Record Keeping in the United States: Counting Women Superintendents

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An Accurate and Timeline Account of Women’s Representation in Leadership is Important

- Women are under-represented in leadership positions
- Data help us name a problem
- Change requires comparative data
- Progress (or lack of progress) needs to be documented
- Data can be a catalyst for action
What We Know in 2019

Public school principals

- Women 46% (2015/2016)
- Women 52% (2011/2012)
- Black women 4.6% (2015/2016)
- White women 36.7% (2015/2016)
What We Know in 2019

Public school superintendents

• 132,853 School districts in the United States
• Women: 27.1% (2015, AASA)
• White women: 24.6% (2015, AASA)
• Black women: 1.4% (2015, AASA)
• Latina: .7% (2015, AASA)
• Other race/ethnicities Women: .4 (2015, AASA)
Response

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- Urgency for change has slowed.
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Urgency for change has slowed.

Demand for better data is muted.
But what if we look at the numbers like this?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percent Teachers</th>
<th>Percent Principals</th>
<th>Percent Superintendents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Women</td>
<td>77.0</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White women</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black women</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic women</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All “other” ethnic/racial groups of women</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Who Collects the Data?

Superintendents

☐ AASA Surveys: Decade and Mid-decade. Last data 2015; but other surveys on other topics more recent that include demographic

Public School Principals

☐ Schools and staffing survey. US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Last data publicly available 2011-2012; 2015-2016 only available through restricted data
Limitations of the Data

- Department of Education data is not current; It is 2019 and the data available to the public is from 2011/2012
- Department of Education does not collect data on superintendents
- AASA surveys on the superintendency occur every 5 to 10 years.
- Superintendent samples are not necessarily representative
Biggest Limitation: Sample

- Population from which sample is drawn: All school districts/schools; organizational membership
- Sample selection method: Volunteer vs random
- Non-response bias is not tested
- Racial/ethnic groups are “collapsed” or removed if cell size is too small
This complacency goes beyond leadership data

- Don’t disaggregate by gender (US Department of Education in data available to public)
- Don’t disaggregate by race and gender (US Department of Education in data available to public)
- Don’t include information of racial/ethnic groups that have low representation.
Some Positive Trends

- The conversations that have begun in schools about trans-gendered students have led to people questioning what we really mean by gender.
- This helps draw attention to be able to talk about the difference between gender identity and gender performance.