Foreword

Comprehensive Problem-Solving and Skill Development for Next-Generation Leaders is constructed around the various aspects of leadership essential to the development of future leaders in both K-12 and higher education settings.

The conceptual framework of the book is predicated on the assumption that for the most part, organizations have little difficulty identifying problems and corresponding solutions, but can only arrive at solutions through effective leadership. The essential components of effective leadership are addressed in this book though several research-based themes based on leadership theories and styles, organizational leadership and culture, leadership and technology, self-assessment and development, and forward thinking. Having worked in K-12 education for three decades and now as a dean of a teacher education program at the university level, now more than ever before I see the need for great leaders at all K-20 levels to possess the skills addressed in this book and work collaboratively to address the anticipated challenges of the future.

There are many outside influences impacting education today. These influences have made it increasingly difficult for leaders to remain effective, especially if they are not willing or able to accept change as the climate of education changes. These influences include the impact of the digital age on our students and instruction, the future job market for yet to be created jobs, increased curricular rigor and higher expectations, accountability, a globally competitive educational environment, diversity and cultural awareness. Readers of this book will appreciate the insights pertaining to all of these critical issues that are presented therein.

The book also provides an accurate depiction of the time and commitment required by leaders to transform culture. Strategies to promote active learning and multicultural leadership, and reflective pedagogical practices intended to facilitate cultural change are presented along with the portrayal of a new paradigm of digital leadership relative to the implementation and utilization of technology. Furthermore, the book includes a thoughtful examination of the impact of emotional intelligence on decision making, and the importance of leadership development and mentoring framed by democratic principles and practices.

Successful leaders must accept the challenge of leading organizations, and embrace the possibilities presented by the future. No matter what changes are ahead, it is certain that it will take effective leadership at every level to bring about success. This book will help leaders bridge the gap between problems and solutions through research-based strategies constructed around blended leadership and change theory. It also offers leaders multiple solutions to navigate the many changes and influences facing educational systems.

This book is an excellent resource for students, scholars and researchers who are interested in delving into the possibilities and challenges of next-generation leadership.