



# NEPC Launches Third Year of *Schools of Opportunity* Recognition Project: Public High Schools Encouraged to Apply

**Key Takeaway:** 2017 Schools of Opportunity Application NOW OPEN.  
Applications due May 1, 2017.

**Find Documents:**

Press Release: <http://nepc.info/node/8450>

**Contact:**

**Kevin Welner:** (303) 492-8370, [kevin.welner@colorado.edu](mailto:kevin.welner@colorado.edu)

**Adam York:** (303) 735-5290, [adam.j.york@colorado.edu](mailto:adam.j.york@colorado.edu)

[More NEPC Resources on Schools of Opportunity](#)

BOULDER, CO (January 30, 2017) - The 2017 Schools of Opportunity application cycle launched today at [www.SchoolsofOpportunity.org](http://www.SchoolsofOpportunity.org). Building on the success of the past two years, the National Education Policy Center at CU Boulder will again recognize public high schools that are creating remarkable opportunities to learn for all their students. The application deadline is May 1, 2017.

Schools that apply are asked to demonstrate how they work to close opportunity gaps across a range of key areas. The NEPC derived this set of opportunity measures from the expertise shared by top researchers in [Closing the Opportunity Gap](#), the 2013 book published by Oxford University Press.

Two criteria are required of all applying schools: (1) broadening and enriching learning opportunities and (2) creating and maintaining a healthy school culture. Applicants also select, from a menu of eight additional criteria, four that best represent how their school is responding to its unique local needs. All ten criteria are described on the [Schools of Opportunity](#) website, along with the scoring rubric used by the evaluation teams.

NEPC designed the Schools of Opportunity project as a way to highlight the nation's best schools and practices, shifting away from the nation's imbalanced focus on standardized test scores. "Even in the face of stark inequities across our social and economic systems, as well as our education system, every school can adopt research-based



best practices,” says Project Co-Director, Dr. Linda Molner Kelley. “The 37 Schools of Opportunity recognized over the first two years of the project illustrate how all schools can work to provide great opportunities for their students.”

Along with Dr. Kelley, who is the former Assistant Dean of Teacher Education and Partnerships at CU Boulder, the project is led by Dr. Adam York, the Project Manager, and by NEPC director and CU-Boulder School of Education Professor Kevin Welner. The Ford Foundation and the NEA Foundation both provide funding to support the project.

Each school’s application will be reviewed by a team of evaluators from across the nation, including educational researchers and current and former school leaders. Finalists are selected based on narrative responses as well as data and other evidence submitted. Site visits to top schools are also a vital part of the project. Educators have found that the application process provides a rich opportunity for high school teams to work together to reflect on their strengths, assets and areas of potential improvement.

Recognized Gold and Silver schools will be announced in winter 2017 in the *Washington Post* Answer Sheet blog and other media outlets. Applications are welcomed until May 1, 2017, with all nomination information and forms available online at: [www.SchoolsofOpportunity.org](http://www.SchoolsofOpportunity.org)

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