

Reflecting on the Current Challenges Amid a Pandemic

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It is a great privilege to serve as the Co-Editor in Chief of the *Journal of School Leadership* and to host the *Journal of School Leadership* at California State University, Fullerton. I am honored to be writing the introduction with Associate Editors Dr. Daniel Choi (California State University, Fullerton) and Dr. Jianjun Wang (California State University, Bakersfield). As we prepare for the introduction of current issue, we write with a heavy heart as we are living through the global pandemic caused by COVID-19. We are grateful to the frontline workers who form the backbone of our society to serve all citizens, particularly the ones in our education community, who are seeking shelter-in-place around the world. In this context, school leadership faces unprecedented challenges in strengthening professional support for effective teaching and learning in alternative delivery platforms. It is the positive inspiration that guides us to read these articles and introduce them to our readers for reflection on important topics of servant leadership, social justice, forward-thinking, and comprehensive school personnel preparation.

In the first article, Tasker-Mitchell and Atttoh highlight the importance of servant leadership and organizational health. Servant leadership practices facilitate a shared vision and setting clear expectations while encouraging others to perform their best within an organization. The authors argue that servant leadership is instrumental in fostering a school climate that is conducive to teacher growth and student learning.

In the second article, Lowery and Hampton take a different approach by using oral history methodology and analyzing Sybil Jordan Hampton's experience during the school de/segregation era in Little Rock, AR, to inform contemporary school leaders working for social justice. Sybil's experience emphasized the importance of assets that families and communities bring to the school settings, the development of critical consciousness along with the courage and perseverance that are needed to disrupt societal and institutional inequalities.

Coincidentally, preparedness, legal preparedness, is central to the DeCino et al. article in this issue. To the articles in this issue, we asked: What is the progressive, forward-thinking that is taking place or is needed, and what is getting in the way of evolving and keeping pace with emerging needs and shifting priorities? Interestingly, reading through the articles with this mindset deepened our appreciation for the work of the authors, on their own, it was clear how their work can be leveraged to take progressive, forward-thinking action. Rereading *The School Leadership* of a 1:1 laptop initiative article was fascinating, especially with the massive transition schools are

trying to make now, to virtual and distance learning. The study is a timely reminder that laptop, itself, is just the beginning, and that how teaching is planned, implemented, and managed and that learning is meaningful, requires instructional leadership that is ever-evolving, amid all the complications. This qualitative case study of school leaders' roles, perceptions, and challenges around this initiative revealed their work in establishing the school's vision, planning and implementing the initiative, supporting teachers and students, and reflecting on practice for continuous improvement. The study also discovered challenges, in the form of limited bandwidth, printing problems, and students' off-task behaviors. Another way to look at these challenges, in differentiating between the first two challenges and the third, is to view it through the First-Level Digital Divide perspective (FLDD)/Second-Level Digital Divide perspective (SLDD). In the FLDD, there are "haves" and "have nots" in terms of access to computers, printing, and the internet (including bandwidth issues). As technology has become less expensive and more accessible to low-income and minority families, advocates for disadvantaged youth have recognized another divide, the SLDD. The SLDD focuses on the quality differences in how technology is being used by students and those who are teaching it in schools (Shank & Cotton, 2013). Therefore, to recast the study findings more parsimoniously, in terms of FLDD and SLDD, may be useful in fitting the study findings to help guide school leaders currently, and to be forward-thinking in their current decision making about optimum use of technology that is most meaningful to students in a virtual learning environment.

In the next article, preparedness is front and center. Given that what most school leaders know about school law is from their administrator preparation programs, not much is known about the adequacy of that knowledge, and thus, how prepared they are, out in the field. DeCino, Curtin, De Jong, Seedorf, and Dalbey studied a large population of educational leaders in several states and examined their experiences with legal issues and levels of their perceived preparedness. The authors collected their data adapting an instrument called the Legal Issues in Counseling Survey. In their findings, years of experience and ethics training were significantly related to legal preparedness. The authors rightly point out more than just legal knowledge, experience in the field and the valuing of ethics are indispensable aspects of legal preparedness. There is much value also in the authors' progressive thinking on training in legal preparedness for other key staff in leadership roles, such as school counselors, school psychologists, coaches, and other school personnel.

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