

## P R E F A C E

On September 12, 2006, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics released *Curriculum Focal Points for Prekindergarten through Grade 8 Mathematics: A Quest for Coherence* to encourage discussions at the national, state, and district levels on the importance of designing a coherent school mathematics curriculum focusing on the important mathematical ideas at each grade level. The natural question that followed the release of *Curriculum Focal Points* was “How do we translate this view of a focused curriculum into classroom practice?”

*Focus in Grades 6–8*, the second of three planned grade-band publications, is designed to support teachers, supervisors, and coordinators as they begin the discussion of a more focused curriculum across and within kindergarten through eighth grade, as presented in *Curriculum Focal Points*. Additionally, teacher educators should find it useful as a vehicle for exploring issues involving the grades 6–8 mathematics curriculum with their preservice teachers.

The members of the development team, all active professional development leaders, designed a detailed outline for the grade-band books. We highlighted the need for new depth and coherence within the content at each of grades 6, 7, and 8; the importance of connections across the content areas in grades 6–8; and implications for learning, practice, and assessment suggested by a focused curriculum. The author of *Focus in Grades 6–8*, guided by our outline, created this grade-band book as a framework for lesson-study-type experiences that involve identifying focus in an existing curriculum or creating focus in a curriculum that is soon to be under revision.

Our intention for this publication is that it will be a model for professional development that supports the implementation of a more coherent and focused mathematics curriculum by posing questions that facilitate discussion and decision making. Whether you engage in reflective discussions with your colleagues or simply use these questions to stimulate independent reflection on your own instructional planning, we hope that your thinking leads you to a view of mathematics teaching that fosters in all students the depth of understanding of important mathematical concepts necessary for their future success.

—Jane F. Schielack, for the  
CFP Grade-Band Books Development Team