

# Introduction

Things continue to change in the area of school assessment. In recent years, interest in and exploration of formative assessment practices has swept through many school systems, while controversy continues to mount and surround standardized testing programs. And most recently, with the passage of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), more autonomy is granted to states and local districts. We have created this leadership guide to take into consideration these changes and have put together a new resource that is based on an earlier publication, *Assessment Balance and Quality: An Action Guide for School Leaders, Third Edition*. We list here our major revisions:

- The overall presentation in this book is condensed compared to previous editions of *Assessment Balance and Quality*. The book continues to center on the core of the work to be done to build and maintain balanced local instructionally helpful assessment systems. Previous editions recommended seven actions local school districts take to put in place the conditions necessary to achieve balance and quality; that is now streamlined down to five organizational actions.
- Included with this organizational perspective are actions to be taken by individual school leaders to both support the five organizational actions and to help expand their personal leadership knowledge base and skill set in assessment.
- The intent of the book is to be used as a hands-on guide as much as a resource to be studied and read. We have pared down and simplified the activities intended as practice and aids to implementation.
- Both K–12 school leaders and faculties of leadership training in higher education continue to be the primary audiences for the book. Given the busy schedules of school leaders and candidates in educational administration the book moves readers into the core content more quickly, with less “stop and go.”