



# SCHOOLS THAT STRETCH



**We searched America for educational pioneers. They have one trait in common: great expectations**

IS THERE GOOD NEWS ABOUT AMERICA'S SCHOOLS? YES: SOME OF THEM are simply great, even against great odds. What makes them that way? To start with, gifted teachers and inspiring principals. But an exemplary school must also set great expectations—for instructors, students and parents. Great schools ask everyone to stretch. Then they give kids the tools and attention they need to reach their goals. We present to you on these pages our choices for TIME's Schools of the Year, the most accomplished K-12 institutions we found in a search that began last fall. Writer-reporter Andrew Goldstein and staff writer Jodie Morse identified and examined more than 100 candidates by consulting leading educators and visiting schools around the U.S. The winners were selected by a team of writers and editors. To be sure, it was a subjective process. Our Schools of the Year are not the nation's best as measured by test scores. They are instead the schools we judged to have found the most promising approaches to the most pressing challenges in education: using wisely the freedom now granted to charter schools; educating the children of the poor; consolidating schools in rural areas; making effective use of technology in teaching; and getting parents and communities involved in the education of their kids. While the prospects for meaningful reform at the federal level look slim, schools like those we feature here are quietly constructing solutions on their own. Their stories have much to teach us all.

