

**Editorial:****Further Work on Educational Leadership and Social Justice**

Sousan Arafah, Ph.D., Editor, JELPS Special Issue #2  
on Educational Leadership and Social Justice

JELPS's Special Issue #1 on Educational Leadership and Social Justice contained four articles that focused on 1) the importance of a [trauma informed approach to schooling](#) as part of a Social Justice Framework, 2) [awareness of the developmental nature of social justice understanding and commitments](#) among educational leaders, 3) specific [social justice principal practices](#) from a Canadian lens, and 4) a proposal for [building social capital among low-income students](#) to support increased college readiness and access.

This JELPS Special Issue #2 on Educational Leadership and Social Justice presents seven articles that further explore this important educational leadership/social justice intersection.

Dr. Heidi Von Dohlen and her colleagues Jan Moore, Lisa Von Dohlen, and Beth Thrift co-authored the first article entitled [Aspiring Administrators' Knowledge and Leadership Capacity in Mitigating Issues of Poverty and Homelessness in Schools](#). In this piece, they detail a study they conducted with 26 Masters of School Administration (MSA) students enrolled in the course *History, Sociology, and Philosophy of Education*. The study explored what educational leadership students initially knew about homelessness and poverty; including knowledge of the McKinney-Vento Act, supports available to such students and their families, and what educational leaders can do to mitigate the effects of these conditions in their current or future schools. Students were then provided content and tasks to expose them to authentic instances of risk factors and impacts of homelessness and poverty, and identifying and responding to trauma in schools. The article's descriptive statistics and qualitative insights into the limited understanding and readiness of educational leadership students about homelessness, poverty, and relevant supports points to the crucial need for ensuring students are exposed to such in their leadership development programs.

The second article, [LGBT Educators' Perceptions of Safety and Support and Implications for Equity-Oriented School Leaders](#), reports on findings from the *National Survey of Educators' Perceptions of School Climate 2017* related to school climate, homophobia, transphobia, safety, support, and relevant interventions. Of particular note are this iteration of the survey's 2 open-ended questions exploring how LGBT teachers perceive the consequences of being "out." Through this research, Drs. Tiffany Wright and Nancy Smith and colleague Erin Whitney draw attention to the disparity between federal and state civil rights protections for LGBT educators. Respondents reported not feeling safe being out to students and parents and being bullied; this, against a backdrop where LGBT teachers do not have civil rights protections in 28 states. New, however, was the finding that more respondents reported being out as positive than negative particularly because it allowed them to advocate for more culturally proficient teaching, more LGBT student and parent supports, and facilitating understanding and connections through school-based and externally-connected organizations like the Gay Straight Alliance (GSA). Suggestions for policy language, professional development, administrative interventions in anti-LGBT actions, and thoughtful inclusion of LGBT individuals in policy and programming are suggested.

In the third article, [In Pursuit of Socially Just and Socio-Culturally Responsive Educational Leadership Preparation: One Ed.D. Program's Process of](#)

*Transformation*, Drs. Porfilio and Strom describe how converting one Ed.D. doctoral program from a quarter system to a semester system afforded the opportunity to focus the program on social justice. The authors argue that revising this preservice leadership development program at California State University East Bay not only created transformational educational leaders who are much needed in school buildings and systems today, it also was a way to respond to the needs of increasingly diverse current and prospective students and prepare them for the increased diversity they will encounter in their school buildings and districts. Key components of the change included substantial content, curricular, and pedagogical revisions to highlight how schooling is grounded in identity- and power-based practices and structures; more focused student mentoring; authentic research opportunities for students. The article points to the importance of taking advantage of bureaucratic openings to advance critical programmatic developments such as this doctoral program focused specifically on values of equity, access, and belief in the critical and transformative capacity of education.

The fourth article is by Drs. Kendra Lowery, Renae Mayes, Marilyn Quick, Lori Boyland, Rachel Geesa, and Jungnam Kim. In their piece, *Principal and Counselor Collaboration for Social Justice Advocacy: A Standards Alignment*, the authors ask a single question: What does collaboration for social justice advocacy mean and look like for principals and counselors? To explore this, they mined the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) and American School Counselor Association (ASCA) school counselor competencies to determine the knowledge, skills, and practices necessary for principals and counselors to both collaborate and advocate for social justice in their schools. The article identifies those PSEL standards and ASCA competencies that explicitly mention *social justice*, *social justice advocacy*, *advocacy*, and words and phrases related to “*equity*.” It then identifies and divides three focal areas –social justice identity, human resources, and advocacy actions – into 12 sub-focal areas (within a crosswalk) that are key for advancing social justice-informed and -inspired action within a global framework.

The fifth article by Dr. Sosanya Jones provides much needed insight into the lives of diversity professionals in higher education. *Subversion or Cooptation? Tactics for Engaging in Diversity Work in a Race-Adverse Climate*, reports on a qualitative study of 26 diversity professionals (18 women and 8 men), 23 of whom were persons of color. Engaging with 20 of the diversity professionals in focus groups and six through in-depth interviews, Dr. Jones learned of the many challenges to the diversity and anti-racist change work these professionals are engaged to do and are, often, obstructed from, or coopted in, doing. Jones highlights nuances in the socio-political-legal context, budgetary constraints, and emotional costs and burnout that diversity professionals encounter. She also pinpoints strategies they use for resistance that can be simultaneously employed to coopt their work such as reflexivity in their use of language, using their own bodies as forms of resistance, and using technologies of resistance through their own expertise. Ultimately, Dr. Jones shows the difficult tightrope diversity professionals walk as their commitment and passion for the work are both sought, but also misunderstood and used as tactics to undermine the individual social consciousness and anti-racism, and institutional learning, required for substantive change.

The sixth article is *An Urban-defined School Implements a Grassroots Oral History Course and Study Abroad Program for Social Justice Equity, Social Consciousness, and Student Advocacy*. It explores a reform instituted by an urban-defined K-12 school with a very high minoritized population relative to state averages that had a turnover of seven principals in nine years. Utilizing a Critical Race Theory framework, authors

Aaron Griffen, Ph.D. and Nneka Greene, Ph.D. student, detail how Southeast Springs School leadership advocated for an explicit focus on dismantling social injustice that offered students the opportunity to authentically connect and direct their own educational experiences and, as a result, thrive. Core elements included educational exposure to a Cultural Competency Series for students, staff, and faculty; and implementation of a grassroots Oral History Course and a Study Abroad Program to the South American Rainforest. These served to bring the school community together; ignited their collective imaginations and energies in authentic, culturally-relevant experiences that mattered to them; and resulted in a variety of beneficial individual and school community outcomes such as student achievement, school safety, reduced disciplinary events, etc. Steps for how to undertake such a reform are included.

In the seventh and last article of Special Issue #2, Drs. José Cardoza and Kathleen Brown argue that, in order to support non-English-speaking newcomer students, teaching in their first language in ESL classes can help them more quickly and deeply access the curriculum and progress in their K-12 education. In their article, [An Alternative ESL/Dual-Language Approach: Narrowing Achievement Gaps for Newly-Arrived Hispanic Students?](#), the authors explore the effects of mathematics instruction in Spanish on the mathematics achievement of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade newcomer Hispanic ELL students. Their statistical analysis showed a greater-than-four-percent benefit and 0.87 effect size when students were taught in Spanish in their ESL classes than similar students who received only English instruction. While the authors encourage further study, their analysis of possible educational benefits for newcomer students, in particular, suggest that policy and practice considerations for this approach are warranted.

As I stated in [Special Issue #1 on Educational Leadership and Social Justice](#), educational leaders have a disproportionate responsibility for creating conditions of individual and institutional growth and transformation. I am grateful for the contributions of these authors to the field through this Special Issue #2. Their ideas and empirical efforts make it possible to identify and approach inequity in its many forms so as to engage more deeply in dismantling it.

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