“We can greatly benefit from applying the knowledge, experience, and wisdom of the authors of this important book to reforming early schooling, teaching, and learning for our most vulnerable children and thereby keep the promise of American democracy—namely, a level playing field and a chance to succeed fully on one’s merits. As a nation we cannot continue to tolerate failure or make excuses when examples such as FirstSchool suggest a proven way forward.”

—From the Foreword by Aisha Ray, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dean of Faculty, Erikson Institute

FirstSchool is a groundbreaking framework for teaching minority and low-income children. This work discusses the research and practice to date that defines FirstSchool as a critical approach to closing the achievement and opportunity gaps. Changing the conversation from improving test scores to improving school experiences, it features lessons learned from eight elementary schools whose leadership and staff implemented sustainable changes in their classrooms and schools. The authors detail how to use education research and data to provide a rationale for change; how to promote professional learning that is genuinely collaborative and respectful; and how to employ developmentally appropriate teaching strategies that focus on the needs of minority and low-income children.

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