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## FOREWORD

**R**estructuring in education is widely discussed, criticized, lauded, and confused. It has many potential real and symbolic meanings. But this metaphor has galvanized considerable nationwide activity, and it is one of the most prominent dimensions of education reform. Many educators adapted the restructuring lexicon from U.S. businesses that focused on objectives such as downsizing middle management and eliminating or selling products less integral to their core business. As in many attempts to transfer business concepts to education, much was gained and lost in the translation to public education. Similar movements at the federal level have been termed “reinventing government” by the Clinton Administration.

Someone needed to make sense out of important but misunderstood, diverse restructuring activity. David Conley has done this and provided a great service to the education profession. He chose an extremely broad definition of restructuring, and consequently this book encompasses the widest possible range of restructuring possibilities. Moreover, the context and systemic interactions involved in restructuring are fully described.

The title of a “roadmap” is appropriate because, while the reader is apprised of restructuring vision, strategies, and context, the book does not pass final judgments on what is “good or bad” restructuring. It is too early for this, and the research base does not exist to make definitive judgments.

Since restructuring has so many dimensions and considerations, it is extremely useful to have resources that can assist decision-makers all in one place. Dispersed information is a problem in education, where there are so many sources that span numerous subfields. This book includes twenty-five chapters, and all are necessary to comprehend how many different parts of the education system are involved in restructuring. The book includes several levels of government, curriculum and instruction, personnel, and five chapters concerning different dimensions of process.

But this volume is more than a compilation of sources. It includes judgments, speculation, and wisdom about restructuring. Conley is forthright in presenting “best guesses” after weighing a variety of evidence. As the book unfolds, it becomes clear that the initial concerns about multiple meanings can be overcome as Conley clarifies the means and ends of restructuring.

This second edition is a major overhaul of the final fourteen chapters. Education restructuring is a fast-moving target, so additions and revisions were made from the 1993 first edition to reflect new knowledge and perspectives.

A frequent response to U.S. education problems is a focus upon structure and organization, rather than the technical core of curriculum and teaching. Conley provides a sophisticated analysis of how structural change may be necessary, but he makes it clear that revamping structure alone is insufficient. School restructuring works best when it is focused on teacher capacity and student achievement. Some educators expect that ambitious restructuring such as site-based management, team teaching, and longer class periods will increase pupil attainment. Conley makes clear that these structural changes must be accompanied by other improvement strategies.

In short, at the end of this “roadmap” the reader knows where he has been and where to go. The contents are also a one-stop shopping location for systemic restructuring. The book serves multiple audiences of practitioners, policymakers, and scholars. Once you start down this road, you will want to continue.

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