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# *Introduction*

## *No-Limit Leadership by Design*

*If you do not think about the future, you cannot have one.*

—John Galsworthy, Nobel Prize-winning author

**E**very book is written for a reason. The purpose of this book is to help current and prospective school leaders to achieve the following:

- Do more good for kids and feel better about their life's work
- Make the most of their talents to better serve students and their community
- Become the best leaders they can be and achieve the most successful and significant careers they are capable of having
- Follow their passion and take charge of their leadership, their careers, their lives, their dreams, and their legacy
- Find their voice and their soul as school leaders
- Build no-limit careers on purpose

This guide is a full-service resource that school leaders can repeatedly turn to for life-changing answers to their most frequent, pressing, timely, and compelling leadership and career-related questions, including the following:

- Do I really want a career in school leadership? Why? At what cost? What are the pros? The cons? Do I have what it takes?
- What distinguishes a real career in school leadership from merely jumping from job to job? What separates a real leader from a run-of-the-mill bureaucrat (educrat)? How can I have a meaningful lifelong career by design?

## 2 Lifelong Leadership by Design

- What are my choices? How do I choose?
- What constitutes success as a school leader? Money? Title? Longevity? Legacy? What stands in the way?
- What are the natural laws and success secrets related to school leadership?
- How should I prepare? How do I know if I'm ready for the next level of leadership? How do I find just the right job or make a job right for me?
- How do I build a winning team and a positive organizational culture?
- What is the right way to leave a job gracefully and begin a new one on the right foot?
- What about lateral moves? When (if ever) is it wise to move down the administrative ladder?
- What are the most common professional blunders school leaders make?
- What are the phases of a successful lifelong career in school leadership? What does it take to make a real difference and leave a lasting legacy?

And finally,

- Is it worth it?

Most educators want to take responsibility for their leadership career, but many aren't sure how to do it. They need guidance to figure out where they will fit in best, how to make the best use of their skills, how to feel fulfilled by their work every day, and how to contribute the greatest service to their students, their profession, and their community.

A successful career in school leadership isn't a crapshoot. It is made up of purpose, strategy, timing, calculated risks, discipline, and focus. And a modicum of luck. That's what this guide is all about (except the luck part).

At last, principals, superintendents, and other school leaders, at all levels, have a resource that fills the need for advice, direction, and support in negotiating today's labyrinth of leadership opportunities, possibilities, pathways, and pitfalls. Reading this practical handbook is like having a wise mentor always at hand.

This text is for everyone who wants to make school leadership his or her life's work. It is aimed at all current, prospective, would-be, and wannabe school leaders (including private, charter, and non-public school administrators) who don't want to end up with just any career that comes along—or, worse, with no meaningful career at all.

Unfortunately, there are some administrators who never have a real career. They only have a history of different positions. There is a difference.

Like most school leaders, you may already have an interesting, productive, and worthwhile professional life. But with this book's guidance and encouragement, you can enjoy an even more meaningful and memorable lifelong career, achieve more, and feel better about your contribution to children and society.

Throughout your career in educational leadership, the most difficult person you will ever have to lead is yourself. Fortunately, reading this book can be the first step in leading yourself to a no-limit career on purpose (by design, not by default). Can you afford not to take a look? If you are interested, a good time to start is now. Good luck on your journey!