

# Leading Educational Change

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Global Issues, Challenges, and  
Lessons on Whole-System Reform

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EDITED BY

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*Foreword by Michael Fullan*



# Contents

<b>Foreword</b> by Michael Fullan	<b>vii</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PART I: EMERGING ISSUES IN EDUCATIONAL CHANGE</b>	
<b>1. International Comparisons as a Lever for Policy Reform</b> Andreas Schleicher	<b>7</b>
<b>2. Teleporting Change: The Dynamics and Distortions of International Benchmarking</b> Andy Hargreaves	<b>11</b>
<b>3. Directions of Change: Why the United States and China Are Moving in Opposite Directions</b> Yong Zhao	<b>16</b>
<b>4. Mindful Teaching with Technology: Steps Toward Harmonization</b> Dennis Shirley	<b>20</b>
<b>5. From the Periphery to the Center: Broadening the Educational Change Discourse</b> Helen Janc Malone	<b>25</b>

PART II: IMPROVING PRACTICE

6. **Capacity for Learning:  
Getting Serious About Practice Improvement** 33  
Louise Stoll
7. **Diagnosing and Designing for  
Schoolhouse Practice: Educational  
Administration and Instructional Improvement** 37  
James P. Spillane
8. **The Enduring Challenge of Achieving  
Effective Teaching on a Large Scale** 42  
Stephen E. Anderson
9. **Ways of Knowing:  
Developing Teacher Knowledge in the 21st Century** 47  
Ann Lieberman
10. **The Small Origins of Large-Scale School Reform in Mexico** 52  
Gabriel Cámara

PART III: EQUITY AND EDUCATIONAL JUSTICE

11. **Equity: The Big Challenge for Education Systems** 59  
Mel Ainscow
12. **Equity-Driven Educational Change** 64  
Amanda Datnow
13. **Engaging Critical Diversity in Educational Reform** 68  
Sherry L. Deckman
14. **The Pursuit of Excellence and Equity in Divided Countries:  
A South African Case** 73  
Jonathan D. Jansen

- 15. Ensuring Educational Justice in Latin American Education Systems: Issues and Challenges** 77

Silvina Gvirtz and Esteban Torre

PART IV: ACCOUNTABILITY AND ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS

- 16. Australian School Improvement with Transparent, Fair Comparisons** 85

Barry McGaw

- 17. Rethinking a Century-Old System: Hong Kong** 89

Patrick Griffin

- 18. Quality Assurance System: Making Education Accountable in Russia** 93

Elena Lenskaya

- 19. The Bottom-Up Push for Quality Education in India** 97

Madhav Chavan and Rukmini Banerji

- 20. Accountability as a Collective Professional Responsibility** 101

Lorna Earl

PART V: WHOLE-SYSTEM CHANGE

- 21. Building the Collective Capacity for System Change: Professional Learning Communities in Wales** 109

Alma Harris

- 22. Education in Brazil: New Challenges** 114

Maria Helena Guimarães de Castro

- 23. Fifteen Years of Singapore's "Thinking Schools Learning Nation" Vision** 118

Pak Tee Ng

<b>24. Fulfilling the Dream in Finland</b>	<b>123</b>
Pasi Sahlberg	
<b>25. Conclusion: Issues, Challenges, and Lessons on Whole-System Reform</b>	<b>128</b>
Helen Janc Malone	
<b>About the Editor and Contributors</b>	<b>133</b>



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# Introduction

In the spring of 2011, while attending a U.S. national education conference, between plenary sessions I engaged in a conversation with a school district professional development trainer. Over the course of our discussion, she shared with me her desire to inform teachers and principals in her district about global educational perspectives on system reform and school improvement, but aired her frustration about a lack of succinct literature on this topic that front-line staff could access and easily read during their limited available time.

On my way home from the conference I came up with a challenge: ask foremost education leaders from around the globe to address the current research, policies, and practices that are changing educational systems in 1,500 engaging and compelling words. The authors featured in this volume responded to my challenge to offer brief, captivating, and provocative ideas designed to appeal to practitioners and decisionmakers alike, to all who directly or indirectly shape children's and adolescents' learning experiences. The authors represent fifteen countries across six continents. They are current and former government officials in the ministries of education, directors of international and national education organizations, scholars, practitioners, educational leaders and innovators, and recipients of the most prestigious honors bestowed on thought leaders in the field of education.

## Introducing the Five Lines of Inquiry

The development of the educational change knowledge base has grown substantially over the past decade. International assessments, comparative analyses, and diverse capacity-building strategies have led to significant knowledge creation and mobilization within the field. Today, we are beginning to understand in a more nuanced way the intricacies of leading educational change. What we have learned is that we must attend to inputs and outputs equally and address contextual factors and underlying conditions that promote student learning and educational success.

Reflective of the burgeoning knowledge base, this book is organized into Parts that explore five lines of inquiry, each of which offers a brief

introduction, situates the thematic discourse, and introduces the chapters contained therein:

- Part I: Emerging Issues in Educational Change** examines cross-cutting issues that play a role in shaping system-level change.
- Part II: Improving Practice** profiles strategies that build professional capacity and collective inquiry.
- Part III: Equity and Educational Justice** critically analyzes contextual factors that lead to inequitable systems of schooling and considers strategies that promote educational justice.
- Part IV: Accountability and Assessment Systems** attends to the use of internal and external accountability mechanisms as drivers for data-based decisionmaking.
- Part V: Whole-System Change** offers lessons from emerging and established models engaged in comprehensive system-level change.

The five themes are intertwined and represent diverse levers that can be pulled to create meaningful and sustainable change. The chapter authors draw attention to the reality that leading educational change is multifaceted, political, and uncertain but that positive educational change is possible when it is embedded in a clear vision, strong leadership, resource investment, internal and external accountability, high-quality practice, collaboration, and continuous engagement by all stakeholders.

The purpose of this contemporary anthology is to bring to the forefront the latest thinking across the five lines of inquiry in order to promote important discussions, analyses, and innovations within the education sector. Accompanying the book is an Instructor's Guide, available on the Teachers College Press website ([www.teacherscollegepress.com](http://www.teacherscollegepress.com)), which offers thought-provoking questions arranged by chapters across the five parts that can be used to lead professional development training, classroom instruction, and individual learning, and to generate broader discussions about leading educational change. This book is geared toward education decisionmakers and leaders, practitioners, and policymakers interested in international education and system-level change.

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