

Foreword

The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) is thrilled to partner with Sandra Harris and Corwin on *Learning From the Best: Lessons From Award-Winning Superintendents*. This important collection brings together the wisdom and expertise of our nation's top school system leaders into one volume.

Harris and her contributors take a practical look at how superintendents can address the leading challenges facing schools today. Their book illustrates how educational leaders can build relationships with diverse audiences—including parents, board members, community members, and the media—to help students succeed. It examines how superintendents can use collaboration and communication to build a sense of community in schools and the larger community, it offers guidance on how superintendents can manage the inevitable stresses of the job by becoming more resilient, and it outlines how superintendents can lead school reform efforts and have a positive affect on student achievement.

There is no official road map to success in the superintendency; however, by drawing valuable lessons from proven leaders, Harris has created the next best thing. Both new superintendents and veteran educational leaders will discover helpful insights in these pages. For those aspiring to be a superintendent, there is no time like the present to begin preparing for the job, and this book is a good place to start.

Many of the award-winning superintendents who contributed to this book have participated in AASA's Superintendent of the Year program. Since 1988, the Superintendent of the Year program has paid tribute to the talent and vision of the men and women who lead our nation's public schools. AASA has recognized and honored more than 1,000 public school leaders through the program over the past twenty-two years.

A common thread throughout the Superintendent of the Year program, and throughout this book, is a commitment to information sharing. I often remark that the superintendency is one of the most challenging positions in America today. It can also be a lonely position. When we bring together school system leaders to share their expertise and learn from each other, we foster success among our leaders, our schools, and, most importantly, the children we serve.

AASA is indebted to Sandra Harris for pulling together this important resource. We also owe a debt of gratitude to all the superintendents who have contributed so much to the Superintendent of the Year program over the last twenty-two years. Finally, I would like to thank Darlene Pierce, who has guided the Superintendent of the Year program since its inception. I invite you to learn more about the program and read our annual Superintendent of Year Forum white papers on the AASA Web site at www.aasa.org.

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