial educational issue of our time. A huge portion of the school reform debate in America--explicitly and implicitly--is framed around the success and failure of African-American children in school. The test-score "achievement gap" between white and black students, especially, is a driving and divisive issue. Yet the voices of prominent African-American intellectuals have been conspicuously left out of the debate about black children. *Young, Gifted, and Black* sets out to reframe the terms of that debate. The authors argue that understanding how children experience the struggle of being black in America is essential to improving how schools serve them. Taking on liberals and conservatives alike, Theresa Perry argues that all kinds of contemporary school settings systematically

undermine motivation and achievement for black students. She draws on history, narrative, and research to outline an African-American tradition of education for liberation and to suggest what kinds of settings black children need most. Claude Steele reports stunningly clear empirical psychological evidence that when black students believe they are being judged as members of a stereotyped group rather than as individuals, they do worse on tests. He calls the mechanism at work "stereotype threat," and reflects on its broad implications for schools. Asa Hilliard ends the book with an essay on actual schools around the country where African-American students achieve at high levels.

Rooks, Noliwe. *Cutting School: The Segrenomics of American Education*. New York, The New Press, 2020.

In an era characterized by levels of school segregation the country has not seen since the mid-twentieth century, cultural critic and American studies professor Noliwe Rooks provides a trenchant analysis of our separate and unequal schools and argues that profiting from our nation's failure to provide a high-quality education to all children has become a very big business. As our public education infrastructure crumbles, Rooks's book manages to find hope in the inspired individuals and powerful movements fighting to save our urban schools. *Cutting School* is a cri de coeur for all of us to resist educational apartheid.

Selingo, Jeffrey J. *Who Gets In and Why: A Year Inside College Admissions*. New York, Scribner, 2020.

A higher-education journalist draws on insider access to explain the nuts and bolts of college admissions today, outlining the unexpected agendas that reflect which and why prospective students receive admission into better schools.

Talusan, Liza A. *The Identity-Conscious Educator: Building Habits and Skills for a More Inclusive School*. Bloomington, IN, Solution Tree Press, 2022.

When educators build knowledge about identity and engage in self-reflection, they can effectively and purposefully foster the habits and skills of an identity-conscious practice and create a more inclusive school environment. This book explores issues of race, social class, gender, sexual orientation, and disability and discusses how educators can begin to address these topics in their personal and professional lives and, in turn, how they can have meaningful interactions with students and peers. By reading *The Identity-Conscious Educator*, educators embark on an identity-conscious journey.

ADULT FICTION

Holsinger, Bruce W. *The Gifted School*. New York, Riverhead Books, 2019.

The Gifted School is a keenly entertaining novel that observes the drama within a community of friends and parents as good intentions and high ambitions collide in a pile-up with long-held secrets and lies. Seen through the lens of four families who've been a part of one another's lives since their kids were born over a decade ago, the story reveals not only the lengths that some adults are willing to go to get ahead, but the effect on the group's children, sibling relationships, marriages, and careers, as simmering resentments come to a boil and long-buried, explosive secrets surface and detonate. It's a humorous, keenly observed, timely take on ambitious parents, willful kids, and the pursuit of prestige, no matter the cost.

Korelitz, Jean Hanff and Colleen Werthmann. *Admission: A Novel*. New York, Grand Central Publishing, 2012.

Princeton University admissions officer Portia Nathan must suddenly confront a secret from her past just as thousands of the nation's brightest students await her decision regarding their academic admission

Moore, Meg Mitchell. *The Admissions: A Novel*. New York, Doubleday, 2015.

The seemingly perfect Hawthorne family of northern California is tested by Ivy League ambitions, overscheduling, impossible expectations by the Bay Area elite, and difficult personal secrets.

Richmond, Michelle. *The Wonder Test: A Novel*. New York, Atlantic Monthly Press, 2021.

Escaping New York City and the espionage case that made her question everything, recently widowed Lina returns home to sell the house she has inherited in tony Greenfield, California. With her teenage son Rory, Lina hopes to reassemble her life, reevaluate her career, and find a clear way forward. Adrift and battling insomnia, she discovers that her father's sleepy hometown has been transformed into a Silicon Valley suburb on steroids, obsessed with an annual exam called The Wonder Test. When students at her son's high school go missing, reappearing under mysterious circumstances on abandoned beaches, Lina must summon her strength and push her own ethical boundaries to the limits in order to solve the crimes. Meanwhile, an old espionage case called Red Vine keeps calling her back into the fold. While Lina struggles to balance her new role as a single mother and the complex counterintelligence puzzles she is so adept at solving, Greenfield's shadowy dangers creep closer to her own home. A searing view of a culture that puts the wellbeing of children at risk for advancement and prestige, and a captivating story of the lengths a mother will go for her son.

YOUNG ADULT NON-FICTION

Bruni, Frank. *Where You Go is Not Who You'll Be: An Antidote to the College Admissions Mania*. New York Grand Central Publishing, 2015.

Over the last few decades, Americans have turned college admissions into a terrifying and occasionally devastating process, preceded by test prep, tutors, all sorts of stratagems, all kinds of rankings, and a conviction among too many young people that their futures will be determined and their worth established by which schools say yes and which say no. That belief is wrong. It's cruel. And in *Where You Go Is Now Who You'll Be; An Antidote to the College Admissions Mania*, Frank Bruni explains why, giving students and their parents a new perspective on this brutal, deeply flawed competition and a path out of the anxiety that it provokes. Bruni, a bestselling author and a columnist for the New York Times, shows that the Ivy League has no monopoly on corner offices, governors' mansions, or the most prestigious academic and scientific grants. Through statistics, surveys, and the stories of hugely successful people who didn't attend the most exclusive schools, he demonstrates that many kinds of colleges--large public universities, tiny hideaways in the hinterlands--serve as ideal springboards. And he illuminates how to make the most of them. What matters in the end are a student's efforts in and out of the classroom, not the gleam of his or her diploma. Where you go isn't who you'll be. Americans need to hear that--and this indispensable manifesto says it with eloquence and respect for the real promise of higher education.

Fields, Timothy L. and Shereem Herndon-Brown. *The Black Family's Guide to College Admission: A Conversation about Education, Parenting and Race*. Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 2022.

The goal of the book is to provide Black families with information about the college admission process so that they can explore college options for their child.

Newport, Cal. *How to Be a High School Superstar: A Revolutionary Plan to Get into College by Standing Out (Without Burning Out)*. New York, Broadway Books, 2010.

What if getting into your reach schools didn't require four years of excessive A.P.-taking, overwhelming activity schedules, and constant stress? In *How to Be a High School Superstar*, Cal Newport explores the world of relaxed superstars--students who scored spots at the nation's top colleges by leading uncluttered, low stress, and authentic lives. Drawing from extensive interviews and cutting-edge science, Newport explains the surprising truths behind these superstars' mixture of happiness and admissions success, including:

- Why doing less is the foundation for becoming more impressive.
- Why demonstrating passion is meaningless, but being interesting is crucial.
- Why accomplishments that are hard to explain are better than accomplishments that are hard to do.

These insights are accompanied by step-by-step instructions to help any student adopt the relaxed superstar lifestyle--proving that getting into college doesn't have to be a chore to survive, but instead can be the reward for living a genuinely interesting life.

Pierre-Louis, Gaelle. *Hacking Elite College Admissions: 50 Surprising Insights on the College Application Process*. New Degree Press, 2020.

Did you know that most elite colleges typically accept only about 2,000 students for their incoming class? Among competitive schools, the number of students who submit applications more than doubled, but the acceptance rates sank from 18.4% to less than 10% in the past decade. Thousands of students around the world face rejection from their dream schools every year. Despite these odds, you can succeed in the college application process. While the college application process can be overwhelming, this comprehensive guide includes expert advice from admissions officers to help guide you as you apply with accurate up-to-date information. Harvard-trained educator, Gaelle Pierre-Louis uses her knowledge as a former college admissions officer to demystify the process and provides helpful tips and advice for high school students as they embark on this journey. She also explains: * How to build a balanced college list * The role of testing and grades in the college application process * How to motivate your advocates, i.e., guidance counselors, teachers, mentors, to write excellent letters of recommendation on your behalf * The criteria admissions committees use to evaluate applications * The importance of applying for scholarships by the deadline in order to make college affordable for you and your family Gaelle Pierre-Louis, M. Ed., is a former college admissions officer and education reform activist.

YOUNG ADULT FICTION

Buxbaum, Julie. *Admission*. New York, Delacorte Press, 2020.

An affluent teen who thinks she is headed off to the college of her dreams, must reckon with the truth and possibly her own guilt when her mother is arrested in a college admissions bribery scandal.

Del Rosario, Juleah. *500 Words of Less*. New York, Simon Pulse, 2018.

A high school senior attempts to salvage her reputation among her Ivy League-obsessed classmates by writing their college admissions essays and in the process learns big truths about herself in this mesmerizing debut novel-in-verse, perfect for fans of Gayle Forman and Sonya Sones. Nic Chen refuses to spend her senior year branded as the girl who cheated on her charismatic and lovable boyfriend. To redefine her reputation among her Ivy League-obsessed classmates, Nic begins writing their college admissions essays. But the more essays Nic writes for other people, the less sure she becomes of herself, the kind of person she is, and whether her moral compass even points north anymore. Provocative, brilliant, and achingly honest, *500 Words or Less* explores the heartbreak and hope that marks the search for your truest self.

Dobmeier, Tracy. *Girls with Bright Futures: A Novel*. Naperville, IL, Sourcebooks Landmark, 2021.

Alicia is a tech giant, wealthy beyond compare. Kelly is a stay-at-home mother and Stanford legacy. Maren makes three: single, broke, and out of place among the rich and elite. All their daughters are natural choices for Stanford: except the school can only recommend one student. As the competition heats up, an attempt is made on one of the girl's lives and the community spirals into panic. Now the mothers have to decide if one of them is capable of murder, or even worse, one of their own children. The Admissions meets *Big Little Lies* in *DO NOT ADMIT*, a book club black comedy of three prep school families locked in competition for a single spot at Stanford when an attempted murder reveals the dark underbelly of their privileged community.

Wasserman, Robin. *Hacking Harvard*. New York, Simon Pulse, 2007.

When three brilliant nerds--Max Kim, Eric Roth, and Isaac "The Professor" Schwarz--bet \$20,000 that they can get anyone into Harvard, they take on the Ivy League in their quest for popularity, money, and the love of a beauty queen valedictorian.

BOOKS FOR YOUNGER LEARNERS AND CHILDREN

DK Publishing. *Careers: The Ultimate Guide to Planning Your Future*. New York, DK Publishing, 2022.

From robotics engineering and computer games development to environmental law and eco-friendly construction, this job guide features hundreds of careers, including trending opportunities. Do you have a passion but can't work out how to make a career out of it? Do you want to change your career but don't know where to start? Are you worried about career development? Or are you overwhelmed by so much advice you are lost in a sea of information? You're not the only one - and *Careers* is here to steer you in the right direction. This indispensable guide is ideal for teenagers and newly qualified graduates. Career counselors will also find this a trustworthy companion for helping students with their future career planning. So, whether you want to become a nurse or home decorator, a chef or cyber-security analyst (or you simply have no idea!), this book is your ultimate source. Concise and combining a user-friendly approach with a bold, graphic design, *Careers* is like having your very own career coach.

Rossi, Sofia E., Carlo Canepa & Luca Poli. *Jobs of the Future: Imaginative Careers for Forward-Thinking Kids*. Kansas City, Andrews McMeel Publishing, 2022.

From chemistry and climatology to robotics and the arts, *Jobs of the Future* imagines professions that may one day be essential to preserving and improving life on Earth. Become a "plastics fisherman" and save the oceans from pollution! Or be a "cloud hunter" and help to slow global warming! Whatever their passion, children will discover a world of possibility in this colorful and inspiring guide to a wide range of futuristic careers.