Preface

Public education in the United States is an evolutionary phenomenon. For all its problems, in a little more than 350 years, the system has progressed from a meager introduction to scholarship reserved for a few, to a system dedicated to developing the potential of all. This evolution has been shaped by slow, orderly social change and impacted suddenly by crisis. It is also affected by economic, political, and religious forces and by the needs of the individual. It is by no means finished.

Learning, in general, reflects changes in knowledge level and behavior. Like a child who grows, stretches, experiments, fails, and succeeds, an effective educational system must also learn. It must continually add new knowledge as well as respond and adapt to its environment, meeting the needs of current students who have never been more diverse, more intelligent, and more socially challenged. The learning and subsequent reform of an entire educational system, however, cannot be mandated or accomplished by a few talented and powerful individuals. An undertaking this broad must involve a school's entire community in learning, planning, and implementing meaningful change. It follows, then, that leadership among all community members must also be sought, nurtured, valued, and respected. For school systems that have learned the lessons of constructivism and collaboration, teacher leadership is a natural outcome and a hidden strength. It is the key to the professionalism of teaching and the achievement of all students.

Leadership Strategies for Teachers is designed for and dedicated to all teachers who are committed to their students' learning and their own development. These teachers already help advance school improvement efforts and adopt innovative teaching practices, but teachers rarely see themselves as leaders. Developing that leadership for all teachers who aspire to be their best does not mean empty classrooms or even larger administrations. What it does mean is a community sharing leadership within a school in order to energize educational endeavors and improve student achievement. While designed for teachers, this text can also be helpful for professional developers, consultants, administrators, and any student of school improvement.

In the second edition of this book, research areas have been updated and materials reorganized and supplemented to strengthen connections to the REACH model for teacher-leaders as well as the roles of a teacher-leader: improving student achievement, extending one's own learning, collaborating for school improvement, and supporting shared vision and values. Additional case studies provide applications of the educational

and leadership research-based theories, and specific strategies included in each chapter provide activities for planning and practicing REACH leadership skills. Case studies offered in this section and throughout the book involve only fictional characters. Any resemblance of name or situation is coincidental.

In its fully developed state, the REACH model for teacher-leaders illustrates how the characteristics that describe the conduct of teacher-leaders serve as a base for their roles and professional relationships as well as the communication skills and strategies they pursue. Even as teacher-leaders are affected by change, they can also find support and networking through organizations, publications, electronic resources, and teacher exhibits. The model is depicted in Figure 0.1. The book outlines these concepts in the chapters that follow.

Chapter 1 explores teacher-leader behaviors through the REACH model: Risk-taking, Effectiveness, Autonomy, Collegiality, and Honor. Specific strategies in goal setting and conflict resolution as well as a case study involving a teacher's ethical dilemma support these leadership functions.

Chapter 2 describes the role of teacher-leaders that evolves from their being change agents within school systems. Strategies examined that bolster dealing with change include force field analysis, developing new capabilities, and managing stress.

Chapter 3 discusses the roles of teacher-leaders as learning leaders in their classrooms and in their schools by focusing on improving student achievement. This is not an instructional methodology book, but looks to building relationships and communication with students and parents as basic to empowering both teaching and learning in a knowledge society. Analyzing a case study and the balance in a parent-teacher conference are strategies provided for investigating the role of learning leader.

Chapter 4 examines the professional growth and development of teacher-leaders by considering the professional nature of teaching, reflective inquiry and practice, and individual models of professional development. Strategies for encouraging lifelong learning include critical inquiry mapping and provocation as creative thinking.

Chapter 5 explains how teacher-leaders can become collaborators for school improvement. Situational leadership, school-based professional

Figure 0.1   REACH Model for Teacher-Leaders
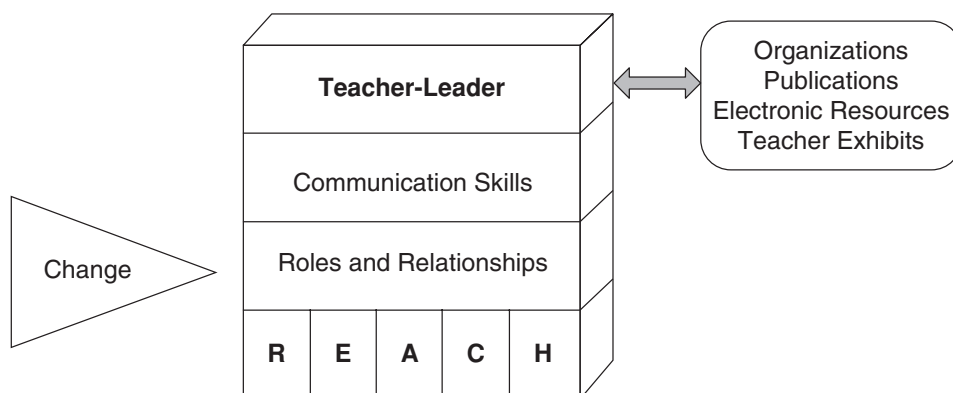
development, and collaborative communication all provide opportunities for proactive learning communities. Strategies promote strategic planning and team building.

Chapter 6 outlines shared vision and values as well as connecting teacher-leaders beyond their in-school professional relationships through professional organizations, publications, electronic resources, and exhibits. Strategies provide guidelines for staging a teacher exhibit and increasing interest of formal presentations.

At the end of each chapter, you will be asked to reflect about the information you have been given and to apply that information to projected experiences in the future. The value of reflective writing is to understand the present and to make decisions for future action. In this way, teacher-leaders have the opportunity to pause and consider their own assumptions, gain insight, think about new information, and create future plans for change or application. With a balanced approach to theory and strategies, *Leadership Strategies for Teachers* reflects the philosophy that leadership is best developed through knowledge and experience that lends confidence to action and satisfaction in defining oneself as a teacher and a leader.