Foreword

Over the past decade there has been exponential attention paid to accountability, assessment for and of learning, and the glut of information that accompanies such phenomenon, aided and abetted by the fantastic increase in technology. Having reams of data, however, does not by itself make us smarter—only overloaded and confused.

This is where Lorna M. Earl and Steven Katz come in. *Leading Schools in a Data-Rich World* is just what the doctor ordered to make data work for the betterment of schools. *Leading Schools* is simultaneously deep and practical. It puts data at the center but also puts it in perspective. It gives data a purpose and a set of conceptual and strategic tools for using knowledge wisely and effectively.

The authors show us how to use data for informed decision making; moreover, they insist that data must be used to serve continuous inquiry, not just to answer the question of the day. A great strength of *Leading Schools* is the use of an actual case woven through the book, each appearance accompanied by guided assignments which require and enable the reader to go deeper and deeper. We are helped at each step of the way to practice our own inquiry. This is a book that should be read and worked through by teams and groups at the school and district levels. It is a perfect study-group book because it serves as a practical and powerful action plan for continuous improvement.

Earl and Katz have presented a marvelous characterization of today's data-rich world and have helped us take advantage of the great knowledge potential that exists in our computers and heads. Above all, they give purpose to data as they model what a culture of sustained inquiry should become.

—Michael Fullan