



## Leading professional learning for social justice

### The Principal's Role in Professional Development for Social Justice: An Empirically Based Transformative Framework

Brad W. Kose. *Urban Education*, 44(6), November 2009, pp. 628-663.

#### OVERVIEW

The purpose of this particular study was to develop a framework outlining the principal's role in professional development for social justice.

#### STUDY APPROACH

The author identified specific principals committed to socially just teaching and learning and studied their leadership practices related to leading professional learning.

#### Selected findings

Through a review of the existing literature, the author identified five interrelated roles of the principal related to professional development. He used the roles to outline a framework to describe principals who effectively lead social justice professional development.

To promote social justice learning, principals' practices in particular roles included:

As **transformative visionaries**, principals developed and communicated a vision and goals. Their visions affirmed diversity, high achievement goals, and inclusion. They re-envisioned entire systems rather than modifying existing practices.

As **transformative structural leaders**, principals fostered teacher and organizational learning for social

justice by establishing teams and placing a high value on time and effective structures for team learning. Moving to an inclusion model for serving all students, principals fostered collaborative learning among general education teachers and specialists.

As **transformative cultural leaders**, principals established cultures with trusting relationships and collective responsibility for all students. Principals valued reflection on how personal and professional beliefs impacted socially just schooling. They demonstrated their values through what they read and shared, through participation in team learning, and by questioning whether school practices were serving all students.

As **transformative learning leaders**, principals promoted a combination of content-area learning and social identity development. Educators reflected on their social identity (including race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status), affirmed and learned about other cultures, and learned to teach students about diversity and social justice. In this role, principals also linked teachers with internal and external expertise and differentiated teacher learning.

As **transformative political leaders**, principals maximized external resources for professional learning and built schoolwide support for change.

#### Implications for system leaders

Principals concerned about social justice need to reflect on their social identities and develop deep commit-

#### Exploring the research base

Find syntheses of research studies that have implications for professional learning beginning with the fall issues of *The Learning Principal* and *The Learning System*. The newsletters will explore both current and seminal works. The syntheses are not necessarily comprehensive; rather descriptions are selective to serve the specific interests of newsletter readers.

To learn more about the research base that informs effective professional learning, search the evidence database on the Learning Forward web site ([www.learningforward.org/evidence](http://www.learningforward.org/evidence)).

ments to a social justice agenda. Consider what support this will require in recruiting and developing school leaders.

Principals need professional learning and systemic support to become learning leaders for social justice. Explore the systemwide capacity and resources to support such principal development.

Principals often looked outside the school to find professional learning opportunities that supported academic learning and social justice objectives. Examine what professional learning the district offers for all staff to support the combined goals.

Consider how school goals for social justice professional learning align with districtwide improvement plans and whether the culture of the district supports the development of socially just cultures.

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