



## HERE WE GO

Suzanne Bouffard

# STRENGTHENING THE EDUCATOR PIPELINE TAKES SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

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**A**s I read through the articles in this issue about building the educator pipeline, the theme that stands out is shared responsibility. Many of the authors go beyond the concept of collaboration — an important and ever-present theme in professional learning — to a deeper notion of collective commitment. Shared responsibility means more than each of us doing our own part; it means that I'm invested in your part, too.

The need for shared responsibility has been on my mind a lot lately. In the current historical moment, our only real hope of surviving and thriving is caring about one another and for one another, and not just in an abstract way.

The coronavirus pandemic requires us to assume responsibility for each other's well-being to an unusual degree, even as we must distance ourselves physically. To decrease transmission of the virus, we have to make daily sacrifices for each another, sacrifices that contradict our most basic human instincts to gather, express affection, give comfort, and experience joy together.

The other pandemic — systemic racism — requires each of us to invest meaningfully in the health and success of people of color. White people, in particular, have to confront our roles in the systems of oppression that cause harm and violence and take active steps to dismantle those systems. This, too, requires sacrifices and hard truths.

As both of these realities make clear, assuming shared responsibility is difficult and sometimes painful work. That's why I am so inspired by this issue's authors, who are building the pipeline of high-quality teachers and leaders, going beyond their own individual contexts to weld the sections together and reinforce them when needed. They are overcoming institutional barriers, logistical hurdles, and entrenched beliefs to create continuity and quality from preservice, to the challenging first years of teaching, to teacher leadership, to school and system leadership.

As authors in these pages show, the educator pipeline has multiple branches that must be strong on their own and also fit together. For example, there are multiple pathways for recruiting and supporting new teachers, such as mentoring initiatives (p. 20), teacher residency programs (p. 33), and the paraprofessional workforce (p. 38). There are also multiple successful career pathways. For example, teacher leadership takes many forms and need not lead to the principalship (p. 43). But when it does, collaboration among universities and districts can play a key role (p. 51). In all of these pathways, it is imperative to make a shared investment in diversifying the educator workforce to include and elevate people of color (p. 24).

Across all of these pathways, shared responsibility takes partnership, and that takes trust, especially when the work requires discomfort, sacrifice, or uncertainty. As we look around at our world in 2020, trust is eroding in many arenas — in politics, in the media, even in science — at the very time when we need it most. But educators have been and will continue to be models of trust and collective care — and we've never needed that leadership more than we do now. ■



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