



The Last Dropout: Stop the Epidemic!

Bill Milliken

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Did you know that we're battling an epidemic* . . . ? Almost one-third of all high-school students fail to graduate with their class; among minorities, the dropout rate is almost 50 percent. Dropouts are more likely than their peers to be unemployed, live in poverty, have poor health, depend upon social services, and go to jail. The combined loss of income and revenue to the American economy from a single year's dropouts is about \$192 billion. But there is a solution to the dropout crisis that is proven, effective, replicable, and sustainable! Communities In Schools (CIS) reaches more than one million at-risk students and their families annually in more than 3,000 American schools. These kids would fall far below the national average for every measure of student success. Yet 98 percent of CIS-tracked students stayed in school. Why? What makes the difference? The Last Dropout offers nine key principles that Communities In Schools has tested over three decades. Interwoven are the dramatic life stories of CIS founder Bill Milliken and his colleagues, a journey that began in the turbulent 1960s as youth workers with a spiritual mission struggled to turn around the lives of dropouts and addicts. It traces the evolution of the CIS movement from a handful of groundbreaking "street academies" to a national network of hundreds of local affiliates. The Last Dropout also features stories about how CIS leaders have adopted these principles in their own communities, with stunning results! *From The Silent Epidemic (Bridgeland, Dilulio, and Morrison, 2006)

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