

AASA JOURNAL OF SCHOLARSHIP & PRACTICE



Research and Evidence-Based Practice Advancing the Profession of Education Administration

Fall 2021, Volume 18 No. 3

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AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice
2020-2021

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ISSN 1931-6569

Sponsorship and Appreciation

The *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* would like to thank AASA, The School Superintendents Association, and in particular AASA's Leadership Development, for its ongoing sponsorship of the *Journal*.

We also offer special thanks to Kenneth Mitchell, Manhattanville College, for his efforts in selecting the articles that comprise this professional education journal and lending sound editorial comments to each volume.

The unique relationship between research and practice is appreciated, recognizing the mutual benefit to those educators who conduct the research and seek out evidence-based practice and those educators whose responsibility it is to carry out the mission of school districts in the education of children.

Without the support of AASA and Kenneth Mitchell, the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* would not be possible.



Published by
AASA, The School Superintendents Association
1615 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

**The Superintendency In 2021: Leading with Evidence to
Address Inequities and Serve the Marginalized and At-risk
In the Contested Spaces of America’s Public Schools**

Ken Mitchell, EdD
Editor

AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice

In June of 2021, the organization, Citizens for Renewing America, published the document, “Model School Board Language to Prohibit Critical Race Theory,” along with their stated objectives:

"The purpose of this policy (or resolution) is to prohibit: the teaching and promotion of critical race theory, divisive concepts, and other forms of government-sanctioned or facilitated racism in our school district and to uphold the foundational American principle that all people are created equal and are endowed by their Creator with unalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" (2021, June 4).

The DC-based Heritage Foundation’s website posts their interpretation of critical race theory (CRT) as follows:

“Critical race theory makes race the prism through which its proponents analyze all aspects of American life, categorizing individuals into groups of oppressors and victims. It is a philosophy that is infecting everything from politics and education to the workplace and the military” (2021, August 18).

Visitors to the site will find a handbook, *Critical Race Theory: Knowing it When you See It and Fighting it When You Can*, that includes a rationale for the opposition, along with tactics for engaging with teachers, school leaders, and boards of education. Readers are encouraged to whistle blow when seeing evidence of CRT in a local district.

The model policy language provided by Citizens for Renewing America is revelatory in its breadth. In addition to an uncategorical prohibition of the teaching and promotion of CRT, the policy language is written in broad terms that ban discussion of “divisive concepts” that go beyond race.

The authors provide a list of almost 90 topics that shall not be included in instruction or discussed in district professional development, including the following:

- Action Civics
- Anti-bias training
- Anti-racism

- Abolitionist teaching
- Culturally responsive teaching
- Critical study or theory
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)
- Diversity training
- Equity/inequity
- Inclusion
- Multiculturalism
- Oppression
- Reflective exercises
- Restorative justice
- Sexism (gender)
- Social Emotional Learning (SEL)
- Systems of power

Recent efforts by some organizations and media outlets to oppose any school district or classroom study of CRT or related “divisive” topics reflect a response to an era of post-George Floyd politics in which the discussion of structural and systemic racism—its history and economic or social consequences—has been elevated. The backlash warns of a prevalent, albeit, presumed use of CRT in public schools.

The tactic to conflate an array of “divisive” topics under the mantle of CRT, although misleading, has been opportunistic and somewhat effective. It has shifted the argument from how we should amend structural and systemic racism to how we should protect our children from an indoctrinating liberal public-school agenda. Arcane language used to create fears about CRT’s pervasiveness has seeded distrust and dissent at the local public-school level.

In *The Politics of Language* (1946), Orwell warned, “The great enemy of clear language is insincerity. When there is a gap between one’s real and one’s declared aims, one turns as it were instinctively to long words and exhausted idioms, like a cuttlefish spurting out ink.” During the spring and summer of 2021, superintendents have had to react to the insincere allegation that CRT, a theory that had never been in the public consciousness until this moment, is pervasive in our classrooms.

Yet, according to a July 2021 Reuters/Ipsos poll less than half (43%) of Americans are familiar with CRT while a majority of Americans are in favor of teaching high school students about the impacts of slavery (78%) and racism (73%) in the U.S.

However, public sentiment on the matter has not dissuaded policymakers. *Education Week* (August 13, 2021) reported that “as of August 12, 26 states have introduced bills or taken other steps that would restrict teaching critical race theory or limit how teachers can discuss racism and sexism, according to an Education Week analysis. Twelve states have enacted these bans, either through legislation or other avenues.”

Leadership and Learning in Contested Spaces

Superintendents lead in contested spaces—socio-culturally bounded spaces where contestation occurs for political, social, or cultural influence from which identities emerge and utilize the social capital to engage in resistance against school policy and authority. As superintendents and boards contend with groups organized to oppose CRT, they have had to make and explain their policy positions on school openings, masks, vaccinations, and their efforts to protect students from COVID-19, all of this within a politically influenced community.

In *The School Superintendent: Theory, Practice, and Cases*, Kowalski (2013) defines various roles of the superintendent, including that of “applied social scientist” and “teacher-scholar.” He describes a district leader, in charge of the learning for all, who strives to navigate the ambiguities within the contested spaces of their district with the integrity of a scholar who interrogates information to make the best decisions. The work involves a sorting of the facts from opinions and assessing the quality of the sources of research on which a policy or regulation is developed. Evidence-based decision-making, at a time when a plethora of information from a variety of sources muddles such efforts and confuses those who come to the schoolhouse with their grievances, armed with assumptions founded on disinformation, has never been more important.

It is with this in mind that we developed the Fall 2021 issue of the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* (JSP). It includes studies on a few of the “divisive” topics banned by Citizens for Renewing America and criticized by The Heritage Foundation and other organizations. The researchers offer evidence, interpretations, and recommendations for leaders who remain committed to leading schools and districts to address injustice and inequity as part of their mission.

In “Promoting Equity in the Modern Superintendency,” researchers Meredith Mountford, associate professor, Florida Atlantic University, and Jayson W. Richardson, professor, University of Denver, who also contributed to a comprehensive study by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), *The American Superintendent 2020 Decennial Study* (Tienken, 2021), provide data on the state of superintendents in their efforts to promote equity:

Equity, diversity, and social justice have become core challenges of the modern superintendent. It is time that the system (e.g., states, districts, schools, and universities) step up to address this need. This is the challenge of our generation.

In an examination of the inequity of teacher talent across school systems, Henry Tran, associate professor, at the University of South Carolina and David G. Buckman, associate professor at Kennesaw State University, in their study, “A Descriptive Analysis of High Need Districts’ Inequitable Access to Talent-centered Education HR Systems,” conclude:

“Poorer performing districts tend to congregate in the middle of the spectrum because they are often districts with worse working conditions requiring them to be more strategic to attract teachers. Yet, they often do not have sufficient resources or capacity to employ the ideal Strategically Developmental HRM systems. This pattern of inequity will likely persist unless the public is aware of the inequalities and willing to accept responsibility to confront them.”

Christopher Tienken, an associate professor at Seton Hall University critiques a new book about an understudied topic, *Canadian Indigenous Literature and Art: Decolonizing Education, Culture, and Society*, by Carol A. Mullen, PhD, professor at Virginia Tech:

Mullen raises critical issues about Indigenous justice in Canada and brings forth rarely discussed perspectives found in education from the perspectives of Indigenous education and culture (literature and art). The concept of decolonizing the classroom, education, policy, practice, culture, and society is the backbone of this work aimed at raising awareness and creating systemic change.

In keeping with an issue theme that includes addressing the needs of the at-risk, an oft-marginalized group, Sweeney, an assistant professor at the University of Nebraska and a team of researchers from the University of Toledo examine the controversial issue of student drug testing as a preventative measure through the lenses of Colorado superintendents.

An Opportunity to Converge Interests with Evidence

Arguments cannot be won nor can compromises be achieved when there is no agreement about the trustworthiness of evidence used in the discourse. According to a Rand report, *Truth Decay*, “Without a common set of facts, it becomes nearly impossible to have a meaningful debate about important policies and topics. Consequently, the quality of policymaking declines and the decision-making process slows” (p. xvi). The authors have proposed a study with seven priorities that “would consider educational interventions; improving the information market; institutional development and rebuilding; bridging social divides; harnessing new technologies; behavioral economics, psychology, and cognitive science; and organizational self-assessment” (p. xix).

Without agreement on such priorities, our institutions and society will stagnate. Public schools remain one of the few common spaces for finding agreement through a well-constructed analytical approach, even amid current contests. Today’s superintendent leads in times when there is an erosion of trust by a significant percentage of the population about the authorities or experts within once respected institutions. Yet across the nation every district has a mission in quest of achieving the vision to prepare our students for an unknown future. These missions, which vary in wording but not intent, have the potential to serve as a common thread to help converge our interests about the needs of our children.

Ours is a journal about scholarship and practice. What have we uncovered in the research and how are we applying it to the work of leading schools? It is assumed that those who lead our school systems do so with a moral purpose guided by a balance of experience, expertise, compassion, justice, and critical inquiry with empirical evidence.

And because of an increasing erosion of reliance on institutions, there may be no better opportunity for leaders of the nation’s public schools to emphasize the need for achieving that vision for the student but with substantive and non-partisan sources to help inform their decision-making. Seizing such an opportunity takes courage and an acceptance that no matter the quality of the data, there will be skeptics, challengers, and the irrational. This is even more reason for leading with the best

possible set of facts to achieve the ends we have designed for our students. As Winston Churchill wrote, “The truth is incontrovertible. Panic may resent it, ignorance may deride it, malice may distort it, but in the end, there it is.” Superintendents must lead with it.

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Promoting Equity in the Modern Superintendency

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Abstract

This article is based on results from *The American Superintendent 2020 Decennial Study* (Tienken, 2021) that reported the survey results of 1218 of America's seated superintendents. Specifically, for this article, we pull from the data on equity, community relations, and social media (Horsford, Mountford, and Richardson, 2021). This article focuses on how equity operates within and around issues of community relations and social media and further considers the extent to which these issues help or obfuscate promoting equity and the benefits and banes of superintendents attempting to do so.

Keywords

superintendents of schools, *The American Superintendent 2020 Decennial Study*, demographics profiles, equity, leadership

The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) began their decennial study of the American school superintendent in 1923, nearly 100 years ago.

AASA currently publishes a study every ten years as well as an occasional mid-decade update on the state of the American school superintendent. Through these comprehensive studies, AASA documents the shifts in demographics, backgrounds, and current experiences of the American school superintendent. Most questions on the survey have remained the same over the decades, thus affording a comparative analysis. For example, questions persistently focus on career pathways, professional learning, current workloads, self-evaluations, and community relationships.

However, job and societal changes have shifted, and the study has adjusted accordingly. For example, the rise of technology in education has impacted schools and districts and thus is reflected in the content of the current AASA survey. As such, in the most recent iteration, superintendents were asked about social media, educational technology, and personal use of technology. Issues of equity, diversity, and social justice have impacted the fabric of society, and, rightfully, superintendents have found themselves front and center at addressing these issues. In response, on the 2020 survey, *equity* was a focus in ten different instances.

In this article, we endeavor to take another look at the data from *The American Superintendent 2020 Decennial Study* using equity as a lens to reexamine the data set. We will describe the findings from the decennial study but in the discussion, compare and contrast those to the systemic levels of inequity as posited by Radd, Generett, Gooden, and

Theoharris (2021). Additionally, using the framework for action, we will discuss how superintendents might best go about promoting equity and building support for equitable practices in their districts.

Results

We begin by examining the demographics of superintendents and their communities including the concerns of minority/majority stakeholders. Following that, we present the findings regarding community relations and stakeholder involvement in district decisions and discuss how these relations and involvement may or may not be impacting equitable systemic practices.

In the last section, we present findings from the decennial study regarding the role of social media, its effectiveness, and the way superintendents report using social media to monitor community involvement. Finally, we review the decennial findings holistically using the four levels of systemic equity and the five practices of equity-focused leadership (Radd et al., 2021).

Superintendent and district profiles

This section of the article reviews demographic and district data related to gender and race from the *American Superintendent Decennial Study 2020* (Tienken, 2021). These same findings have already been published in the most recent AASA study but detailed herein to provide readers with key demographics of superintendents and the racial profiles of their districts. Changes over time to the profile of superintendents based on earlier AASA ten-year studies are also presented.

It is clear from the results of the *American Superintendent Decennial Study 2020*, that the superintendents' profile might influence their ability to promote systemic equitable practices in their districts and

communities. Superintendents continue to be *overwhelmingly* male and White. The 2020 results showed that 26.68% were female and 72.91% were male. Women worked in districts of all sizes but almost three-quarters (71.46%) of them work for districts with less than 3,000 students. Of the 1,206 superintendents who

responded to the survey item about race, 91.38% reported being White; 3.48% were Black; 2.40% were Hispanic; and 1.74% were Native American or Native Alaskan. Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, or other races, combined were less than 1.00% of the superintendents surveyed (see Figure 1).

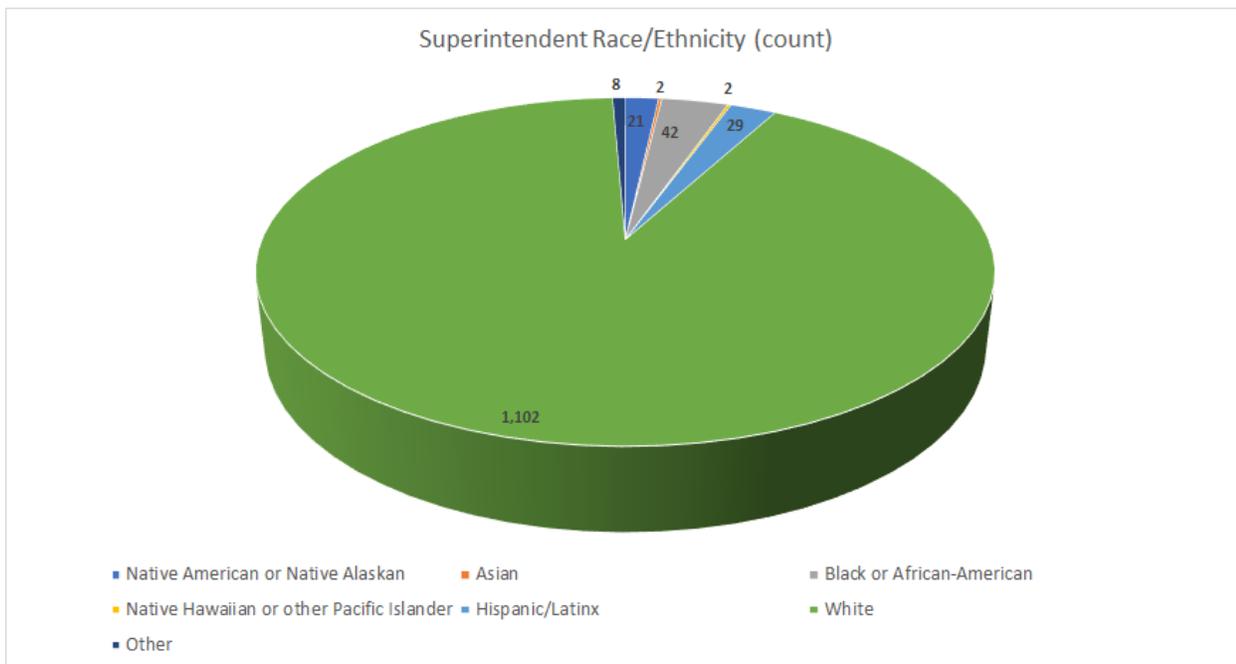


Figure 1. Superintendents by race/ethnicity.

Slightly over a quarter (25.23%) of the superintendents in the study were between the ages of 41-45 when they were first hired.

Slightly less (20.53%) were between the ages of 46-50 when hired for their first superintendency. The average tenure of superintendents was between 1 and 13 years with most

superintendents serving 4 years in the same district. Figure 2 shows that superintendents were split into almost even thirds when it came to political party affiliation.

Results indicated that 31.34% reporting being Democrat, 33.02% reported being Republican, and 32.60% reported being Independent.

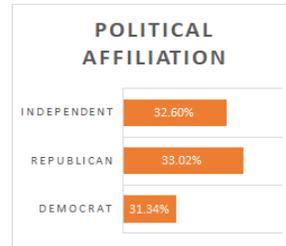


Figure 2. Political affiliation.

The majority (93.58%) of superintendents reported holding a Master's degree as the highest degree earned followed closely by a Bachelor's degree (86.50%). Almost half (44.28%) of superintendents had earned an Ed.D. or Ph.D. More than half (52.67%) of these degrees were in the field of educational leadership. Another 34.16% of these superintendents had a doctoral degree in the field of education administration/supervision.

Current profile of the American superintendent

The data show that in 2020, a superintendent was most likely to be male and White, beginning their first superintendency between the ages of 40-50. The tenure of the modern superintendent ranged broadly from one or fewer years to 13 or more years. A superintendent in 2020 likely holds a Master's, Ph.D., Ed.D. in educational leadership or educational administration/supervision.

Slightly over half (54.78%) of the superintendents worked in rural districts, whereas 20.76% worked in suburban districts and 18.86% worked in a small town or city. District enrollments of less than 300 students accounted for 11.76% of survey responses and

only 5.60% of the superintendents worked in urban districts which tended to have the largest enrollments and be the most racially diverse.

Profile changes over time

There have been modest changes in the demographic data since 2000. The number of females in the superintendency has grown to 26.68% in 2020, while it was 24.10% in 2010 (Kowalski, McCord, Petersen, Young, & Ellerson, 2011), and 13.1% in 2000 (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2001).

Essentially, it took two decades for the number of women working as superintendents to double. However, the distribution of female superintendents across enrollment types stayed fairly steady. Slightly more females reported serving in districts with the largest enrollments. Results from the 2000 AASA study (Glass et. al., 2001) indicated that only 5% of superintendents were not White.

The number of superintendents of color edged up slightly by 2010 (Kowalski et. al., 2011) to 6%, and further to 8.62% in 2020 (Tienken, 2021). However, these modest increases do not match the increase in student diversity in school districts as detailed in Figure 3.

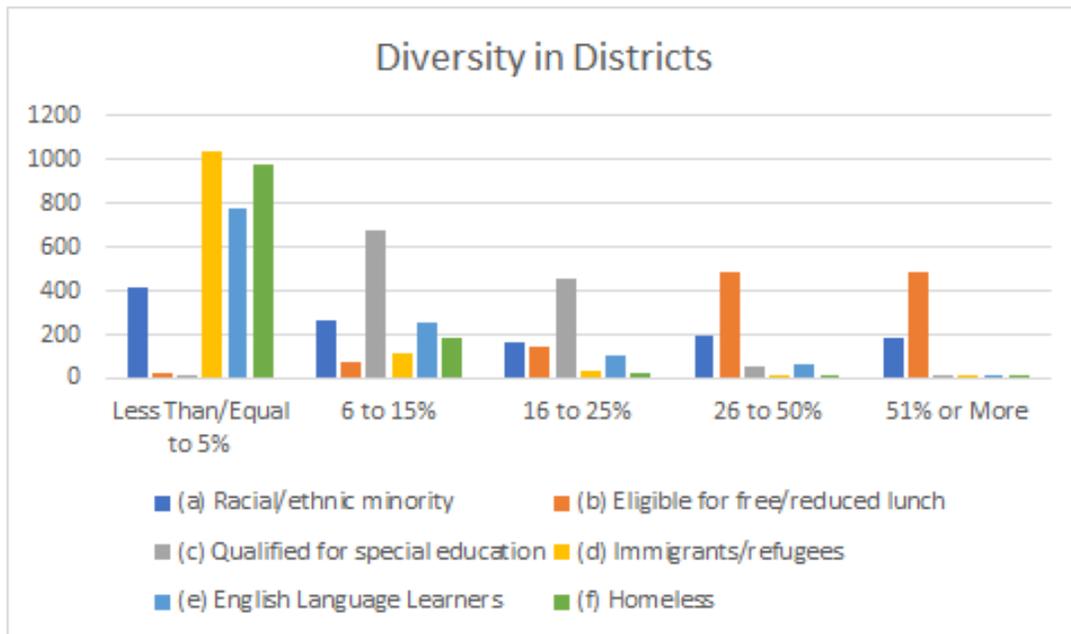


Figure 3: Diversity of students in districts.

Community stakeholders

One of the main functions of the superintendency is to serve as a human hub (Mountford & Alsbury, 2007) for the community, not unlike the school buildings as facilities hub.

With regard to the level of support from their local community, almost all superintendents, 95%, reported feeling either

“very supported” (64%) or “somewhat supported” (31%) by their local community (see Figure 4).

However, when superintendents were asked about their relationship with the largest “minority” community, only 83 percent of superintendents reported feeling very or somewhat supported (see Figure 5).

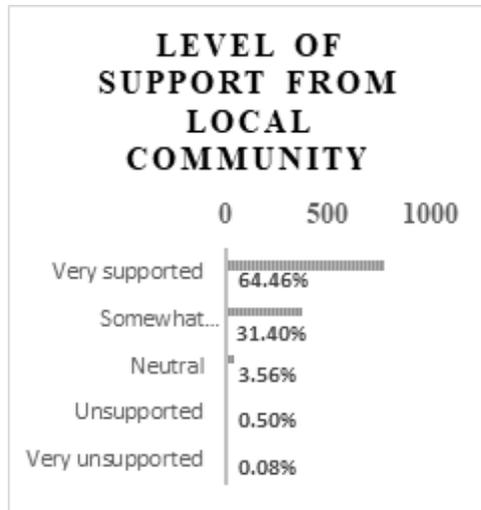


Figure 4. Level of support from local community.

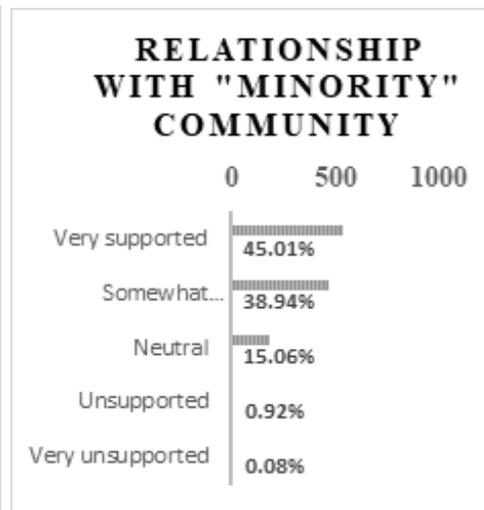


Figure 5. Relationship with “minority” community.

Superintendent engagement with community

In 2020, respondents were asked about what issues consumed the most time as the superintendent. Slightly less than 54% of respondents reported that equity and diversity were addressed monthly, 14.10% addressed these topics weekly, and only 2.56% of superintendents addressed these topics on a daily basis. Of those superintendents who addressed equity daily, all felt they were effective at doing so.

More specifically, of those who addressed issues of equity weekly, only 17% did not feel they were effective in doing so. That number dropped if the issue is addressed monthly, where a third did not feel they were effective in doing so.

The data were similar when addressing diversity issues where 50% of superintendents who addressed this topic monthly did not feel they were effective. This indicates that those superintendents who dealt with the topics of

equity and diversity more regularly felt more effective in doing so. Of interesting note, only 10.11% of superintendents reported that racial tension was a topic that generated political action in the past three years.

Superintendents were asked if the minority community has concerns that differed from the majority community in the district. Over half of respondents indicated that this is the case for all topics including conflict management, finances, school reform, student discipline, and curriculum issues. However, almost 75% of these superintendents in 2020 reported that differences existed around issues of educational equity and diversity.

This topic was by far the most divisive among minority and majority parents, which is almost 20% higher than the next most divided topic being school board member relationships. With that said, only 27.93% of respondents included parents and community members when dealing with issues of equity and diversity.

Superintendents' use of social media for equity, diversity, and inclusion

Social media activism was a topic that community members organized around in over 70% of rural, 75% of small, and 85% of urban districts. For those superintendents who rated themselves as very effective at addressing issues of equity, almost 74% used Facebook and almost 70% used Twitter. Though the survey did not ask if these superintendents used social media to address equity and diversity, one would assume they did so.

More than three out of five superintendents urged principals and teachers to maintain social media accounts to communicate with parents and students. Of those superintendents who were very effective at dealing with issues of student equity, over 75% were daily social media users.

Discussions and Implications

One of the unique features of *The American Superintendent 2020 Decennial Study* is the addition of several survey questions asking superintendents to comment on equity issues within their school districts as well as strategies superintendents used to promote equity in their districts.

While previous AASA 10-year studies (see for example the 2000 or 2010 superintendent studies) asked superintendents about race, class, and gender discreetly, the 2020 study included questions about the ways race, class, gender, socio-economic status (SES), disabilities, and majority-minority districts impacted a superintendent's ability to promote equity in the school district and build community support for doing so.

Understanding the empirical, and often praxis-based, literature related to leaders effectively promoting equity in the surrounding community is also important. As noted in Horsford, Mountford, and Richardson (2021): Throughout the twenty-first century, it became increasingly clear that certain segments of the community were feeling alienated from their local school community with school desegregation efforts limiting the ability for parents representing minority¹ communities to engage and contribute to school events, activities, and decision making. (p. 65)

Strategies for promoting equity and building support in the community in schools often center around the fundamental question as to whether students, regardless of race, gender, socio-economic status, ability, sexual orientation, and cultural or religious backgrounds, get the educational resources they need to thrive as adults in a democratic society.

Earlier literature tends to focus on the *equality* of resources distributed across different stakeholder groups and whether all resources were distributed equally to each group.

Equity demands students get the resources they need to learn and succeed regardless of more resources go to them than other students who may not need those additional resources (Horsford, Grosland, & Gunn, 2011; Theoharris & Scanlan, 2015; Tillman & Scheurich, 2013).

In other words, while equality demands students get the same resources and are treated the same way regardless of their demographic profiles, equity means some students or groups

¹ We use the term "minority" to be consistent with the survey questions, recognizing that this term is problematic in that it is primarily used by dominant group members to describe non-White students, groups, and populations.

may get more resources than others because they may need those additional resources to succeed to be a participant citizen of a democracy.

Promoting equity in school districts then becomes a primary directive of today's superintendents, regardless of whether they are leading in large urban centers, the suburbs, or in rural areas (Mountford & Wallace, 2019). The problem is that schools are not equitable. Some argue this has to do with their funding formulas and others argue it has more to do with where schools are located. Regardless, a lack of equity in a school system means some students will succeed while others will not.

Promoting equity in schools

Superintendents are faced with an uphill battle when it comes to promoting equity in their districts and maintaining community support to do so. Superintendents must convince all their educational stakeholders that the district will afford more of their precious, and often dwindling, resources to some students and not others.

But it is not that simple.

Promoting equity in schools occurs at multiple levels concurrently. Some researchers have suggested superintendents first analyze district policies at various organizational levels within and outside school districts where bias and inequitable practices are likely *baked in*.

While there are multiple ways for superintendents to approach equity practices in their districts; concomitantly, superintendents, and really all school leaders, should develop their own intellectual advancement around issues of equity. By engaging in deep learning around equity, some superintendents may come to better understand their own biases and prejudices before attempting to change

inequitable practices within their school district (Radd, Generett, Gooden, & Theoharis, 2021) and build community support.

There has been a recent movement in this direction often referred to as culturally responsive school leadership (Khalifa, Gooden, & Davis, 2016). Culturally responsive school leadership sets up four distinct task areas for school leaders.

First, school leaders should reflect on their own biases and behaviors. Second, school leaders need to develop culturally responsive teachers. Third, school leaders must promote inclusive school practices while, fourth, engaging students and parents and Indigenous contexts.

More recently, Radd, Generett, Gooden, and Theoharris, (2021) posited five practices necessary for school leaders to build an equity-focused system. According to the authors, school leaders need to prioritize equity, prepare for equity, develop equity leadership teams, build equity-focused systems, and sustain equity.

For Radd, Generett, Gooden, and Theoharris, (2021), the key difference in this approach to other theories for promoting equity is that they take into consideration the different types of inequities occurring at different levels of a system simultaneously. While such an approach would surely be difficult, the authors believe change can occur if a "systemic and transformative approach is taken" (p. 9).

Here, systemic means "the problem lies in the system and the inequities are symptoms and results. In other words, although inequities breed inequities, it is not the cause but the result of a system that is set up to produce inequities" (p. 9). Further, they posit that the process is transformative for the leader because

the leader must consciously act differently and with purpose within and across each level of systemic inequity.

Levels of systemic inequity

According to Radd, Generett, Gooden, and Theoharris, (2021), four levels of systemic inequity occur simultaneously. These levels are historical, structural, institutional, and individual/personal. The historical level is described as “problems we face today have their roots in centuries of human experience” and that “people carry their histories. Your histories inform what you think, how you feel, and how you react” (p. 11).

Structural inequities are “built and organized predictably and lead to the types of disparate outcomes that exist today” (p. 12). Segregation and housing patterns are posited as examples of structural inequities. Laws, rules, and institutional policies are examples of *institutional* levels of inequity.

Finally, believing only others perpetuate hate, violence, discriminatory acts, and holds biases “when science has concluded inarguably that everyone carries unconscious biases” (p. 14).

When comparing school district profiles with the profiles of superintendents who responded to the 2020 survey, it becomes evident that there is a disconnect regarding a demographic match between the two. Alsbury and Whitaker (2007) resolved that superintendents needed to expand their understanding of social justice and prioritize issues of inequities within their districts.

Without a closer examination of how superintendents promote social justice and equity in their districts, they may inadvertently repeat and legitimize inequitable racial practices in themselves, their districts, and the

community. Superintendents may be well served by focusing on the four levels of systemic inequity posed by Generett, Gooden, and Theoharris, (2021) and simultaneously address historical, structural, institutional, and individual/personal inequities.

Conclusion

The American Superintendent Decennial Study 2020 (Tienken, 2021) deeply informs the field of the current experiences of what it means to be a modern superintendent. In 2020, a core experience that we all faced was around equity, diversity, and social justice.

In the era of ‘I can’t breathe,’ the onus is on leaders of school systems to remove those constraints that might be causing some groups of students to not ‘breathe’ as well as others. If the modern superintendent is likely to be a White male and middle-aged where half have achieved the highest degree in their field, yet the districts they serve are becoming increasingly diverse (e.g., racially, ability, language proficiency, SES, newcomer status, and homeless), then understanding how superintendents can better address equity amidst this disconnect is a topic of dire import.

The data showed that very few superintendents address equity and diversity on a regular basis. Of those who did, they felt they are doing so effectively. This indicates that those superintendents do not address equity and diversity, simply do not feel they can do so effectively.

This leaves a gaping hole of neglect across America’s school districts. The astute reader might ask if it is not possible that these issues are simply not relevant to those school districts where these conversations are not happening. But that is likely not the case given that 75% of superintendents noted differences in concerns between minority and majority

community members around many topics, but especially equity and diversity.

Simply putting one's head in the sand does not make the issue go away. Equity, diversity, and social justice have become core challenges of the modern superintendent. It is time that the system (e.g., states, districts,

schools, and universities) step up to address this need. This is the challenge of our generation. Let us hope that another ten years do not go by and the data return to paint a bleaker picture. The time is now for district leaders to be more equity-minded, more socially justice, and more critically aware of issues of diversity.

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A Descriptive Analysis of High Need Districts' Inequitable Access to Talent-centered education HR Systems

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Abstract

This study draws from the SHRM and TCEL literature to apply an HR systems typology to categorize school districts based on their personnel policies. The researchers descriptively examine whether types of HR systems are related to district demographics and outcomes. Sources for analysis included a comprehensive review of sample district's websites, personnel handbooks, board policies, and conversations with HR directors/management. The study found partial support for the theories of SHRM and TCEL. Districts with Strategic Developmental HRM systems experienced higher student achievement, lower student-to-teacher ratios, higher teacher retention, and fewer teacher vacancies than districts with all other HRM typologies. These districts were less likely to be high-needs districts.

Key Words

human resources, human resources system, talent-centered education leadership, strategic human resources, district HR, HR, teacher turnover, personnel, strategic human capital, district human resources

A large body of research suggests education working conditions matter (Burkhauser, 2017; Ladd, 2011). For example, working environment such as positive school climate (e.g., emphasizing collaboration and learning) have been linked to improvement in student achievement (Bear, Yang, Pell & Gaskins, 2014; Saunders, Goldenberg, & Gallimore, 2009) and teacher staffing outcomes (Kraft et al., 2016).

Much of this research has focused on the school level, based on the idea that school-based management has the most direct impact on teachers' day-to-day experiences. This work suggests school leaders can create the school conditions necessary to enhance teacher effectiveness.

Although research exists on the effectiveness of individual HR practices (Goldhaber, Grout, & Huntington-Klein, 2017; Taylor & Taylor, 2012), scholarship on district-level Human Resource (HR) systems is scant. The work that has been done primarily identifies how the research is outdated and in need of improvement (Konoske-Graf, Partelow, & Benner, 2016; Hanushek, 2016; Odden, 2011).

On the other hand, Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) literature has a robust theoretical foundation, with strong empirical evidence supporting a positive relationship between organization level HR practices and employee outcomes and performance (Belias & Koustelios 2014; Messersmith, Patel, Lepak, & Gould-Williams, 2011).

Moreover, in the field of education specifically, Tran (2020) introduced Talent-centered education leadership (TCEL) as a model that draws on progressive HR practices

and the education working conditions literature to suggest the value for evolving education HR further.

Education Human Resources Management

Education human resources management (HRM) has a long-standing reputation for being reactive, outdated, and often criticized for failing to link its practices with outcomes (Konoske-Graf et al., 2016; Tran, 2015).

For example, workforce reductions often occur based solely on seniority without any consideration of employee performance. Because of this status quo, districts often lose more effective or high-quality early-career teachers. These occurrences can dampen the released teachers' enthusiasm from the field altogether, which may contribute to teacher shortages.

With the increasing focus of education accountability, education reformers argued that HR practices should be linked to organizational outcomes (Odden, 2011), most often defined by student standardized test scores. The result was an increased emphasis on test score-based HR policies.

One example of this is the promotion of teacher evaluations based on value-added metrics, which have been linked to further inequity of teacher quality distributions (Bates, 2020). The accountability-based HR practices and paradigm have also been linked to workplace demoralization and stress, which has been associated with teacher turnover (Wronowski, et al., 2019).

Based on the importance of relationships from the education working conditions literature and progressive education HR practice, TCEL has been recently

introduced to the field to evolve education HRM (Tran, 2020; Tran & Smith, 2020). With TCEL, employees are not treated as a means to an end. TCEL employers are not only focusing on organizational outcomes, but they are also encouraged to be intentional in their response to employee needs.

The latter is critical given that being responsive to employee needs has strong linkages to the organizational outcomes in a more sustainable fashion than merely focusing on organizational outcomes in isolation. Given the importance of education HR, this study was conducted to advance understanding of education HR systems by:

1. Drawing from the SHRM literature to apply a typology to categorize the HR systems of school districts based on their personnel policies
2. Descriptively examine whether types of HR systems are more:
 - a. Likely to exist based on districts' demographics or their staffing problems
 - b. Advantageous for organizational outcomes (based on teacher staffing and student performance metrics)

Theoretical framework

Our work is grounded in the SHRM scholarship that links HR practices to organizational outcomes (Boselie, 2014) and the work on TCEL that further prioritizes the value of responding to employee needs (Tran, 2020; Tran & Smith, 2020). This strategic developmental approach to HR has been advocated over the often relied upon administrative (personnel) approach practiced in schools (Tran, 2015).

To categorize the unique bundle of HR practices employed by each district into

different HR systems, we relied on the SHRM systems typology framework used by Ridder, Bauluch, and Piening (2012) on organizations and modified by Vekeman, Devos, and Valkcke (2019) for school principals. The typology draws on the SHRM literature to consider employer's orientation, either "Strategic Orientation" or "Human Resource Orientation."

The former is related to aligning organizational goals with practice with consideration for the external context, while the latter is related to a resource-based view that suggests the organization must make investments internally to create value.

For the purpose of our study, district HR practices were examined across six domains: HR capacity (i.e., teacher to HR personnel ratio), recruitment and selection, economic incentives, professional development and recognition/rewards, to determine each district's alignment with four different HR system typologies as identified by Vekeman et al. (2019).

These systems include:

- 1) *Administrative HRM*, where districts provide little to no substantial investments into the HR function of the school district and are the least strategic of the HR systems. They are reactive, with their personnel practices guided by administrative rules and standard procedures;
- 2) *Developmental HRM*, where districts are also reactive in their approach towards external challenges; however, they emphasize employee development. Unfortunately, the development supports are not linked to its goals;

- 3) *Strategic HRM*, where districts install HR practices aligned with district goals and are proactive to external challenges; and
- 4) *Strategic-Developmental HRM*, where districts adopt a balance of district goals, as well as employee needs, while proactively approaching external challenges (Vekeman et al., 2019).

While Strategic HRM's focus on organizational outcomes reflects a strategic human capital approach to education HRM (Odden, 2011), Strategic-Developmental HRM's attention to organizational outcomes and employee needs reflects a modern Talent-centered education leadership perspective (Tran, 2020).

Sample

We examine the HR systems typologies in education with a random sample of public school districts (n=23) in a Southeastern state. The sample represents 28% of the districts in the state, spread across a diverse set of geographic regions, including districts located in the city (n=3), rural locales (n=5), suburbs (n=11), and town (n=4) based on NCES definition.

The sample districts' have an average of 807.30 teachers, 12,190.45 students, and 13% average teacher turnover. The districts spend an average of \$14,336.54 per student, with an average of 40 and 44 percent of their students meeting or exceeding state standardized English and Math performance standards, respectively. The districts have an average of 8.8 HR staff, an average of 63% of students in poverty, and their number of schools range from 3 to 82.

Method

Our study builds on Kolbe and Strunk's (2012) work by embedding their economic incentive typology and building onto those categories (see Table 1) to include five other domains. Data from the six HR domains were collected from a comprehensive review of each sample district's websites, personnel handbooks, board policies, and conversations with HR directors/management.

Because the state is a non-collective bargaining state, the HR systems are void of the influence of collective bargaining agreements, the HR policies and decisions are more reflective of the employers' orientations. Each domain and its assessed subareas are listed in the table below.

Table 1

*HR Domains Assessed***HR Capacity**

Number of Teachers to HR Personnel Ratio

Recruitment

Recruitment Sources

Month exiting teacher must provide notification of departure

Month district begins teacher recruitment

Policy concerning internal hiring preference

Selection

The selection process (e.g., whether districts collaborate with the school with hiring)

The number of rounds of interviews for selection, representation of stakeholders in the interview

The presence of other selection protocol (e.g., teaching demonstration, written examination)

Economic Incentives*

Salary Enhancement

Limited Duration Incentives

Education/Certification Funds

In-Kind Incentives

Retirement Benefits or Waivers

Professional Development

Types of Professional Development

Financial Allotment for Professional Development

Incentives for Professional Development

Formal Leadership Development Opportunities for Teachers

Orientation Program

Induction Program

Rewards and Recognition

Degree of Teacher Rewards and Recognition

* As defined by Kolbe & Strunk (2012)

Our content analysis of the sampled district's HR systems was conducted through an iterative and deductive coding process to identify themes that emerged from the analysis (Crano & Brewer, 2002).

The qualitative data were quantified according to a standardized scoring rubric by two independent assessors to increase rating validity. Interrater agreement between two individual coders was 96%.

Empirical HR system research has typically treated HR practices as additive in its strategic value (Lepak & Snell, 2002), and we use such an approach to rate the HR practices.

For example, for recruitment sources, we counted each district's number of recruitment resources. Districts with more recruitment sources received higher scores, whereas districts that only recruited via their website received the lowest score.

We relied on the literature that suggests earlier notifications and recruitment resulted in better outcomes and therefore rated districts that required earlier notification and recruitment higher than those that did not (Liu & Johnson, 2006). Some policies were rated

according to their presence; for example, if districts reserved funds for professional development, they were rated higher than those that did not.

Consistent with Ridder et al. (2012) and Vekeman et al. (2018), we treated strategic and HR orientations as ranging from high to low. For each HR domain, we totaled the score of each of its practices and divided the total score in half. The upper 50% were considered "high," and the lower 50% were considered low. We used these groupings to further categorize the mix of each district's bundle of HR practices into one of four quadrants (i.e., Strategic-developmental HRM, Strategic HRM, Developmental HRM, and Administrative HRM) representing different HR systems. See table 2.

Table 2

HR Systems Configuration

	Administrative HRM	Developmental HRM	Strategic HRM	Strategic-Developmental HRM
	Low	Low	High	High
HR Capacity	Limited number of HR personnel to address personnel matters	Limited number of HR personnel to address personnel matters	Larger number of HR personnel to address personnel matters	Larger number of HR personnel to address personnel matters
Recruiting	Weak efforts with leveraging multiple sources for recruitment	Weak efforts with leveraging multiple sources for recruitment	Strong efforts with leveraging multiple sources for recruitment	Strong efforts with leveraging multiple sources for recruitment
Selection	Unclear policy regarding the district's hiring process and	Unclear policy regarding the district's hiring process and	Clear policy regarding the district's hiring process and	Clear policy regarding the district's hiring process and direct

	ambiguous protocols pertaining to screening and interviewing	ambiguous protocols pertaining to screening and interviewing	direct protocols pertaining to screening and interviewing	protocols pertaining to screening and interviewing
	Low	High	Low	High
Salary/Incentives	Limited to no salary enhancements, duration incentives, and other incentivizing mechanisms	Multiple forms of salary enhancements, duration incentives, and other incentivizing mechanisms	Limited to no salary enhancements, duration incentives, and other incentivizing mechanisms	Multiple forms of salary enhancements, duration incentives, and other incentivizing mechanisms
Professional Development	Limited opportunities and incentives to participate, create, pursue professional development	Multiple opportunities and incentives to participate, create, pursue professional development	Limited opportunities and incentives to participate, create, pursue professional development	Multiple opportunities and incentives to participate, create, pursue professional development
Rewards and Recognition	Limited types of rewards and opportunities to receive recognition during the school year	Multiple types of rewards and opportunities to receive recognition during the school year	Limited types of rewards and opportunities to receive recognition during the school year	Multiple types of rewards and opportunities to receive recognition during the school year

Analysis

The results from the analysis are displayed in Table 3 and Table 4 below. As seen in table 3, the modal HRM system was Administrative HRM, encompassing approximately 35% of the sample, while only approximately 13% fall into the Strategic Development HRM system (n=3).

This finding is expected as most districts are often cited for being reactionary and administrative in their orientation (Odden, 2011; Tran, 2015). It is worth noting the study only found strategic Development HRM systems in suburban districts in our sample.

Table 3

Frequency of HR System by Location

	Rural	Suburban	City	Town	Total
Administrative HRM	1	5	1	1	8
Developmental HRM	1	2	0	2	5
Strategic HRM	3	1	2	1	7
Strategic Development HRM	0	3	0	0	3
Total	5	11	3	4	23

The descriptive statistics in table 4 illustrate how HR systems might be related to district characteristics. The analysis of percentages of students who met or exceeded in the areas of English and Math on their respective state standardized test compared to the different HR systems showed that increases in student achievement (i.e., Math and English) were higher in Administrative HRM and Strategic Development HRM districts as opposed to those with Developmental HRM and Strategic HRM systems.

Because Strategic Development HRM systems have both high strategic orientation and high human resources orientation, while Administrative HRM systems have both low strategic orientation and low human resources orientation, one would think the associated student achievement of these two polarizing systems would be vastly different. Instead, data indicates they are very similar.

To better understand this finding, attention should be placed on the “students in

poverty (%)” variable. Both Administrative HRM and Strategic Developmental HRM districts have the lowest percentage of students in poverty, one of the strongest predictors of student achievement (Sirin, 2005). This finding provides evidence as to why administrative HRM has elevated levels of student achievement.

In this study, districts with Strategic Development HRM systems had the lowest percentage of students in poverty; but, Administrative HRM had lower percentages of students in poverty as compared to Developmental HRM and Strategic HRM districts. Relatedly, when reviewing the percentage of teacher vacancies, both Administrative HRM and Strategic Development HRM have less than 1% teacher vacancies (0.8% and 0.4%, respectively). While Developmental HRM and Strategic HRM districts respectively report 1.7% and 1.5%.

This finding seems to suggest the highest need school districts *must* be more

proactive to address their staffing needs (as failing to do so may render the school inoperable); however, they are unable to provide strategic developmental HRM due to

capacity constraints. Responses by district administrators and employees supported this hypothesis.

Table 4

Comparison of HR System by District Demographic and Accountability Metrics

		Administrative HRM	Developmental HRM	Strategic HRM	Strategic Developmental HRM
Enrollment	M	13309.26	9448.00	14280.71	12017.00
	SD	9660.836	10848.77	16849.37	2610.324
Teachers	M	821.56	628.03	961.97	790.56
	SD	588.29	736.89	1116.47	159.83
Student Teacher Ratios	M	15.97	15.3	14.4	15.1
	SD	2.15	1.05	2.05	.261
Met/Exceed English (%)	M	.443	.339	.338	.542
	SD	.082	.084	.086	.119
Met/Exceed Math (%)	M	.491	.369	.365	.588
	SD	.113	.090	.086	.121

Teacher Retention (%)	M	.874	.869	.859	.887
	SD	.045	.014	.025	.040
Teacher Vacancies	M	.008	.017	.015	.004
	SD	.008	.016	.011	.002
Per Pupil Expenditure	M	10014.43	26686.40	11695.29	10001.33
	SD	949.51	39174.20	2745.97	2108.96
Students in Poverty (%)	M	.611	.684	.701	.424
	SD	.118	.125	.135	.214

N=23

Conclusion

While the bulk of education working conditions research has focused on the school level, missing from the literature is an extensive analysis of how districts and policymakers can augment school leadership and management efforts to develop and sustain a better work environment for teachers.

Recent teacher hiring research has demonstrated that HR departments can provide much value to school-level efforts, e.g., by improving the chances of more effective teacher selections during the school hiring process (Goldhaber, Grout, & Huntington-

Klein, 2017). We drew on the SHRM and TCEL literature to frame our work.

While the sample size of our study leads to inevitable limitations of generalizing our results, our work has produced several important findings. Specifically, the results from this study provide partial support for SHRM and TCEL theory.

Consistent with the literature, districts that employed Strategic Developmental HRM systems are associated with higher student achievement in English and Math, lower student-to-teacher ratios, higher teacher

retention, and fewer teacher vacancies than districts relying on any other HRM system.

That said, our study did produce some surprising findings. While the assumption, based on the literature, suggests Strategic Development HRM systems would outperform other systems across various organizational outcomes, it would also suggest Administrative HRM systems would perform worse. That wasn't always the case in our study, and deeper probing indicates reasons why.

To start, districts with Developmental and Strategic HRM have higher percentages of students in poverty and relatedly lower student performance than their counterparts at either end of the spectrum (i.e., Administrative HRM and Strategic Developmental HRM).

This study's cross-sectional nature does not allow us to detect the direction of influence (i.e., are administrative HRM systems causing the better outcomes (which would be inconsistent with the literature? Or are the better outcomes causing organizations to adopt less strategic systems).

We have some evidence to suggest the latter may be occurring. Based on our conversations with district personnel, some of the more attractive districts (e.g., because of locale) feel less of a need to be strategic with their recruitment because the teacher supply is more abundant for these districts. They then have the ability to be more selective and employ

higher-quality teachers, which results in stronger student academic performance.

Conversely, some hard-to-staff districts must offer incentives to attract teachers for employment. Still, they are not overall more strategic, resulting in them being classified as either Developmental or Strategic HR systems. These districts are most often teaching a large percentage of students in poverty, which explains the findings. Ultimately, this pattern results in an inequitable access to education HR support based on differential district resources, capacities, and needs.

In sum, in support of SHRM theory, Strategic Developmental districts have the best organizational outcomes. However, those employing Administrative HRM systems may not have the worst outcomes because they are often districts that need not be as strategic to achieve their goals because of their attractiveness.

Poorer performing districts tend to congregate in the middle of the spectrum because they are often districts with worse working conditions requiring them to be more strategic to attract teachers. Yet, they often do not have sufficient resources or capacity to employ the ideal Strategically Developmental HRM systems. This pattern of inequity will likely persist unless the public is aware of the inequalities and willing to accept responsibility to confront them.

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High School Drug Testing Perceptions Among Superintendents in Colorado

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ABSTRACT

Due to emerging laws regarding marijuana use, the need for school officials to implement effective prevention interventions with students is evident. The purpose of this study was to examine superintendents' perceptions regarding drug testing of high school students. A survey based on the Integrated Behavioral Model was mailed to all superintendents in Colorado. Descriptive statistics, odds ratios, and binary logistic regression were conducted to analyze the data. The majority of superintendents perceived that alcohol, marijuana, illicit, and prescription drugs were a problem that needs to be addressed in high schools. Superintendents agreed that drug testing students would be effective in reducing substance use amongst certain high school students. The strongest predictor of support was positive and/or negative beliefs regarding testing.

KEY WORDS

Superintendents, adolescents, substance use, drug policy, drug testing, drug prevention

Drug use among youth remains prevalent among high school students. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Youth Risk Behavior Survey, almost 36% of high school students have used marijuana at least one time (CDC, 2017). Though the state of Colorado has a lower adolescent marijuana use percentage (19%) than the U.S. (20%), 10 out of the 21 districts in Colorado have a higher average of adolescent use (21%-27%) (Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, 2017). Conversely, in 2017 the use of other illicit drugs like cocaine (4.8%), hallucinogens (6.6%), inhalants (6.2%), ecstasy (4.0%), heroin (1.7%), methamphetamine (2.5%), and steroids (2.9%) has decreased since the turn of the millennium (CDC, 2017). However, use of these drugs constitutes an enduring public health problem.

The use of psychotropic drugs poses a variety of health risks, especially for adolescents whose bodies and minds are still developing. For example, marijuana—the most commonly used illicit drug (in most states)—impairs critical thinking, decreases memory functions, impairs visual processing, and causes paranoia and hallucinations (Volkow, et al., 2014; Meier, et al., 2012). S

Due to the brain developing until around age 21, use psychotropic chemicals, like marijuana's THC, can have detrimental effects on the adolescent brain (Volkow, et al., 2014). Marijuana use can be addictive, especially for adolescent users (Volkow, et al., 2014). Regular long-term use of marijuana causes deterioration of pulmonary health along with increasing the risk of developing anxiety, depression, and psychosis (Volkow, et al., 2014). Other illicit drugs, such as cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine are addictive as well and may cause health problems such as

respiratory issues, brain damage, and heart failure (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2015).

Drug use has long been associated with negative behaviors in school, such as truancy, absenteeism, aggression, dropping out of school, bringing guns to school, stealing, and fighting (Volkow, et al., 2014; Valasquez, 2010; Chou, et al., 2006; Kingery, et al., 1992; Lowery, et al., 1999).

As well as negatively impacting the school environment, drug use interferes with students' learning ability and motivation, thereby potentially reducing student academic achievement (Barrington, 2008; Sznitman, Dunlop, et al., 2012). Students also perform poorly on standardized tests while under the influence of drugs, such as marijuana and cocaine (Jeynes, 2002). Given the threat substance misuse/abuse poses to youth both physically and academically, school officials recognize the need to address this pervasive public health issue.

Due to the recent legalization of recreational marijuana use in some states and districts for adults aged 21 and older (Alaska: 2014, California: 2016, Colorado: 2012, D.C.: 2014, Maine: 2016, Massachusetts: 2016, Michigan: 2018, Nevada: 2016, Oregon: 2014, Vermont: 2018, and Washington: 2012), marijuana presents a unique challenge.

In Colorado, adolescent perceptions regarding the ease of obtaining marijuana have risen, and perceived risks of marijuana use have gone down (CDC, 2017; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014). Historically, as perceptions of risk about a specific drug go down, use of that drug goes up (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2009).

The Colorado Department of Education has reported an increase in drug-related suspensions and expulsions of high school students from 2008 to 2016, with the majority (62%) of these offenses related to marijuana (Rocky Mountain HIDTA, 2017). Students admit having acquired marijuana from their friends who, in turn, obtained it from parents who purchased the marijuana legally (CDC, 2017).

Random student drug testing (RSDT), a supplement to prevention programs, may help deter students from using drugs (Russell, et al., 2005; Dupont, et al., 2013). Since the early 1970s, drug testing has played an important role in preventing substance use in the military, workplace, and criminal justice settings (Dupont, et al., 2013).

The use of random drug tests has resulted in a significant (90%) drop in self-reported drug use in the military, and similar policies placed in schools may help deter adolescent drug use (Dupont, et al., 2013).

However, drug testing within the public schools has only been implemented in a limited number of settings and subpopulation groups (e.g., athletes, students in extracurricular activities, students who obtain a school parking permit).

Scholars have raised questions regarding the effectiveness of student drug testing. Some studies reveal that drug testing students did not result in lower drug use rates (Yamaguchi, et al., 2003; Brendtro & Martin, 2006; Sznitman & Romer, 2014), although various methodological issues raise concerns about the validity of these findings.

Other researchers report that student drug testing helped identify students who needed drug counseling, decreased drug-related

disciplinary actions, and gave students a reason to refuse peer pressure (Velasquez, 2010; Barrington, 2008; Dupont, et al., 2013; Committee on Substance Abuse and Council on School Health, 2007; James-Burdumy, et al., 2012; Terry-McElrath, et al., 2013).

Research regarding adolescent perceptions about this type of intervention indicates that most students believe RSDT would reduce drug use among teens (Evans, et al., 2006).

However, Dupont and colleagues (2013) report that drug testing was ineffective as a stand-alone prevention program. Thus, random student drug testing should supplement other substance abuse prevention programs in the school and surrounding community.

Best practices suggest that schools maintain student confidentiality, not involve law enforcement, and offer unobtrusive testing procedures if student drug testing is to be effective (Edmonson, 2002).

As of 2016, about 30% of U.S. high schools implement a form of RSDT (CDC, 2012); accordingly, the question remains as to why more high schools are not presently implementing RSDT. Superintendents are crucial to any school reform process (Hodgkinson & Montenegro, 1999); without their support, any attempts to prevent and possibly decrease student substance use through RSDT will likely fail.

One way of determining support for prevention initiatives is by assessing key stakeholders' support of the intervention through behavior-based theories such as the Integrated Behavioral Model (IBM) (Glanz, et al., 2008). The IBM provides a framework to identify key attitudes, norms, and control beliefs that affect intentions to perform a

behavior (Wohlwend, et al., 2014). The purpose of this study was to investigate superintendents' support of RSDT using the IBM.

Methods

Participants

The sample for this study included all public school district superintendents in the state of Colorado. The list was obtained from the Colorado Department of Education and included a total of 179 superintendents.

Instrumentation

The Integrated Behavior Model theory was used to develop a four-page paper/pencil survey to assess behavioral intention (one item), normative beliefs (31 items), attitudes (20 items), and control beliefs (five items).

The survey also included items assessing superintendents' perceptions regarding the prevalence of adolescent drug use and related problems, as well as demographic information.

To establish content validity, the survey instrument was reviewed by experts in the fields of drug prevention, psychometrics, and school health research, including a former superintendent. Revisions were made based on the feedback from the expert panel. In addition, a principal component analysis was conducted to assess the construct validity of the instrument.

The following a priori constructs loaded together using .35 for item loading: control beliefs/efficacy, attitudes about drug testing students in extracurricular activities including athletes, attitudes about drug testing all students, beliefs about student outcomes of drug testing, and beliefs about the school being affected from drug testing.

Further, a sample of Ohio superintendents ($n=15$) was selected to conduct a test/retest analysis, two weeks apart, to assess the stability reliability of the instrument. All items elicited greater than 70% agreement indicating strong temporal consistency among the measures. Cronbach's alpha internal reliability of the subscales was calculated on the final returned surveys: perceived district drug use (.87), perceived state drug use (.72), attitude about drug testing athletes and students in extracurricular activities (.97), attitude about drug testing all students (.97), drug testing beliefs regarding student outcomes of the testing (.80), drug testing beliefs about how it may affect the school/district (.78), drug testing support (.97), and self-efficacy (.87).

Procedure

The instrument was mailed in 2016 to Colorado superintendents, which included a cover letter, a self-addressed stamped envelope to return the survey to the researchers, and a dollar incentive. Two weeks later, a second wave of the cover letter, survey, and a self-addressed stamped envelope was mailed to non-respondents. Finally, a postcard reminder along with an email was sent to non-respondents, a month after the initial mailing, in order to obtain a higher response rate.

Data analysis

Data were analyzed with Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 21. Level of significance was set at $p < .05$. Descriptive statistics were used to describe demographic variables, the perceived threat of adolescent drug use, and perceived support.

Chi-square tests were performed to examine relationships between different demographic/attitude/behavior variables and support for high school drug testing. Logistic regression analyses were conducted to

determine which IBM variables were influential in predicting the outcome variables of support for RSDT. Support for RSDT was dichotomized into support/oppose.

Results

Demographic and background characteristics of respondents

A total of 178 (population sample) questionnaires were sent to Colorado superintendents. A total of 89 participants

(50%) responded (89/178), yielding a 50% response rate. Thus, the findings from this study are adequate to generalize to the broader population of Colorado superintendents with a 95% level of confidence.

The majority of Colorado superintendents were white (93.3%), located in a rural area (89.9%) and male (73%). The pluralities were either Republican (36%) or Independent (36%), and non-denominational Christian (40.4%) (Table 1).

Table 1

Demographics

	Frequency	Valid %
Gender		
Male	65	73.9
Female	23	26.1
Age Categories		
35-44	6	7.2
45-54	33	39.8
55-64	37	44.6
65 and older	7	8.4
Politics		
Republican	32	38.6
Independent	32	26.7
Democrat	21	25.7
Religion		
Catholic	11	13.4
Lutheran	7	8.5
Jewish	1	1.2
Non-Denomination Christian	36	43.9
Non-Religious	10	12.2
Other	17	20.7

Race/Ethnicity

White	83	96.5
Hispanic	2	2.3
Other	1	1.2

Most school districts did not drug test high school students within the past five years (76.4%), and of those districts that did not drug test, the overwhelming majority did not plan to start drug testing students within the next two years (61.8%).

Moreover, most superintendents believed that other school districts in the state were also not drug testing their high school students.

Perceived drug problem—local district vs. state

The survey included eight items which assessed superintendents' perceptions of drug use among high school students within their state and district.

Within their district, superintendents perceived alcohol use to be a moderate problem (55.1%), marijuana use to be a moderate problem (44.9%), illicit drug use to be a minor problem (47.2%) and prescription drug use to be a minor problem (52.8%).

Ironically, superintendents reported substance use as more problematic outside of their district: alcohol (65.2%), marijuana (52.8%), illicit drugs (55.1%), and prescription drugs (53.9%).

Moreover, some superintendents (15%) claimed drugs were not a problem in their district, while indicating they were elsewhere in the state (Table 2).

Table 2

Perceived Substance Use as a Problem

	Frequency	Valid %
Substance use is a problem in my district:		
Alcohol		
Not a problem	1	1.1
Minor problem	26	29.2
Moderate problem	49	55.1
Major problem	13	14.6
Marijuana		
Not a problem	2	2.2
Minor problem	23	25.8
Moderate problem	40	44.9
Major problem	24	27.0

Illicit Drugs			
	Not a problem	15	16.9
	Minor problem	42	47.2
	Moderate problem	26	29.2
	Major problem	6	6.7
Prescription Drugs			
	Not a problem	15	16.9
	Minor problem	47	52.8
	Moderate problem	23	25.8
	Major problem	4	4.5

Frequency Valid %

Substance use is a problem in my state:

Alcohol			
	Not a problem	0	0
	Minor problem	7	7.9
	Moderate problem	58	65.2
	Major problem	24	27.0
Marijuana			
	Not a problem	0	0
	Minor problem	4	4.5
	Moderate problem	47	52.8
	Major problem	38	42.7
Illicit Drugs			
	Not a problem	0	0
	Minor problem	28	31.5
	Moderate problem	49	55.1
	Major problem	12	13.5
Prescription Drugs			
	Not a problem	0	0
	Minor problem	32	36.0
	Moderate problem	48	53.9
	Major problem	9	10.1

A paired samples t-test was conducted to examine the differences between superintendent perceptions of a drug problem (four-point scale from not a problem to major problem) between schools in their district and state.

There was a statistically significant difference in perception of drug use as a problem from district to state for alcohol (district: $M = 2.83$, $SD = .678$ and state: $M =$

3.19 , $SD = .562$, $t(89) = 5.27$, $p < .001$), marijuana (district: $M = 2.97$, $SD = .790$ and state: $M = 3.38$, $SD = .574$, $t(89) = 5.45$, $p < .001$), illicit drugs (district: $M = 2.26$, $SD = .819$ and state: $M = 2.82$, $SD = .650$, $t(89) = 7.18$, $p < .001$), and prescription drugs (district: $M = 2.18$, $SD = .762$ and state: $M = 2.74$, $SD = .631$, $t(89) = 8.08$, $p < .001$). The Cohen's d statistic (.40 - .50) indicated a medium effect size (Table 3).

Table 3

Differences in Perceptions of Drug Use Problem

		Paired Differences of Perceptions of Drug Use District vs State						
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval		Sig. (2-tailed)	
					Lower	Upper		
Pair 1	alcohol district - alcohol state	-.360	.644	.068	-.495	-.224	-5.267	>.001
Pair 2	marijuana district - marijuana state	-.416	.720	.076	-.567	-.264	-5.447	>.001
Pair 3	illicit district - illicit state	-.562	.738	.078	-.717	-.406	-7.183	>.001
Pair 4	prescription district - prescription state	-.562	.656	.070	-.700	-.424	-8.075	>.001

Drug testing attitudes

Participants were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed that drug testing students was an effective way to prevent substance use. The majority agreed or strongly agreed, that drug testing athletes, helps prevent alcohol use (50.6%), marijuana use (73%), illicit drug use (71.9%), and prescription drug misuse (57.3%). Similarly, the majority agreed or strongly agreed that drug testing students involved in extra-curricular activities would prevent marijuana (71.9%), illicit drugs (70.8%), and prescription drug (58.4%) misuse.

Superintendents were split on whether drug testing would prevent alcohol use, with nearly half (48%) of them indicating RSDT would be helpful.

Participants' attitudes toward drug testing all high school students were less supportive than those of specific populations (e.g., athletes and those involved in extra-curricular activities, Table 3). The majority of participants disagreed or strongly disagreed that drug testing high school students would be effective in preventing alcohol use (62.9%), marijuana use (51.7%), illicit drug use (52.8%), and prescription drug misuse (53.6%).

Drug testing beliefs

Eight items were used to measure participants' beliefs toward student drug testing on a four-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Regarding positive aspects of high school student drug testing, the majority agreed or strongly agreed that testing would help get students into drug counseling if needed (76.4%). Also, 66.3% agreed or strongly agreed that drug testing would give students a reason to resist peer pressure to use drugs and 56.1% agreed or strongly agreed that drug testing would decrease the number of adolescents using drugs. However, 68.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed that drug testing would decrease student suspensions/expulsions.

Regarding negative aspects of high school drug testing, the majority disagreed or strongly disagreed that drug testing would cause an adverse school climate (53.9%). Also, 59.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed that drug testing violates students' privacy rights.

Participants were split on whether drug testing would take up too much time (49.4% agreement vs. 49.5% disagreement) and 76.4% agreed or strongly agreed that drug testing would cost the district too much money.

Support or opposition to drug testing

Superintendents reported varying support regarding drug testing. For athletes (58.4%) and students involved in extracurricular activities (54%), superintendents indicated support for drug testing. However, the majority opposed drug testing all high school students (62.9%) (Table 4).

Table 4

Effectiveness of Drug Testing as a Prevention Tool

		Frequency	Valid %
Drug testing is effective for student athletes regarding:			
Alcohol			
	strongly disagree	9	10.2
	disagree	34	38.6
	agree	34	38.6
	strongly agree	11	12.5
Marijuana			
	strongly disagree	3	3.4
	disagree	20	22.7
	agree	48	54.5
	strongly agree	17	19.3
Illicit Drugs			
	strongly disagree	3	3.4
	disagree	21	23.9
	agree	46	52.3
	strongly agree	18	20.5
Prescription Drugs			
	strongly disagree	3	3.4
	disagree	34	38.6
	agree	37	42.0
	strongly agree	14	15.9
Drug testing is effective for students in extracurricular activities regarding:			
Alcohol			
	strongly disagree	9	10.2
	disagree	36	40.9
	agree	31	35.2
	strongly agree	12	13.6
Marijuana			
	strongly disagree	3	3.4
	disagree	21	23.9
	agree	48	54.5
	strongly agree	16	18.2

	Frequency	Valid %
Drug testing is effective for students in extracurricular activities regarding:		
Illicit Drugs		
strongly disagree	3	3.4
disagree	22	25.0
agree	46	52.3
strongly agree	17	19.3
Prescription Drugs		
strongly disagree	4	4.5
disagree	32	36.4
agree	38	43.2
strongly agree	14	15.9
Drug testing is effective for all students regarding:		
Alcohol		
strongly disagree	18	20.5
disagree	38	43.2
agree	25	28.4
strongly agree	7	8.0
Marijuana		
strongly disagree	11	12.5
disagree	35	39.8
agree	34	38.6
strongly agree	8	19.1
Illicit Drugs		
strongly disagree	11	12.5
disagree	36	40.9
agree	33	37.5
strongly agree	8	9.1
Prescription Drugs		
strongly disagree	11	12.5
disagree	42	47.7
agree	27	30.7
strongly agree	8	9.1

A chi-square analysis revealed that superintendents who identified as republican were more likely (20%) to support drug testing all students $\chi^2 (n=85) = 7.15, p = .028$ compared to those who identified as non-Republicans (15%).

Additionally, a chi-square analysis indicated a statistically significant association between superintendent support and current district drug testing of students, athlete testing $\chi^2 (n=89) = 8.98, p = .003,$

extracurricular student testing $\chi^2 (n=89) = 11.70, p = .001,$ and all student testing $\chi^2 (n=89) = 7.15, p = .008.$

A binary logistic regression was performed to determine the impact of beliefs, attitudes, and personal agency (self-efficacy/perceived control) toward drug testing in assessing the likelihood that participants would support drug testing high school students (Table 5 below).

Table 5

Binary Logistic Regression Predicting Likelihood of Support

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
								Lower	Upper
Athletes	Attitude of Athletes and Extracurricular	1.117	.748	2.232	1	.135	3.056	.706	13.232
	Attitude of All	.511	.814	.394	1	.530	1.667	.338	8.214
	Beliefs of Student Outcomes	2.226	.649	11.775	1	.001	9.260	2.597	33.013
	Beliefs about School being Affected	-.512	.911	.316	1	.574	.599	.101	3.569
	District Perceived Problem	.531	.685	.600	1	.439	1.701	.444	6.517
	State Perceived Problem	-.681	.784	.753	1	.385	.506	.109	2.355
	Control Belief/Efficacy	1.036	.722	2.061	1	.151	2.819	.685	11.603
Extra-curriculars	Attitude of Athletes and Extracurricular	2.318	.923	6.298	1	.012	10.151	1.661	62.020
	Attitude of All	.425	.892	.227	1	.634	1.529	.266	8.782
	Beliefs of Student Outcomes	2.776	.718	14.941	1	>.001	16.051	3.929	65.577
	Beliefs about School being Affected	-.552	1.121	.242	1	.623	.576	.064	5.181
	District Perceived Problem	.498	.828	.362	1	.547	1.646	.325	8.341
	State Perceived Problem	-.933	.926	1.014	1	.314	.394	.064	2.417
	Control Belief/Efficacy	1.921	.902	4.531	1	.033	6.826	1.164	40.012
All	Attitude of Athletes and Extracurricular	.097	1.055	.008	1	.927	1.102	.139	8.707
	Attitude of All	2.604	.904	8.292	1	.004	13.516	2.297	79.532
	Beliefs of Student Outcomes	2.216	.765	8.395	1	.004	9.168	2.048	41.044
	Beliefs about School being Affected	-.627	.921	.464	1	.496	.534	.088	3.249
All	District Perceived Problem	-.973	.775	1.575	1	.210	.378	.083	1.728
	State Perceived Problem	-.964	.911	1.120	1	.290	.381	.064	2.274
	Control Belief/Efficacy	.142	.835	.029	1	.865	1.152	.224	5.917

Independent variables were dichotomized from a four-point agreement scale into agree/disagree. The model explained 54% (Nagelkerke R^2) of the variance, predictors were statistically significant for beliefs regarding drug testing of athletes (beliefs: $\chi^2 = 11.859$, $p < .001$), beliefs regarding drug testing of students involved in extracurricular activities (beliefs: $\chi^2 = 15.002$, $p < .001$, and beliefs and attitudes regarding the drug testing of all high school students (beliefs: $\chi^2 = 4.253$, $p = .039$, attitudes: 4.614 , $p = .032$).

The odds ratio results pertaining to student outcomes from drug testing (e.g., it will help get them into counseling, it will violate student privacy rights, it will decrease the amount of students using substances) were examined relative to support for RSDT. Compared to those who disagreed with the positive student outcomes, those who agreed were significantly more likely to support RSDT for athletes (OR = 9.26, $p = .001$) and for students in extracurricular activities (OR = 16.05, $p < .001$). Regarding RSDT for all students, the greatest predictor was superintendents' attitude that drug testing was an effective prevention strategy (OR = 13.52, $p = .004$).

Perceived support among key stakeholders

Participants were also asked to consider whether other school/community members would support or oppose drug testing. For athletes, students involved in extracurricular activities, and all high school students, the biggest perceived supporters were school nurses (77.5%, 68.6%, and 49.5%). Teachers were also perceived as supportive for drug testing athletes (69.7%), students in extracurricular activities (64%), and all high school students (49.5%).

Conversely, participants perceived *students* would be opposed to drug testing

athletes (76.2%), those in extracurricular activities (74.1%), and all high school students (84.3%). Superintendents also perceived *parents* as being opposed to drug testing athletes (59.6%), students in extracurricular activities (61.8%), and all high school students (77.6%).

Self-efficacy/perceived control

Six survey items measured participants' self-efficacy/perceived control regarding drug testing high school students in their district. The majority agreed or strongly agreed that they could convince their school board members to implement high school drug testing if they wanted (54%), even without student support (53.9%). Further, the majority disagreed or strongly disagreed they could convince their school board members to implement high school drug testing if they did not have community (64.1%) or parental (66.3%) support. Superintendents disagreed or strongly disagreed they had the knowledge (48.3%) or skills (47.2%), respectively, needed to implement high school drug testing.

Discussion

Most superintendents in this study were supportive of drug testing high school students, assuming they had the support of students, parents, and the broader community.

One particularly noteworthy finding from the current study was that superintendents whose schools currently drug test high school students were substantially more supportive of drug testing than those who did not drug test. This finding is indicative of *confirmation bias*, whereby superintendents tend to be supportive of their current policy.

The results from the current study also revealed that superintendents perceive the majority of students are opposed to drug testing any student population (athletes, extra-

curricular, and all students). However, the literature indicates high school students are supportive of random student drug testing (Evans, et al., 2006).

Superintendents also perceive parents to be opposed to drug testing; although, this too is a misperception. In a related study, most parents indicate they are supportive of drug testing all students including athletes and students in extracurricular activities (Sweeney, 2019). This vital information needs to be shared with superintendents because it may influence their decision to implement drug testing.

Additional research should be conducted to examine these misperceptions and how to remedy them (i.e., social norms intervention). Superintendents also perceive that adolescent drug use is less of a problem in their district than in other districts in the state. To be better informed, superintendents should review the Healthy Kids of Colorado Study which includes regional data of adolescent drug use (Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, 2017) or conduct their own needs assessment to determine the actual drug use among high school students in their district.

Superintendent beliefs and attitudes were important factors in relation to the support of student drug testing. With mixed results of effectiveness regarding student drug testing in the literature (Dupont, et al., 2013; Yamaguchi, et al., 2003; Brendtro & Martin, 2006; Sznitman & Romer, 2014; Committee on Substance Abuse and Council on School Health, 2007), superintendents' opinions varied as to whether drug testing would decrease drug use among adolescents (56% agree, 43% disagree).

The most substantial perceived barrier to drug testing students was that drug testing

would cost the district too much money (76% agreeance). With a standard drug test costing approximately \$14-\$30 per test, this financial burden constitutes a legitimate barrier for districts that are underfunded (Yamaguchi, et al., 2003). However, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, for every dollar spent on drug testing, an average of \$24 per student would be saved throughout their lifetime (Miller & Hendrie, 2008).

Limitations

The response rate of 50% represents a potential threat to the external validity of the findings if non-responding superintendents hold different beliefs and attitudes than respondents. The survey was closed format; additional information was not elicited and may have precluded some superintendents from providing important information related to their attitudes, beliefs, and support regarding high school student drug testing.

This study was limited to superintendents in public Colorado school districts and excluded ones from private or charter districts. The small sample size could reduce the power of this study, thereby increasing Type II error. Finally, drug testing is a sensitive issue, and respondents may have provided socially desirable responses.

Conclusion

In the current study, superintendents were most supportive of drug testing high school students who were athletes and involved in extracurricular activities, and less supportive of drug testing the entire high school population.

Testing athletes and students involved in extra-curricular activities may be a good segue to testing all students in the future, if testing is found effective for that district. Indeed, students who are not involved in school

activities may benefit from drug testing as a way to resist peer pressure.

Parents need to be reassured their written permission is needed to conduct drug testing with their child. This is important for superintendents to keep in mind to help dissuade any fears regarding retaliation from parents regarding the drug testing of their child. Further, drug testing should not be punitive with its implementation per se.

For example, suspending students from school, extracurricular activities or sports for a first-time positive drug screening may result in iatrogenic outcomes as supervised activities and positive social interactions (i.e., teachers and coaches) are protective factors for adolescents (Kwan, et al., 2014).

Superintendents perceive school nurses to be the most supportive stakeholders of drug testing high school students, which suggests school officials may want to leverage this group's support and frame this issue from a

public health perspective. There seems to be a readiness/support among superintendents to implement drug testing. Additional training regarding appropriate procedures for high school drug testing is needed for superintendents to increase their self-efficacy apropos this policy.

Colorado school districts have reported an increase in school discipline problems since the passing of the recreational use of marijuana (Rocky Mountain HIDTA, 2017). Due to the increased availability of marijuana, and the current opioid crisis in the United States, school districts invariably need to enhance their prevention efforts. Though drug testing may come with a cost, it pales in comparison to treating addiction, unintentional injury and premature death associated with drug abuse. Further, the advantages of drug testing (getting a student into drug counseling, a reason to resist peer pressure, decreased adolescent drug use and suspensions/expulsions) from a cost/benefit perspective outweigh this barrier.

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Canadian Indigenous Literature and Art: Decolonizing Education, Culture, and Society

written by Carol A. Mullen, PhD

reviewed by Christopher H. Tienken, PhD

Carol Mullen's (2020) *Canadian Indigenous Literature and Art: Decolonizing Education, Culture, and Society* (published in Brill's book series Education, Culture, and Society) is the subject of this book review. Mullen is a professor at Virginia Tech in Educational Leadership.

In this truly inspiring work, Mullen raises critical issues about Indigenous justice in Canada and brings forth rarely discussed perspectives found in education from the perspectives of Indigenous education and culture (literature and art). The concept of decolonizing the classroom, education, policy, practice, culture, and society is the backbone of this work aimed at raising awareness and creating systemic change.

Examples of Indigenous culture are used as tools for discerning, interpreting, and protesting colonization. Mullen uses Indigeneity as the primary critical lens from which to view education policy in Canada that she explains is applicable more broadly to countries like the United States and Australia.

Mullen calls on readers to become mindful of colonization as a starting point for addressing what she terms a "modern plague" in society. She offers critical collective

consciousness as a process that readers can use to both identify and disrupt colonialism.

More than this, she presents multiple frames of reference for systemic disruption and renewal. The frames range from returning stolen lands and resources to tribal nations to decolonizing policy, pedagogy, curricula, assessment and integrating Indigenous worldviews that align with policy and practice in favor of culturally contextualized learning.

The author's discussion of standardized testing and colonializing brought me to the realization that the entire notion of defining student achievement by a standardized test score is a colonizing weapon. Mullen's dive into the world of standardized testing raises serious questions for education leaders and policymakers who strive to increase educational equity.

Who gets to define the parameters of student achievement? Who sets the underlying goals and objectives from which to describe and compare student achievement? Who controls how students are then labeled and categorized, and ultimately viewed by those within the education system? Student achievement when measured by standardized tests erases cultures and forces homogenization

because achievement is defined by mastery of content that is culturally biased toward those in power. Cultural colonization and obliteration continue to take place across Canada, the United States, and other nations under the veil of student achievement.

Mullen observes that standardized testing does not occur in a vacuum—it is driven by the politicization of curricula. She pulls back the curtain on Canadian school curricula to find mounting tensions as provinces around the country strive to come to grips with their own history of colonialism by trying to decolonize school curricula.

Mullen includes a case study of teaching from British Columbia, a province that instituted *The First Peoples Principles of Learning* in 2016 as a weight to balance the curricular scales and bring in the perspectives and lived histories of Indigenous peoples.

The case is illustrative of one of the six thematic binaries—"from colonization to decolonization"—that Mullen created to take the reader below the usual surface-level discussions of colonizing/decolonizing education into a deep phenomenological exploration that exposes and unpacks colonization. Readers are provided numerous concrete examples of how to confront, if not overcome, colonialism in education and society.

This thematic binary (from colonization to decolonization) expertly captures the struggle faced by a "colonial settler" teacher in a conventional classroom as she attempts to navigate her own settler mindset and introduce an Indigenous worldview into an education system dominated by the settler culture. As Mullen explains, "Settler mindset is complex and extremely difficult to invalidate" (p. 67).

The use of six unique thematic binaries of her own analytical making helps the reader to better understand the larger relationship between education and society, and colonizing complexities that shape schooling for Indigenous populations and, indeed, all students and educators.

This book assists readers in using their inherent power to work toward desirable educational ends by arming them with an under-researched viewpoint from which to understand and dismantle colonialism: Indigenous culture.

Examples of Indigenous art and literature assist the reader in exploring two important political themes of colonization that need to be overcome in order for impactful decolonization to occur: (1) the politics of land, and (2) the politics of water. As described by Mullen, land and water have been used as weapons by settler societies to subjugate Indigenous peoples—an entrenched historical practice that continues.

Indigenous art and literature are woven throughout the second part of the book to illuminate a rarely used context for viewing issues of colonial education and challenging colonization.

In Mullen's words, "Protest art serves as a tool for interrogating colonial mindsets and settler futurity in which national sovereignty thrives and Indigenous sovereignty is sacrificed" (p. 108).

The book builds to the author's description of educational interventions from the literature in chapters 5 and 6. The interventions are aimed at impacting colonial education and advancing Indigenous worldviews, including futurity, which takes

seriously the possibility of a new world from the powerful subaltern perspectives of Indigenous educators and allies in different disciplines and community contexts. She goes the extra mile in her analysis by taking up the subject of the future of Canada.

The previous four chapters assist the reader in rethinking history and current dynamics of colonization/decolonization in Canada, whereas Chapter 5 describes specific interventions for decolonization tied to six educational domains: (1) teacher education, (2) educational leadership, (3) health/medical education, (4) community centered education, (5), environmental education, and (6) youth education. Chapter 6 presents alternatives for decolonizing teaching, learning, and education that every educator can consider and adapt. Mullen sets the tone for Chapter 6 when she writes, “Imagining the future and making preparations underscore futurity as a dynamic force of change” (p. 141). The author advances Indigenous justice as a key mindset in decolonizing life-worlds and fostering equity.

Readers will be moved to action while making their way through the narration and analysis. It is as much a text about colonization/decolonization as it is about the fundamental principles of educational equity and peaceful co-existence that most countries struggle with today. Mullen’s mosaic of

history, art, and culture offer a multidimensional view of these important topics. She provides scholars and practitioners alike with research-supported tools for setting upon a course that can transform lives and “cultivate a desired future” (p. 143) for Indigenous peoples.

I believe that this book contributes much needed knowledge to the field, with earnest attention on Indigenous education. It is the first writing I have seen on this important topic that integrates Indigenous art and literature as tools for protest and meaningful change. Without a doubt, *Canadian Indigenous Literature and Art* breaks new ground for education in its content, frameworks, and presentation.

I strongly recommend that readers obtain a copy of this book so that they can benefit from using it with their students and other stakeholders. In the words of Professor J. Konkol of Concordia University Chicago, whose endorsement appears on the jacket, this book is: compelling, interesting, important, and original. I was impressed with Carol Mullen’s knowledge, as well as how she wove together this knowledge with both the literature and personal experience throughout this beautifully and soulfully written text. I appreciate how she illuminates spaces and people whose work is often relegated to dark corners.

Reviewer Biography

Christopher Tienken is an associate professor of leadership, management, and policy and an education consultant. His educational experiences began as an elementary school teacher and concluding as a PK-12 assistant superintendent prior to entering higher education. He is the former editor of the AASA (American Association of School Administrators) *Journal of Scholarship and Practice* and the current editor of the *Kappa Delta Pi Record*.

Tienken's research interests focus on curriculum and assessment policy and practice at the local, state, national, and international levels. He most recently was selected as the lead author and principal investigator for the AASA *Decennial Study of the Superintendent*. He has received numerous awards and authored over 80 publications including book chapters and articles.

Canadian Indigenous Literature and Art: Decolonizing Education, Culture, and Society was written by Carol Mullen and published in 2020 by Brill, headquartered in Leiden, The Netherlands. 176 pp. \$47.00 softcover.

Mission and Scope, Copyright, Privacy, Ethics, Upcoming Themes, Author Guidelines, Submissions, Publication Rates & Publication Timeline

The *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* is a refereed, blind-reviewed, quarterly journal with a focus on research and evidence-based practice that advance the profession of education administration.

Mission and Scope

The **mission** of the Journal is to provide peer-reviewed, user-friendly, and methodologically sound research that practicing school and district administrations can use to take action and that higher education faculty can use to prepare future school and district administrators. The Journal publishes accepted manuscripts in the following categories: (1) Evidence-based Practice, (2) Original Research, (3) Research-informed Commentary, and (4) Book Reviews.

The **scope** for submissions focuses on the intersection of five factors of school and district administration: (a) administrators, (b) teachers, (c) students, (d) subject matter, and (e) settings. The Journal encourages submissions that focus on the intersection of factors a-e. The Journal discourages submissions that focus only on personal reflections and opinions.

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Below are themes and areas of interest for publication cycles.

1. Governance, Funding, and Control of Public Education
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Submissions

Length of manuscripts should be as follows: Research and evidence-based practice articles between **2,800** and **4,800** words; commentaries between **1,600** and **3,800** words; book and media reviews between **400** and **800** words. Articles, commentaries, book and media reviews, citations and references are to follow the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, latest edition. Permission to use previously copyrighted materials is the responsibility of the author, not the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice*.

Cover page checklist:

1. title of the article:
identify if the submission is original research, evidence-based practice, commentary, or book review
2. contributor name(s)
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10. 120-word abstract that conforms to APA style
11. six to eight key words that reflect the essence of the submission
12. 40-word biographical sketch

Please do not submit page numbers in headers or footers. Rather than use footnotes, it is preferred authors embed footnote content in the body of the article. Articles are to be submitted to the editor by e-mail as an electronic attachment in Microsoft Word, Times New Roman, 12 Font.

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The *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* maintains of record of acceptance rates for each of the quarterly issues published annually. The percentage of acceptance rates since 2010 is as follows:

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Additional Information

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and consortia is represented in the graphic below. To assist in navigating through the pandemic, AASA has produced and archived over 100 webinars since March 2020 on *Leading for Equity* and *What Works* at AASA, The School Superintendents Association. Contact Mort Sherman at msherman@aasa.org or Valerie Truesdale at vtruesdale@aasa.org to explore professional learning and engagement.



PROGRAMS & SERVICES

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Personalized Learning Cohort		
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