



Big-City School Reforms: Lessons from New York, Toronto, and London

Michael Fullan, Alan Boyle

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Big cities have struggled to improve public school systems. This book shows why—and offers a framework for achieving future success. Fullan and Boyle, internationally renowned thinkers on school change, demonstrate that while the educational challenges of big cities may be overwhelming, they are not insurmountable. They draw on ten years' of research to identify six essential “push” and “pull” actions that enable big school systems to improve student achievement.

Leaders must *push* to challenge the status quo, convey a high sense of urgency, and have the courage needed to intervene. But they need to also *pull* together to create a commonly-owned strategy, develop professional power, and attend to sustainability. Examining three major cities—New York, Toronto, and London—through the decade of 2002–2012, this book weaves case studies with careful analysis and recommendations to hone in on which policies and strategies work best to raise the bar for all students and reduce the gap for the disadvantaged. *Big-City School Reforms* offers invaluable advice to those leading the next phase of school reform in cities around the world. This is an eminently practical book that focuses on big problems and big solutions.

“This encouraging book draws on the recent experiences of New York, London, and Toronto to identify what it takes to transform big-city school systems. It recognises their complexities without being overawed by them. By concentrating on the factors that seem to matter most, it offers real hope that we can now tackle some of the key issues that have frustrated reform efforts in the past.”

—Geoff Whitty, director emeritus, Institute of Education, University of London, UK

“Fullan and Boyle present a compelling framework for motivating and sustaining improvement in large urban school districts. The authors’ premise that system leaders must optimally balance push and pull strategies serves as an important lesson to school-level leaders as well.”

—Sandra J. Stein, education and leadership consultant

“In this important new book, Fullan and Boyle answer the most important question facing the leaders of the world’s major cities: what will it take to significantly improve the quality of public education? Through a sophisticated analysis of the policies pursued in New York, Toronto, and London, the authors make it possible for us to see why some cities are making more progress than others. Their clear and compelling insights couldn’t be more relevant and timely.”

—Pedro A. Noguera, Peter L. Agnew Professor of Education, Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Development, Executive Director, Metropolitan Center for Urban Education, New York University

Michael Fullan, Order of Canada, is professor emeritus of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. **Alan Boyle** is director of Leannta Education Associates where he designs professional learning for education leaders.



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