Preface

Being offered that first leadership position is initially invigorating. You start to think about all you hope to accomplish and the powerful impact you will be able to make on the lives of children. You are bubbling with enthusiasm, and you can't wait to get started. You wait with anticipation for school to begin and then the day finally arrives. Teachers file in followed by children; your time no longer appears to be your own; district personnel begin to slide you policy and procedure manuals along with a plethora of managerial duties laden with deadlines; parents begin to call and question building activities; the roof begins to leak; the custodian decides to take an unapproved leave; supplies ordered in the spring are lost in the warehouse; last year's administrator overspent the budget, and you are notified that your current budget is being slashed to compensate for this overspending; and on, and on, and on it goes! And we wonder why new leaders burn out so quickly and rush back to the classroom or out of education all together.

What about experienced leaders returning for their fifth, seventh, or fifteenth year as an administrator? They have had some time off to rejuvenate, are familiar with the routine of school procedures, their office staff are experienced and efficient, and so they approach the beginning of the year with energy and a new sense of purpose. These experienced leaders walk into the building on their first day back and learn that the ground rules have changed just a bit. New policies have been adopted over the summer that have resulted in some additional job duties; assessments have been revised in order to better align with state standards; additional positions have been created at the district level, and individuals learn that they not only have a new supervisor, but that the means by which they will be evaluated has also changed; guidelines have been established to ensure greater consistency, which is a definite plus, yet experienced leaders know their staff well enough

to realize that the gap between where the staff currently is and where they are expected to be is as wide as the Grand Canyon; three staff members have come in to voice their concerns about the new reporting procedures; parents call to demand a change in their child's room placement; two staff members have decided to accept positions at other sites; and on, and on, and on. And we wonder why so many of our experienced leaders begin to seek options for early retirement!

Of course, there are some deeply rewarding moments that leaders, both new and veteran, experience during the first few months of the school year, but leaders so often find themselves so overwhelmed that they can't find the time or the energy to savor them. So, how do leaders in today's world rise to the occasion and meet the demands placed upon them?

Organize, Communicate, Empower! How Principals Can Make Time for Leadership was written to address this very question. This text will provide leaders with strategies and techniques related to Organization, Communication, and Empowerment, three areas that I see as foundational to effective leadership. My goal is to equip leaders with tools to make the complex job of leadership manageable so that productivity can be increased and energy sustained.