



Why "AUGUST TO JUNE" NOW?

Improving public education in America is considered a high priority by most of our leaders. While policymakers associate this almost solely with increased accountability as measured by student performance on standardized tests, the isolated focus on so-called "basic skills" that has resulted from that narrow view is causing an outcry. Many note a loss of children's joy in learning, sense of belonging, creative expression, and self-confidence. These are not easy things to measure, but they are visible and palpable in a vibrant community of learners, and are vital for maintaining a lively democratic society.

AUGUST TO JUNE is not meant to suggest there is one right way to teach. It shows intimately and over time how one unconventional classroom puts schoolwork inside a larger picture!

AUGUST TO JUNE can be watched for the sheer pleasure of the experience, but we hope it also raises awareness of what a public school can accomplish when the goal is not just discreet skills. Viewed from this intimate angle, one is really rooting for the kids, experiencing the range of abilities and backgrounds that is found in schools everywhere, and seeing up close how this particular classroom becomes a supportive community.

Few would say that they want a one-size-fits-all model of education, yet as decisions about schooling are made further and further away from children and local communities, there is less and less flexibility in classrooms. Educational leaders, teachers and parents all over the US are resisting this direction. Whether they describe their approach as progressive, humanistic, holistic, democratic, alternative, or just good practice, they have in common a desire to nurture the fire in each child, to recognize and support the whole child. Their classrooms are alive and well, but often either under attack or under the radar in this time of testing and standardization.

AUGUST TO JUNE asks viewers to stop and reconsider how we achieve what we really value for our children and society. www.augusttojune.com

"It's one thing to deplore the assembly-line model of schooling with its emphasis on mindless compliance and rote memorization. Far more useful is to see the alternative take shape in front of you."
-- Alfie Kohn, author of *The Schools Our Children Deserve* and other books