

# Prof. Rex Li's Writings

**Category:** Education

**Sub-category:** Educational Ideas

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**Title:** Book Summary and Review of Diane Tavenner (2019):  
*Prepared* - Introduction, Chapter 1 - 3 How Tavenner  
Started Her Career

**Year Written:** 2021

**Summary/ Abstract:** Diane Tavenner is the school principal of Summit Public Schools, which gained media attention since its first batch of graduation in 2007. *Prepared* is her story of how to make a school succeed in America.

This paper summarized how Tavenner started her career.

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**Book Summary and Review of Diane Tavenner (2019): *Prepared***  
**Introduction, Chapter 1 - 3 How Tavenner Started Her Career**

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Jacket - Summit Public Schools was founded 2003 / 99% college admission  
 College admission and more

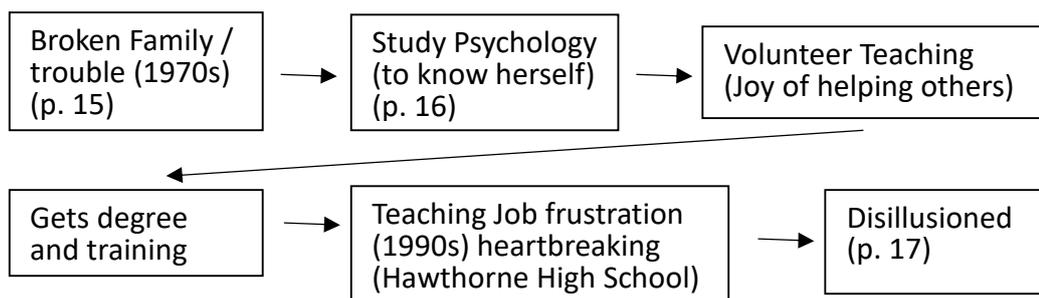
- Solve real-world problems
- Self-directed skills
- Collaboration
- reflection
- Succeed in college
- Thrive in workplace
- Lead a fulfilled life

Tavenner - 15 schools in California and Washington  
 Summit Public Schools (SPS)  
 On Board of Carnegie Foundation

Prologue R: Tavenner's description of Isabella is good, but Jamie (p.6) is less convincing – an upper-middle-class kid going to school to do a good job!  
 R: It is an interesting successful story of how SPS provides an opportunity for Isabella to transform: It is simply safe, positive and supportive.

p. 14 R: A real frontline principal  
 I *knew* these children, or should I say young adults, and their families. I knew how they thought, how they wrote, how they spoke and performed. I knew what they cared about, as well as their fears, and the habits they had formed and struggled with. I knew their dreams, and what they wanted from life. And though I'd participated in countless

p. 16 Tavenner's background:



p. 17 R: Tarvenner's summarized problems of a wide array of dimensions.

get a job. I encountered kids who I knew would not graduate at all, and what lay ahead for them was, to me, all too clear. Kids who drop out of high school are less likely to find jobs, less likely to earn a living wage, and more likely to be poor. They're more likely to rely on public assistance, and more likely to suffer from health problems.<sup>1</sup> I knew this, and I didn't see a way I could do anything meaningful to help. I was disillusioned. And it wasn't just the impoverished kids who struggled. I worked in a summer reading program and encountered affluent kids who fell through the many wide cracks in the traditional teaching model. I met hyperdriven kids who it was clear to me had no interest in actually learning the material and just wanted the grade. I saw high school seniors about to leave home who I knew would flounder because they were so dependent on the adults in their lives that they couldn't stand on their own. It seemed we were losing kids left and right. Why couldn't we figure out how to get them ready to be adults, to thrive?

p. 18 History of American education (people's aspirations change) and recent global economy

p. 20 skills 1950 vs 2020

p. 20 The college admissions race

"Be the same as everyone else, only better"

"We dream very different dreams today than we did 70 years ago."

p. 21 fundamental right to life, "good school", "good life".

p. 22 SPS "to create an environment that looked at the whole student."

p. 23 National attention – waiting for "superman"

p. 24 support from Zuckerberg, Gates,

Problem of rote homework in elementary school

p. 26 Move on to "Summit learning" (online support programs)

400 schools, 40 states, 4000 educators, 80,000 students

p. 27 Education and society, democracy

p. 28

sistance should be, we forget that when an individual is self-sustaining and fulfilled, they don't need a lot of assistance. We forget that when an individual is able to live a fulfilled life, it's good for the entire community, for our entire society. In all of our hand-wringing and fear about a nation that is spiraling down, we forget to look at what can spiral us up.

R: So far I can feel that Tavenner is a passionate educator. Her objective is one step ahead of others – preparing for a fulfilled life. It is a good American ideal – dream of 21st century. Nothing academic / complex in her idea. Maybe heart more than brain. She wants everyone to succeed (NCLB)

Piece together from Chapter 2

	1971	Born
	1979 (9)	Grade 3 / Home violence / father
	1980s	Studies in South Tahoe High
	1990s	Goes to college, studies psychology, volunteers in teaching
p. 29-30	1993	Teaches in Hawthorne High School, Los Angeles for 5 years
	1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Move to North California</li><li>• Determine to teach (Laurie – Step mother death)</li></ul>
p. 33		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teach in Mountain View High</li></ul>
p. 34		Vice Principal intern in Stanford Graduate School of Education
p. 36	2000 (30)	Vice Principal
	2001	Pregnant, 911, “good school”
p. 39		A passionate Tavenner – wants everyone succeed

“It just seems crazy to me,” I said. “Every parent wants their child to succeed. I want all of my students to succeed. How is it good for anyone when kids fail? Why do there have to be winners and losers?”

- p. 42-43 2001            Community High School Foundation formed. She applied for the job.  
(good school paper at Stanford Graduate School of Education (SGSE))
- p. 45-47                 The 1<sup>st</sup> batch of parents
- p. 48-50                 Fighting on principles