With budget constraints affecting districts across the country, school infrastructure funding is frequently pushed aside to deal with more pressing concerns. In *Saving America’s School Infrastructure*, the contributors make a strong case that a national crisis has resulted from the hundreds of billions of dollars of school infrastructure needs that have not been met, suggesting that these problems are exacerbated by the current economic declines.

The primary audience for this book is policy makers at the state and local levels. However, some chapters may be of particular interest to school or district administrators because they provide important information regarding the practical and policy-related challenges of school infrastructure funding (broadly defined). The editors of this book have extensive backgrounds in school finance in general, as well as school infrastructure funding, and have served in a variety of positions in K–12 schools, government agencies, and universities. In addition, the contributors have diverse backgrounds, which cause them to use a variety of different lenses and approaches to examining this complex topic.

Organized into three parts, the book begins by focusing on an overview of the school infrastructure problem, laying the groundwork for the next two sections. Part I reviews past research, discussing the link between school infrastructure, the physical environment, and student achievement. It includes a chapter that discusses Canada’s centralized, government-supported approach to school infrastructure funding and a chapter that focuses on the complex system of capital funding in higher education.

Catherine Sielke’s chapter, “Financing School Infrastructure Needs: An Overview Across the 50 States,” is worth noting because it provides important details about both state and local funding.

Part II of the book examines challenges to funding school infrastructure needs. Topics include particular challenges facing urban and rural districts; the underfunding of education technology; concerns about adequately meeting the needs of students with disabilities; and the role of the principal in renovations.

This section also provides a history of school finance litigation, arguing that it has been an effective strategy for addressing funding inequities and discussing the limitations its use as the sole strategy for solving the infrastructure problems across the country. Several chapters call for a greater federal government role in addressing these infrastructure challenges.

Two chapters here deserve special attention because of their relevance to district and school administrators. James Cibulka and Bruce Cooper’s chapter, “Capital Needs and Spending in Urban Public School Systems: Policies, Problems, and Promises,” discusses the educational, economic, political, and institutional factors affecting capital funding and problems with piecemeal policies for addressing infrastructure needs. These authors call for four new policy approaches: (1) outsourcing, (2) mixed land use (i.e., locating schools and housing near commercial buildings and services), (3) regional facilities planning, and (4) a federal policy response to the infrastructure needs of urban districts.

Brian Brent and Marie Cianca’s chapter, “Should Principals Be Involved in School Renovations?” examines an important school-level issue of interest to both school and district administrators. These authors surveyed principals in New York State and found...
that nearly 75% were involved in school renovations (from assessing needs to troubleshooting and consulting with architects). Principals reported that their involvement minimized instructional disruptions and provided an overall benefit to the school. However, few principals had formal opportunities to learn to manage renovations, and most believed that they would be more effective with this type of training.

Part III of the book focuses on the future of school infrastructure funding. In a concluding chapter, "Striking a Balance in School Infrastructure Funding," David Thompson discusses the complexity of the problem, identifies the principles that must be applied to a sound funding system (e.g., equity and adequacy), and argues for research on the effects of the school infrastructure on student learning.

Saving America's School Infrastructure provides important insights into the long-term problems resulting from a lack of attention to the critical school infrastructure needs. Each chapter provides an important lens for this complex topic. This book is an important contribution to the literature on school infrastructure funding and should be read by policy makers and other educational leaders to gain a better understanding of the urgency of addressing these critical issues.