NC State’s Principal Preparation

A great principal in every school.

Excellent Leaders: Effective Schools: Enriched Communities ©
Women in Education in US

- 77% Teachers
- 54% Principals
- 25% Superintendents
Race in Educational Leadership in U.S.

- Convincing evidence that the race of educators matters in the academic outcomes of students of colour. (Egalite et al. 2019).
- **Principals**: 79% white, 10% black, 8% Hispanic
- **Superintendents**: 11% black with those individuals primarily leading district with more than 50% of students of color.
Typical Educator Preparation

• Faculty in educator training programs are primarily white

• Curriculum may reference issues of equity, but very few programs offer different subgroups of students differential experiences or trainings. In effect, everyone is exposed to the same curriculum and trainings. One size fits all.

• Doesn’t reflect the different challenges women of colour will encounter on the job.
Where we work
NC Population by % Black/African-American
One-third (32%) of NC State’s MSA program are African American women.
Extant Research

• Much previous research on women leaders was based on studies of Anglo-American, middle-class women and the findings were generalized to all women (Parker & ogilvie, 1996).

• Black/African American women “must bridge multiple realities and manage complex multiple contexts (environmental, social, and cultural)” (p. 203).
Extant Research

• “Racism, sexism, racial and gender discrimination, and racial and gender prejudice create a changing environment full of contradiction and inconsistencies for women of color” (pp. 203-204).

• African American women school leaders noted major obstacles as lack of role models, mentors, and support systems (Alston, 1999; Bell, 1990; Gardiner, Enomoto, & Grogan, 2000).
Complicated

- **Familial support**, with parents and relatives having **high expectations**, and the role of the mostly “black” church—with its multiple opportunities for leadership development...speaking before the congregation or singing in the choir—were formative supports in helping African American female superintendents develop self-confidence and self-efficacy. (Alston, 2002; 2005; Bass, 2012; Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Newcomb & Niemeyer, 2015; Witherspoon & Taylor, 2010).
Dual-Subordinate Identities

• African American women represent atypical leaders based on the intersection of their race and gender

• Doubly marginal in society, as females and African Americans
Black Female Leaders

• Disproportionately sanctioned for making mistakes on the job
• Must minimize mistakes made on the job as their penalty for doing so may be greater than consequences experienced by white women and black men”
• “Making small mistakes on the job is particularly damaging to individuals in gender-incongruent occupations”
Female and Person of Colour

- This duality can produce “divergent thinking, creativity, risk-taking, and boundary spanning” (p. 474), although it can also lead to stress and imbalance—“the never-ending struggle of having to be ‘superwomen’, always competent and ready to perform” (p. 473).
Focus on Supporting Women of Colour

• The need identified (from literature and experience)
• During principal preparation program:
  – Focused readings, book studies, discussions
  – Equity retreat (all students but focused sessions for men & women of colour)
  – Individualized coaching
  – Seminars with successful role models (current and retired school leaders who are women of colour)
Post-degree induction support

Flow of the Sessions:

1. Presentation on a Topic (by Coaches)
2. Breakout groups to discuss real /just in time problem of practice (related to topic.) that Fellows are facing on the job. They bring in a problem. Broken out by school level (and possible a central office group) Facilitate by coaches
3. Operation NELA (Role Play) based on topic and infused with equity perspective (Lynda’s work) and rich debrief.
4. All AA Women
5. Social Time
Impact

• Data from program participants provides insights into the lived realities of women of color who are school principals and informs the design of programs created to help support them.
• Three years of exit surveys of students who completed the trainings
• 90% of respondents indicated the trainings were beneficial.
Impact: Key Themes

• Key themes: (1) managing perceptions is important—everything you say and do as a school leader, even how you dress and present yourself, will be judged. For example, one respondent commented that “as African American women we must always carry ourselves in a professional manner because of the assumptions already placed on us”;
Impact: Key Themes

- (2) Importance of networking, relationships, and building networks of support
- Participant now has “a network if minority women in leadership positions that I can consult and interact with.” “Knowing that others deal with similar issues and that it is important to have a network to work with”
Impact: Key Themes

• (3) Importance of knowing yourself (both your strengths and areas for improvement) and being true to yourself (not compromising your beliefs); and
• (4) maintaining work-life balance.
Conclusions

• “There are many things that I cannot discuss with administrators in my county because they are not black and/or female.”

• Need for mentoring to help navigate the politics of leadership, access networks, have mentors similar to themselves (by gender and ethnicity—affinity pairings), and secure support systems.
Conclusion: One-Size Does Not Fit All
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