PREFACE

Statistics are a wonderful servant and an appalling master.

—Hopper & Hopper, 2009

Technology and accountability have generated a data dump on teachers. There is no longer a shortage of information; it's just the opposite—a glut. We tackled many of the problems that arise from too much information in our previous publication, *Realization* (Sharratt & Fullan, 2009). Using the 14 parameters of district-wide success that we developed in our work in the York Region District School Board, we showed how schools and the district as a whole were able to realize improvements on a wide scale. But we did not really delve into the role of data in a deep, human way.

In FACES, we go deeper in our quest to balance and integrate two aspects of school improvement that look like they can't be brought together: on the one hand is the question of how you personalize data for all students so that each is treated as a real person and helped to learn according his or her own individual needs; on the other hand is the question of how you do this for 100,000 students at a time without losing the human touch. FACES does just this, honoring and helping the individual, and improving the system.

We examined three research questions in our work in four countries, Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia. We asked over 500 educators three direct questions: why put FACES on data, how do we do so, and what leadership qualities would be necessary to lead a system that did this well? Then we asked participants to tell their stories about their work with the FACES that they know. In our work with practitioners, we have come to appreciate that "practice drives practice" or, more precisely, that best practice drives even better practice. Systems need to be stimulated

and steered sometimes, but by and large effective practice needs to be unleashed, spread, and further developed.

This book is an account of what good practice is and how to get more of it using data and the FACES of students as the drivers. In Chapter 1, we set the context and show how we and others use data. Chapter 2 examines what we found from our key research questions. Then we focus on assessment (Chapter 3) and instruction (Chapter 4), inseparable conjoined twins. In Chapter 5, we examine the leadership required to make such a balanced and integrated system work. Finally, in Chapter 6, we consider ownership—who is accountable for putting FACES on the data.

So, join us in this journey to find the "wonderful servant" for which the Hopper brothers yearned.