



# Hope Against Hope: Three Schools, One City, and the Struggle to Educate America's Children

By Sarah Carr

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Geraldlynn is a lively, astute 14-year-old. Her family, displaced by Hurricane Katrina, returns home to find a radically altered public education system. Geraldlynn's parents hope their daughter's new school will prepare her for college--but the teenager has ideals and ambitions of her own.

Aidan is a fresh-faced Harvard grad drawn to New Orleans by the possibility of bringing change to a flood-ravaged city. He teaches at an ambitious charter school with a group of newcomers determined to show the world they can use science, data, and hard work to build a model school.

Mary Laurie is a veteran educator who becomes principal of one of the first public high schools to reopen after Katrina. Laurie and her staff find they must fight each day not only to educate the city's teenagers, but to keep the Walker community safe and whole.

In this powerful narrative non-fiction debut, the lives of these three characters provide readers with a vivid and sobering portrait of education in twenty-first-century America. *Hope Against Hope* works in the same tradition as *Random Family* and *There Are No Children Here* to capture the challenges of growing up and learning in a troubled world.

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## **Hope Against Hope: Three Schools, One City, and the Struggle to Educate America's Children** By Sarah Carr Bibliography

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### Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

*\*Starred Review\** In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, with so many schools destroyed and destabilized, New Orleans was viewed as fertile ground for educational reform. Charter schools, staffed mostly by young teachers new to the area, rushed to fill the void in a city whose public schools had long been failing. Education reporter Carr chronicles the lives of students and faculty at three charter high schools, Walker, Sci Academy, and KIPP Renaissance, as they struggled to meet mounting expectations for academic performance. Carr focuses on Geraldlynn, a high-school freshman; idealistic teacher Aidan, a Harvard grad who struggled to keep pace with the ambitious goals set for the school; and Mary Laurie, a New Orleans native and veteran teacher, who became principal of one of the first public schools to reopen after Katrina. Carr deftly explores the complexities of school reform and the tensions between newcomers unfamiliar with the culture of New Orleans and educators and parents suspicious of their intent. But Carr goes beyond New Orleans to examine the broader issues of education reform in urban areas throughout the nation as students and parents are caught in a clash of cultures and ideas on how to repair failing school systems and educate inner-city children. --Vanessa Bush

From Bookforum

*Hope Against Hope* takes place in a New Orleans ravaged by Hurricane Katrina, but even more important in journalist Sarah Carr's story is a highly unnatural disaster: American poverty. Carr's book takes an intimate look at the real people—students, principals, teachers—affected by "school reform," a slippery term that means privatization, a weakening of teachers' unions and elected school boards, and an increasing dependence on testing data. The book is a tremendous achievement, and should be required reading on all sides of these debates. —Liza Featherstone

Review

"[A] nuanced, concrete picture focused on individuals seeking to make the reform regime work for the children in their schools. The book is a tremendous achievement, and should be required reading on all sides of these debates." *?Bookforum*

"An important book about issues facing urban districts everywhere." *?Philadelphia Inquirer*

"Carr's reporting is some of the best education reform journalism to date...For anyone seeking to understand U.S. education and education reform, [her] story of New Orleans is an essential place to start." *?The Wilson Quarterly*

"[A] thoughtful narrative." *?School Administrator*

"Carr deftly explores the complexities of school reform...[She] goes beyond New Orleans to examine the broader issues of education reform in urban areas throughout the nation as students and parents are caught in a clash of cultures and ideas on how to repair failing school systems and educate inner-city children." *?Booklist (starred review)*

"Carr's decision to view the situation through the eyes of three people with a stake in the outcome...humanizes the story, and places *Hope Against Hope* in the same class as other groundbreaking books such as Jonathan Kozol's *Savage Inequalities* and Alex Kotlowitz's *There Are No Children Here*."

?Bookpage

“[W]ith journalistic precision and a remarkably unflinching objectivity... Carr clearly delineates the strengths and weaknesses of both sides, admirably delving into the complex racial, political and social ethos underpinning each, and melding historical context and hard statistical data along the way...[W]hat makes the book special is its focus on the experiences of the teachers, students and administrators that form the true core, the heart, of *Hope Against Hope*.” ?*Philadelphia City Paper*

“Meticulously reported, competently written, and sometimes surprisingly intimate.” ?*Columbia Journalism Review*

“It's work like this that makes journalism truly matter, that makes clear that reportage is not merely about fact and argument and theory, but about human lives in the balance. In *Hope Against Hope*, Sarah Carr has taken an open mind and a careful eye to the delicate, complicated issue of public education and the fading American commitment to equality of opportunity. She does so not by embracing ideological cant or political banter, but by following people through the schools of New Orleans, a city that is trying desperately to reconstitute and better itself after a near-death experience. Don't embarrass yourself by speaking further on American education without first reading this.” ?*David Simon, creator of The Wire and Treme*

“With grace and profound intimacy, Sarah Carr immerses us in the lives of a group of students, teachers and administrators in New Orleans, ground zero for the debate over school reform, and lays bare all that we face as we try to strengthen our schools. Riveting. Empathic. Incisive. *Hope Against Hope* is storytelling at its absolute finest.” ?*Alex Kotlowitz, author of The Other Side of the River and There Are No Children Here*

“For all the charts, graphs, and figures that attempt to explain education reform, a good story is more powerful. Sarah Carr's narratives about a student, a teacher, and an administrator are captivating and evocative. This is an important book about education writ large.” ?*Gloria Ladson-Billings, author of The Dreamkeepers*

“Of the many dreams and schemes for upgrading New Orleans after Katrina, the controversial, convulsive overhaul of the city's public schools is the one that really happened. Sarah Carr offers readers a ringside seat on an attempted revolution. No one who cares about public education in America can afford to ignore this balanced and vivid account.” ?*Jed Horne, author of Breach of Faith: Hurricane Katrina and the Near Death of a Great American City*

“If you read just one book about contemporary education reform, it should be Sarah Carr's *Hope Against Hope*. Geraldlynn, Aidan, and Mary Laurie are unforgettable characters, whose complex lives challenge the talking points and political pieties so common to the debate over public schools, poverty, and race. Carr has set a new bar for all of us writing about education in America.” ?*Dana Goldstein, education journalist and Schwartz Fellow at the New America Foundation*

“*Hope Against Hope* compels us to look beyond the slogans and labels of competing interest groups to see the issues at the front lines of American education. For those who are interested in genuinely understanding--and moving beyond--the current impasse on school reform, this book is a must read.” ?*Pedro Noguera, author of City Schools and the American Dream*

“As the nation looks to New Orleans as the model for education reform, we would do well to read this book closely. Sarah Carr's portrait of these changes, at once analytical and compassionate, reveals the human tolls and triumphs of this movement. Whether you support or oppose education reform, *Hope Against Hope* is necessary reading.” ?*Lolis Eric Elie, co-director of the documentary Faubourg Treme*

“A balanced account of the growing charter-school movement in post-Katrina New Orleans. Detailed and thoughtful.” *Kirkus*

“[Carr's] protagonists' perspectives capture subtleties rarely probed in a national debate more preoccupied with test scores, corporatization, and teachers' unions.” *Publishers Weekly*

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **William Smith:**

The ability that you get from *Hope Against Hope: Three Schools, One City, and the Struggle to Educate America's Children* is a more deep you excavating the information that hide inside the words the more you get enthusiastic about reading it. It doesn't mean that this book is hard to understand but *Hope Against Hope: Three Schools, One City, and the Struggle to Educate America's Children* giving you thrill feeling of reading. The author conveys their point in selected way that can be understood by simply anyone who read it because the author of this publication is well-known enough. That book also makes your own personal vocabulary increase well. That makes it easy to understand then can go along, both in printed or e-book style are available. We highly recommend you for having this *Hope Against Hope: Three Schools, One City, and the Struggle to Educate America's Children* instantly.

#### **Jess Bolan:**

This book untitled *Hope Against Hope: Three Schools, One City, and the Struggle to Educate America's Children* to be one of several books this best seller in this year, this is because when you read this e-book you can get a lot of benefit upon it. You will easily to buy this kind of book in the book retail store or you can order it by using online. The publisher in this book sells the e-book too. It makes you easier to read this book, as you can read this book in your Mobile phone. So there is no reason for your requirements to past this guide from your list.

#### **Deborah Hayes:**

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