



# Diagnosis and Design for School Improvement: Using a Distributed Perspective to Lead and Manage Change

*James P. Spillane, Amy Franz Coldren*

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## **Diagnosis and Design for School Improvement: Using a Distributed Perspective to Lead and Manage Change** James P. Spillane, Amy Franz Coldren

This practical resource highlights the critical importance of diagnosis and design in the work of leading and managing for school improvement. The authors maintain that today's school leaders and managers, under intense pressure to improve student learning, cannot simply adopt and implement pre-packaged reforms manufactured outside the school. Rather, to effect real reform, they must understand how leading and managing for instructional improvement gets done in *their* school and in turn use their diagnoses as the basis for mindful design and redesign. This book is a must-read for school administrators, teachers, stakeholders, and reformers who seek a new way to improve teaching and learning.

- Draws on over 10 years of empirical study and includes detailed vignettes to examine real-world examples of school social networks.
- Combines distributed leadership with diagnosis and design and grounds that work in the daily life of schools.
- Looks at both formal and informal aspects of the school organization.
- Includes suggestions and tools for doing the work of diagnosis and design.

**James P. Spillane** is the Spencer T. and Ann W. Olin Professor in Learning and Organizational Change and Chair of the graduate program in Human Development and Social Policy at Northwestern University. **Amy Franz Coldren** is an administrator and teacher at Frederick Community College in Frederick, Maryland.

“In a simple but powerful framework, the authors help leaders think, indeed re-think, the formal and informal aspects of running a school. With all the focus on leadership these days, here is a book that will help leaders go deeper, and will equip them with ideas for thinking about and combating superficial solutions.”

—**Michael Fullan**, professor emeritus, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto

“Through solid research evidence, evocative examples, and well-crafted writing, the authors dispense with one-dimensional management where principals just implement other people's programs, in favor of 3D distributed leadership that is front and center in all effective school reform. Like many leadership books, this one will inspire you, but it will also give you concrete, usable insights.”

—**Andy Hargreaves**, Lynch School of Education, Boston College

“This book is an insightful and useful account of leadership work in schools. It provides crucial food for thought for educators in a variety of leadership roles, as well as researchers.”

—**William A. Firestone**, Rutgers Graduate School of Education, New Jersey

“A masterful volume that redefines the center of gravity for the work of school leaders—from an individual quest for prepackaged solutions to the search for understanding and for improvement designs anchored in distributed action.”

—**Joseph F. Murphy**, Frank W. Mayborn Chair, Vanderbilt University's Peabody College

“Spillane and Coldren present a fascinating picture of the real-life practice of school leadership—in 3D: How problems are *diagnosed*; how forward steps are *designed*; and how leadership is *distributed* to make teaching and learning work for kids.”

—**Jerome T. Murphy**, Howe Research Professor of Education, Harvard Graduate School of Education

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