

ACCELERATING CHANGE IN  
SCHOOLS: LEADING RAPID,  
SUCCESSFUL, AND COMPLEX  
CHANGE INITIATIVES

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ADVANCES IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION  
VOLUME 27

**ACCELERATING CHANGE  
IN SCHOOLS: LEADING  
RAPID, SUCCESSFUL, AND  
COMPLEX CHANGE  
INITIATIVES**

BY

**LINDA DUDAR**

*St. Mary's University, Calgary, Alberta, Canada*

**SHELLEYANN SCOTT**

*Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary,  
Calgary, Alberta, Canada*

**DONALD E. SCOTT**

*Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary,  
Calgary, Alberta, Canada*



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# FOREWORD

One of most significant challenges facing educational leaders today is the ever-increasing demand for rapid organizational change in the face of a constantly evolving environment. These demands challenge the ingenuity and creativity of school leaders while also creating great stress for teachers, students, parents, and other key stakeholders. Educational leaders are increasingly searching for resources that not only help understand the complex currents they are facing but also provide practical and effective responses.

*Accelerating Change in Schools* tackles this important topic through the perspective of three interrelated research projects: The principal author's doctoral dissertation research focusing on rapid change in Alberta schools, the Alberta Student Assessment Study, and the International Study of Principal Preparation. The primary thesis of this book is that, contrary to what the past educational literature has claimed, it is possible to implement rapid changes in schools in a manner that both gains significant buy-in from stakeholders and can be sustainable over time.

Writing about dynamics of educational change in a way that addresses the interests and needs of both education scholars and frontline school administrators is a challenging task. Theoretically sophisticated scholarly studies often lack sufficient practical usefulness or are too ahistorical in orientation. In turn, books designed to provide school leaders with practical advice may not be grounded in a sound theoretical foundation. In approaching the topic of rapid change in schools, *Accelerating Change in Schools* offers a timely and unique blend of theoretical reflection, historical analysis, and practical strategies. The first part of the book examines the complex factors driving the demand for rapid change in schools, various theories of the change, and the role of numerous stakeholders and participants in the change. This provides the foundation for a detailed presentation of a theoretical model for rapid change based on the ground-breaking research of Dr. Linda Dudar.

The second half of the book builds on Dr. Dudar's model in order to draw out pragmatic strategies that can be used by school administrators to promote rapid, but effective, school change. This advice is rooted in a series

of case studies developed by Linda Dudar, Shelleyann Scott, and Donald E. Scott involving a variety of types and sizes of schools, facing differing challenges. These cases provide the basis for linking very practical ideas and strategies to the larger context of the rapid change model being proposed. The final chapter of the book is the most practically focused, speaking directly to school principals and other educational leaders, providing them with detailed checklists for further action and self-reflection on the change process.

*Accelerating Change in Schools* is one of those rare books that tackles a complex topic from a solid theoretical and historical foundation while providing very practical advice and strategies for those working on the “frontlines” of organizational change.

Readers interested more in the theoretical discussion of rapid change will find a wealth of material and sources as well as a good review of the literature. For those interested in the very real challenges faced by school administrators, the book is a rich resource of practical advice and suggestions. Finally, those who feel daunted by the challenges that rapid change poses will find a positive vision of hope that will encourage them in their work. *Accelerating Change in Schools* is likely to remain the “go to” resource on the topic of rapid school change for many years to come.

Mark Charlton  
Retired Vice President,  
Academic, Calgary, Alberta, Canada