

AASA JOURNAL OF SCHOLARSHIP & PRACTICE



Research and Evidence-Based Practice Advancing the Profession of Education Administration

Fall 2022, Volume 19 No. 3

Table of Contents

Board of Editors	2
Sponsorship and Appreciation	3
Editorial	
Holding on to Local Control. <i>by Ken Mitchell, EdD</i>	4
Research Article	
System-level Leaders' Local Control of Teacher Supervision and Evaluation Under Every Student Succeeds Act	10
<i>by Douglas Wieczorek, PhD; Israel Aguilar, PhD; Ian Mette, PhD</i>	
Evidence-Based Article	
A Framework for Cohesive School Improvement: Integrating School Improvement Plans, Evidence Use and Resources	32
<i>by Gul Nahar, PhD; Angela Urick, EdD; Stephanie M. Wescoup, MEd; Sung Jang, MEd; Casey J. Cascio, PhD; Shelly K. Unsicker-Durham, MEd</i>	
Research Article	
<i>Flipping the Script: Transformational Teamwork for Communicating Equity.</i>	52
<i>by Jacob D. Alonso, MEd; Tasmina K. Dhaliwal, PhD; Monica A. Santander, MPP; James Bridgeforth, MEd; Kate Kennedy, MEd; Taylor N. Allbright, PhD</i>	
Mission and Scope, Copyright, Privacy, Ethics, Upcoming Themes, Author Guidelines & Publication Timeline	63
AASA Resources and Events.	67

Editorial Review Board

AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice
2022-2023

Editor

Kenneth Mitchell, *Manhattanville College*

Associate Editor

Barbara Dean, *AASA, The School Superintendents Association*

Editorial Review Board

Jessica Anspach, *Montclair State University*

Brandon Beck, *Ossining Public Schools*

Gina Cinotti, *Netcong Public Schools, New Jersey*

Michael Cohen, *Denver Public Schools*

Betty Cox, *University of Tennessee, Martin*

Vance Dalzin, *Carthage College, Kenosha, WI*

Mary Lynne Derrington, *University of Tennessee*

Ryan Fisk, *East Rockaway Public Schools, NY*

Denver J. Fowler, *Southern Connecticut State University*

Daniel Gutmore, *Seton Hall University*

Gregory Hauser, *Roosevelt University, Chicago*

Steve Hernon, *St. John's University*

Zach Kelehear, *Augusta University, GA*

Kevin Majewski, *Seton Hall University*

Joanne Marien, *Manhattanville College*

Nelson Maylone, *Eastern Michigan University*

Robert S. McCord, *University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Emeritus*

Barbara McKeon, *Broome Street Academy Charter High School, New York, NY*

Margaret "Terry" Orr, *Fordham University*

Brian Osborne, *Lehigh University*

David J. Parks, *Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University*

Joseph Phillips, *Manhattanville College*

Joseph Ricca, *White Plains City School District*

Thomas C. Valesky, *Florida Gulf Coast University, Emeritus*

Charles Wheaton, *Leadership Services, Granger, WA*

Available at www.aasa.org/jsp.aspx

ISSN 1931-6569

Sponsorship and Appreciation

The *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* would like to thank AASA, The School Superintendents Association, and in particular AASA's Leadership Development, for its ongoing sponsorship of the *Journal*.

We also offer special thanks to Kenneth Mitchell, Manhattanville College, for his efforts in selecting the articles that comprise this professional education journal and lending sound editorial comments to each volume.

The unique relationship between research and practice is appreciated, recognizing the mutual benefit to those educators who conduct the research and seek out evidence-based practice and those educators whose responsibility it is to carry out the mission of school districts in the education of children.

Without the support of AASA and Kenneth Mitchell, the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* would not be possible.



Published by
AASA, The School Superintendents Association
1615 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Holding on to Local Control

Ken Mitchell, EdD
Editor
AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice
Fall 2022

Efforts to wrest oversight of public education to control what is taught and by whom has been an ongoing theme in the history of American education.

However, the 1980's marked a time when the shifts away from local control were transformative. Since the Reagan administration's, *A Nation at Risk*, an anecdotal diatribe, lacking evidence, but loaded with rhetoric that declared public schools were failing and "awash in a tide of mediocrity," there has been an incremental march by special interests to bring market-based reforms, such as choice and competition, to public education.

Mullen (2022) frames this shift as "Public Education, Inc." which is "... the neoliberal takeover of public education and marketing of schooling as a commodity from which profiteers and some entrepreneurs benefit economically and political" (p. 2). According to the Education Data Initiative (2022) almost \$800 billion dollars are spent on educating America's 50 million public school students every year. The federal government provides about 8% of these dollars, most of which subsidize high-poverty schools and a portion of special education costs.

The greatest investment in public schools comes from state and community taxes. Yet, since *A Nation at Risk*, decisions about schooling have been influenced by the federal government's quest for accountability. Leveraging funding to coerce state education authorities to revise their regulations and laws that affect all schools within their jurisdiction, the U.S. Department of Education has devised policies, such as *No Child Left Behind*, *Race to the Top*, and *Every Student Succeeds Act*, that have required local school leaders to adapt their programming, curriculum, and instruction, often in ways that are counterproductive to their locally determined missions.

Neo-liberal Efficiency

While business interests seek profitable opportunities from school funding, there are policymakers wanting "efficiencies" in how tax-funded education dollars are spent. In his 1955 classic paper—arguably the clarion call to free market schools—economist Milton Friedman called for the denationalization of "government schools" to widen choice and enhance efficiencies by providing parents with vouchers to shop for schools. Such vouchers would allow for a minimal level of education. Anything beyond that would be up to parents. According to Friedman and his acolytes,

market forces drive down education costs. Without the public monopoly of taxpayer-funded schools, unions would be weakened, lowering labor costs.

For over forty years, the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), a national policy network founded by the Heritage Foundation, has provided local policy actors with legislative templates for bills that reflect neo-liberal and conservative agendas, such as influencing school policies at state and local levels. According to Anderson & Donchik (2016):

While ALEC's espoused mission statement is clear about its grounding in free markets, limited government, federalism, and individual liberty, a wholistic coding of the model bills of the Education Task Force found that bills tended to cluster around three main themes: (a) the privatization of public assets, or, in other words, the transfer of state taxpayer dollars from public schools to private non-profit or for-profit education corporations; (b) opposition to teachers' unions, tenure, and certification; and (c) the transfer of new managerialist principles to the public sector. (p. 333)

Weiner (2005) described neoliberalism as a lens that "represents a 'nonsystemic' system; that is, an ideological system of language, thought, and behavior that detests and wants to destroy collective structures which may impede the pure market." (p.16)

The public school system, deemed a monopoly by Friedman (1955), represents such a collective structure. It also remains one of the last local places where citizens of a community come together for the good of the commons. Citizens vote annually on their school budgets and elect board trustees. Citizens participate in the selection of a superintendent. Parents, family, and friends of all political views congregate to attend academic ceremonies, concerts, plays, and athletic events. Citizens typically get a voice in the development of the district's mission and vision statements that reflect the values of most stakeholders. Collective structures can unite for the good.

Emerging Agendas

In many places in 2022, this is beginning to change. Mullen (2022) warns of an outside to inside shift: "... public education leadership and policy are being rewired from the outside-in by external interest groups. Consider the Broad Foundation, Uncommon Schools, Success Academy, Teach for America—all corporately organized controlling giants (p.5)."

Over the past few years, communities have witnessed an infiltration of national politics into local communities, primarily through school districts. The pandemic brought out parents opposed to or supportive of vaccines or mask mandates. Superintendents and school boards were pressured to open schools or provide assurances that students and staff in attendance were not infectious. Politically stoked arguments about balancing health and safety measures against the effects on the economy fractured local communities.

America's culture wars spilled into schools and school board meetings, which became local battlegrounds for America's ever-increasing political divide. By January of 2022, thirty-five state legislatures introduced 137 bills restricting local policies related to teaching or professional development about diversity, equity, and inclusion. The laws reflected opposition to policies designed

to support LGBTQ students and their families. The teaching of such topics as race or the injustices within American history that are deemed to make students uncomfortable became offenses that carry financial penalties or dismissal.

Recent school board elections have been marred by national political agendas. In Florida, Governor Ron DeSantis promoted candidates who supported his administration's legislation such as the *Stop WOKE (Wrongs to Our Kids and Employees) Act* and *A Parents Rights in Education ("Don't Say Gay" Law)*. The bills, presented in the guise of providing choice and protection, face legal challenges for their potential threat to First Amendment protections. They also mislead and divide.

Threats to Democracy

Henig (2013) warned of a "potential danger to democratic control when programs and agencies are captured by the small but highly attentive and mobilized interests that are their intended targets" (p. 19). This is evident with recent efforts to use the current political moment to seize public schools to reshape the American narrative to whitewash its historical transgressions. Those accusing school leaders and teachers of indoctrinating students seek control by using such tactics as banning books from classrooms and libraries, limiting critical discussion, and excluding topics about documented historical events that reflect how rhetoric about American liberty and justice has often failed to become reality.

Orwell's *1984* was set in a world in which the most powerful manipulated language and reconstructed the past to control the thinking of the people to justify actions and gain loyalty. Those opposed, such as Orwell's protagonist, Winston Smith, would be destroyed. Philosopher Hannah Arendt (1951) warned that the lies of the authoritarian were designed to confuse. She wrote that "... the ideal subject (for a dictator) were people for whom the distinction between fact and fiction ... and the distinction between true and false ... no longer exist." (p.474)

When today's leaders limit critical discussion, ban books, and cleanse history lessons to avoid any appearance of an imperfect American society with sometimes corrupt leaders, *they* become the indoctrinators. *They* create Arendt's confusion and weaken our democracy by failing to ensure our schools graduate citizens who are critical thinkers.

Local Leadership—Ideas for Reclaiming Control

There have always been battles for control of local politics, including school boards. However, the intentions to seize control of local boards with the financial and structural support of national political organizations with ideological agendas presents a danger to democracy. School board members become de facto surrogates for "outside" influencers.

"Governance of local school districts by citizen boards is a basic tenet of American democracy. Given the increasing presence of conflict and the corresponding stress and tension in the public school system around the country, there has never been a time when highly effective governance is more needed" (Campbell & Fullan, p.13). As school boards become politicized, what are superintendents and other school leaders to do? How can they maintain their focus on the local needs of their students while facing opposition?

The researchers in the Fall 2022 issue of the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* examine different issues related to local control. While they offer no solutions to the greater conflict facing Americans at this time, their research and suggestions provide ideas to work through or around obstacles that prevent engagement with a broader community for what is needed for students.

A study by Wiecezorek, et al. (2022) examines the tensions between the “outside” policies imposed upon systems that have local priorities:

The emphasis on the standardization and accountability of TSES processes present significant challenges to systems—level leaders at the district level, who have obligations to cultivate collaborative, responsive, and contextually relevant practices with the stakeholders in their respective communities. In a country which is increasingly diverse, and where local communities comprised of students, families, and teachers require personalized supports, ESSA represents paradoxical problem for systems leadership practice. In response, systems leaders will need to collaboratively reaffirm shared community commitments and take actions to retain local control of teacher development and instructional priorities. (p. 25)

The authors’ research suggests that professional development for teachers and leaders relies on state and not local needs and priorities. They describe an “infiltration and influence of the educational improvement industry and profit driven economy” that has influenced state-mandated policy.

The researchers warn of “an overreliance on tools that are unreliable methods to gauge teacher performance, compounded by evaluations based on student data, which may be interpreted against external frameworks or state assessments that are misaligned and being misapplied” (p. 25). They describe a situation in which best research-based practices are ignored as “policymakers continue to reduce instruction to a series of standardized lists of classroom cues or teacher behaviors” (p.25). They call for local leaders to design “peer-reliant” and collaborative procedures to buffer and supplement externally imposed teaching frameworks to make them relevant for local needs.

Researchers Nahar, et al. (2022) explore a disconnect between policy and the need for resources to address local needs, especially for the most vulnerable of populations:

Educational leadership is left to bridge the disconnect between policies, which may distract from instructional time and needs of teachers, to develop and maintain a focus on goals for improved student learning (Bryk, 2015; Finnigan et al., 2013; Robinson et al., 2008). Further, resources are often disconnected from these goals and reforms leaving schools with continued disparities for the most vulnerable student populations (i.e., Condrón & Roscigno, 2003). Because of this high pressure in a changing context, school and district leaders must continually integrate and assess interventions, and resources attached to these interventions, to make progress toward more equitable access to learning (see Urick et al., 2018). The current terrain of educational reform necessitates that educators must learn to learn. (p. 33)

The authors describe the importance of stakeholder collaboration and how it must be incorporated into the daily values and actions of the educators: “Many school educators struggle to

reconcile the onslaught of mandatory and competing top-down policies.” They argue that capacity building through partnership should be localized and more authentic, using data that are timely and formative. Unified and collaborative planning are keys to the successful management of finite resources to improve schools.

One of the challenges for today’s leaders is addressing equity-focused missions, especially in states where legislation restricts what can be taught or even discussed about diversity, equity, and inclusionary practice. Authors Alonso, et al. (2022) propose a creative approach that examines how, if at all and in what forms, do existing district internal documents and public-facing statements match their district’s vision for students, especially in how it is “equity-focused.”

Their findings from a two-year study of high school websites found potentially problematic assumptions about students and their families. The websites used deficit-based language to refer to racially minoritized students and families that did not acknowledge them as valuable resources for the school community.

Calling this approach, *Flipping the Script*, the researchers suggest that when school leaders and their teams find the discrepancies between rhetoric about stated values and what can be found in organizational communications, they can not only improve representation in and engagement with school district websites but can begin addressing deep-rooted inequities revealed in those documents.

“All Politics is Local”

Former Speaker of the House, Tip O’Neil, of Massachusetts, famously quipped, “All politics is local.” For the past forty years, what is happening at the local school level is indeed political, yet less informed by needs and wants of the local community and more informed by the outside influencers with broader agendas that are attached to national politics.

Reasserting local control amid today’s politically divisive environment can be risky business. But it is at the local level where a community has collaboratively developed a vision about what they want for their graduates.

It is at the local level where a community has developed a mission about how they will attempt to achieve this vision. And even in communities where there are “red and blue” divisions and resentments, what we want for our children is something around which we can all find agreement. Dewey (1907) said it best: “What the best and the wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all children. Anything less is unlovely, and left unchecked, destroys our democracy” (p.19).

It is in this spirit that school leaders can take back local control and resist the interlopers who seek control for purposes of profit and politics.

References

- Alonso, J., Dhaliwal, T., Santander, M., Bridgeforth, J., Kennedy, K., & Allbright, T (2022). Flipping the script: Transformational teamwork for communicating equity. *AASA Journal of Scholarship & Practice*, 19(3).
- Anderson, G. & Donchik, L. (2016). Privatizing schooling and policy making: The American Legislative Exchange Council and the new political and discursive strategies of education governance. *Educational Policy*, 30(2), 322-364.
- Arendt, H. (1951). *Origins of totalitarianism*. (Vol. 244). Houghton, Mifflin, & Harcourt.
- Campbell, D. & Fullan, M. (2019). *The governance core: School boards, superintendents, and schools working together*. Corwin Press.
- Dewey, J. (1907). *The school and society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Friedman, M. (1955). *The role of government in education*. White paper.
- Hanson, M. (2022, June 15). *U.S. public education spending statistics*. Education Data Initiative. <https://educationdata.org/public-education-spending-statistics>
- Henig, J. (2013). *The end of exceptionalism in American education: The changing politics of school reform* (Harvard Education Press: Cambridge, MA.)
- Mullen, C.A. (2022). Corporate networks' grip. In Tienken, C. H., & Mullen, C. A. (Eds.). *The risky business of education policy*. (pp. 1-22). New York: Routledge.
- Nahar, G., Urick, A., Wescoup, S., Jang, C.S., Cascio, C., & Unsicker-Durham, S. (2022) A framework for cohesive school improvement: Integrating school improvement plans, evidence use and resources. *AASA Journal of Scholarship & Practice*, 19(3).
- Weiner, E.J. (2005) *Private learning, public needs: The neoliberal assault on democratic education*. Peter Lang.
- Wieczorek, D., Aguilar, I., & Mette, I. (2022). Systems leaders' local control of teacher supervision and evaluation under Every Student Succeeds Act. *AASA Journal of Scholarship & Practice*, 19(3).

System-level Leaders' Local Control of Teacher Supervision and Evaluation Under Every Student Succeeds Act

Douglas Wieczorek, PhD
Associate Professor
Iowa State University
School of Education
Ames, IA

Israel Aguilar, PhD
Assistant Professor
University of Texas, Rio Grande Valley
Department of Organization and School Leadership

Ian Mette, PhD
Associate Professor
Educational Leadership
College of Education and Human Development
University of Maine
Orono, ME

Abstract

This article investigates school system leaders' influence and control over local teacher supervision and evaluation systems (TSES) guided by the United States' (U.S.) Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Using qualitative, textual document analysis methods, we analyzed 50 states' ESSA policies to determine the extent to which local education agencies have flexible TSES authority granted by state and federal guidelines. The study findings indicate that a majority of U.S. state-level policies mandate standardized TSES tools and processes at the local district level. In order to optimally meet students' and teachers' needs, we recommend that systems-level leaders prioritize community driven visions for teachers' professional growth and student learning while maintaining appropriate responsiveness to state and federal educational policy requirements.

Key Words

district leadership, teacher supervision, teacher evaluation, educational policy, instructional leadership, local control

The United States' (U.S.) *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA, 2015, Title II, Part A, sec. 2002., 129 STAT. 1920) codifies federal guidance and support for states to develop respective state-level principal development and teacher supervision and evaluation systems (TSES). The latest ESSA policy provides individual states with the flexible authority to determine unique state and local-district level TSES processes to improve teachers' instruction, professional development, and student learning outcomes.

Despite this shift towards increased federal policy flexibility, little scholarly or practitioner research has analyzed the extent that states' ESSA policy language and legal codes provides local school districts with the influence, agency, and control over TSES in their school communities and respective buildings (Edgerton, 2019; Gagnon, Hall, & Marion, 2017; Kim & Sun, 2021). Furthermore, researchers have not analyzed how states developed TSES policies in response to federal ESSA guidelines to determine the potential impacts on local school district systems leaders' practices such as superintendents and directors.

The purpose of this study is to analyze how all 50 U.S. states developed their TSES in response to ESSA guidelines to determine district leaders' influence and control over TSES processes. This study answers two research questions: 1) During ESSA implementation, what state-level TSES policy requirements and procedures govern local school districts' TSES development and implementation; and 2) What are the implications of these state-level TSES requirements and procedures for systems-level leadership practices at the local district level?

This paper is significant to systems-level leadership scholarship and practice for two reasons; first, our study findings provide systems-level leaders with research-based evidence and examples of how state- and federal-level ESSA policies have continued to leverage bureaucratic control over local districts' TSES autonomy. Second, we discuss and propose leadership actions that systems-level leaders can take to diffuse the effects of these policies on leadership practices in local contexts and recapture local community agency and control in the TSES process.

Analytical Framework

In this article, we argue that the role of district leaders' instructional supervision and evaluation leadership, especially during periodical federal and state policy transitions, is an understudied area that impacts teachers', teacher leaders', and principals' effectiveness to supervise and evaluate instruction aimed to increase student learning. Our analysis indicates that in the majority of U.S. states under ESSA, states continued to leverage significant levels of administrative and procedural control over district-level TSES processes, with evidence of continued state-level policy conflation of supervision and evaluative structures and processes.

The study's findings provide evidence of how ESSA has rhetorically provided a measure of state and local flexibility, but ultimately, the federal and state-level policy responses continue to prevent a significant level of local district authority and control over teacher development, growth, and evaluation of effectiveness. Based on our evidence, local school systems leaders may need to develop strategies to advocate for locally relevant visions and processes for professional growth

and instructional performance, respectively that reflects local community priorities and strategic goals.

Teacher supervision and evaluation practices

As a central focus of this study, research on teacher supervision and evaluation has established these separate, yet closely related leadership processes as essential to students' learning and experiences by supporting teacher development, growth, and professional performance, respectively (McIntyre & McIntyre, 2020; Tuytens, Devos, & Vanblaere, 2020).

However, there are complex, overlapping, and sometimes conflicting interactions between these two conceptual areas of research and practice, which have been documented by scholars and leaders in practice (McGhee, 2020). Researchers have long advocated for clearly defined supervision roles and procedures that provide teachers with supportive coaching and opportunities to improve practice in safe professional spaces, utilizing peers, colleagues, and principals to provide constructive feedback (Author Three, 2017).

However, there is also an organizational need to evaluate and assess teachers' performance on regular cycles, for the purposes of contract renewal, termination, and as part of a regular performance assessment or clinical observation schedule, which can support but also be contrary to the purpose and spirit of supervision processes (Hazi, 2018). In this study, we have drawn from each conceptual area of supervision and evaluation practices to determine how states have outlined the processes and priorities for teacher growth and performance across contexts. From this analysis we determine potential implications for systems level

leaders' practices to engage with teachers and leaders in TSES in effective and collaborative ways.

ESSA era teacher supervision and evaluation policy

The hierarchical nature of the U.S. educational policy and funding system exhibits intersecting spheres of influence and control at the local community district, state, and federal levels (Debray-Pelot & McGuinn, 2009; Kirst, 1984; Koppich & Esch, 2012; Schneider & Saultz, 2020).

To varying degrees, TSES policy control in the U.S. has alternated between and overlapped among policymakers within the federal government, the individual states, and leaders in local districts, particularly as a result of federal policy iterations implemented through *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB, 2002), *Race to the Top* (RTTT, 2014), and *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA, US PL 114-95, 2015).

Recent research on TSES under ESSA has investigated the changing policy directions between the state and federal level, finding evidence of how states de-emphasized value-added models shifted to a greater focus on teacher development and growth (Close, Amrein-Beardsley, & Collins, 2020; Pauffler, King, & Zhu, 2020).

Research findings also demonstrate that TSES do not manifest as mutually exclusive components of district- and building-level school leadership practices that effectively support both teachers' professional development and document evaluation of teachers' effective practices (Ford & Hewitt, 2020; Lane, 2019). Although these recent policy level findings are important, local community district responses and effects have implications for systems-level leadership

regarding how leaders plan, develop, and implement TSES for teacher growth and development, and ultimately, increasing student learning and achievement.

Systems-level TSES leadership and impacts on stakeholders

During these successive U.S. federal policies from NCLB to ESSA, there is evidence of how systems-level educational leadership perceptions and responsibilities have increased pressures on teacher and leaders in response to changing standards, guidance, and codes at the local, state and federal level regarding teacher quality, effectiveness, supervision, and evaluation (Koppich & Esch, 2012; Pauffler, King, & Zhu, 2020).

This study of TSES policy models is framed by the hierarchical structure, control, and history of education policy pressures exerted at the federal, state, and local levels, specifically building on recent scholar-practitioner research that has documented how teachers and leaders continue to interpret, negotiate, and manage expectations for teacher effectiveness within and across states (Close, Amrein-Beardsley, & Collins, 2018, 2020; Edgerton, 2019; Ford & Hewitt, 2020; Kim & Sun, 2021; Lane, 2020; Pauffler, King, & Zhu, 2020). With respect to district leaders' TSES practices, this continues to be an understudied area of scholarship (Donaldson, Mavrogardato, Youngs, Dougherty, Al Ganem, 2021; Stosich, 2020), which provides opportunities for further examination.

Drawing on evidence from research and practice, we assert that local, systemic control of TSES processes is a more effective, efficient, and contextually relevant approach to support and monitor teachers' professional development and instructional performance. We advocate that scholars, practitioners, and policymakers continue to negotiate, develop,

and implement TSES that draw upon local systems leaders' expertise, resources, and directives to improve teacher performance and student outcomes.

Methods

We completed a qualitative document analysis (Bowen, 2009; Silverman, 2000) of 50 states' TSES policy documents and related ESSA compliance documents to investigate the level of control afforded to local districts over teachers' instructional supervision and evaluation practices. We purposefully selected and analyzed states' policy language, codes, structures, and processes to determine if states' ESSA policies potentially limited local systems leaders' capacity to develop and implement district driven TSES priorities and practices.

We produced a national-level comparative analysis, determining how states across the U.S. have structured TSES policies at the state- and local levels. This study is an adapted extension of an interim 30-state analysis previously completed by the authors and distinguishes from the previous study and related extant research by utilizing a full corpus of national data and applying a multi-level, policy-driven analytical perspective focused on the potential impacts of state policy on local school systems leaders' practices.

Data sources and collection

From February 2019 through May 2020, we collected and archived over 300 publicly available documents from state departments of education (DOE) and state legislature websites, which included legislative documents, state legal codes, DOE regulations, memos on TSES implementation, archived state-level presentations, state legislative technical reports, and white papers which analyzed, described, or outlined TSES policies.

In some cases, we also emailed or called state departments of education to clarify or to obtain information from websites that were not readily accessible due to inactive web links or lack of digital archiving and access. We retained these documents and records of our analysis in a shared digital cloud storage system.

Data analysis and interpretation

We restricted our investigation to analyze state-level policies, related legal documents, and technical reports specifically related to two administrative functions nested within our analytical framework of state- and local leadership and control of instructional improvement: 1) teacher supervision as a means of teachers' formative professional development, and 2) teacher evaluation as a summative assessment of teachers' performance. We utilized a four-step methodological data analysis process described as follows:

(1) Subjectivity and trustworthiness.

First, we articulated our collective subjectivity statement as scholars who care deeply about the intersection of leadership, policy, practice, and research. Thus, applying our beliefs and scholarly knowledge as means to improve school-based practices served as a working heuristic and a starting point of comparison, debate, and reflection. Moreover, we each believe that teachers and administrators are the primary drivers of school improvement and innovation at the local district and school levels. We are critical of reform efforts that enforce top-down mandates and specify the use of particular models, frameworks, and ratings systems as a way to determine local teacher effectiveness.

To mitigate our biases, we engaged in collaborative dialogue and peer-check protocols to ensure that we individually and

collectively applied consistent, evidence-based interpretations of policy language and document content. For the duration of the study, we met monthly to consult one another, peer check our methods processes, and complete our analysis. We met regularly to discuss and account for terminology and concepts embedded in policy rationales, and practices not aligned with discussions reflected across the scholarly literature. We considered how states and local districts articulated their respective policies and implementation plans, and we held ourselves accountable to a standard of achieving interpretive and analytical consensus during the analysis process.

(2) Data coding.

Next, we identified specific terminology and language about each state's TSES policies and feedback models, which we organized according to our two primary categories, supervision and evaluation, and these guiding concepts became the initial categories of qualitative codes. For example, for teacher supervision we identified and coded policy and practice terms, which were descriptive of legal code requirements, guidance, processes, purposes, or the materials of practice related to formative professional support in order to improve teachers' instruction.

We identified and included these terms in this category: *instructional supervision, teacher reflection, self-reflection, self-evaluation, coaching, professional development, portfolio development, peer-to-peer conferencing, teacher growth, teacher leadership, mentoring, and teacher improvement*. For teacher evaluation, we identified and coded policy and practice terms related to professional summative evaluation of teachers' instruction and judgment of their professional performance. We identified and included these terms in this category:

instructional evaluation, summative evaluation, teacher ratings, evaluation labels or categories, and applications of rubrics or ratings scales for the purposes of providing measured judgments of teachers' performance.

We identified, but initially withheld, the final categorization of terms and items that we identified as instructional frameworks and tools related to the practice of teachers' instruction. Examples of these items included various instructional frameworks provided by individual state education departments, state teacher unions, or third-party vendors such as Danielson, Marzano, or similar producers of instructional materials intended to guide teachers' instructional practices, assessment, and professional behaviors. This last group of items required an additional level of analytical coding and categorical scrutiny central to our framework, which we describe next.

(3) Data interpretation.

Third, aligned with our framework, at this stage we analyzed how state and local districts constructed TSES systems, what tools were appropriated for TSES purposes, and how the authority for TSES systems were allocated across these systems, respectively. To do this, we compared our respective analytical perceptions of the data, working to reconcile terms and practices that potentially intersected both supervision and evaluation categories.

We employed a cross-case check of each other's state- and local-level language analysis to ensure consistency and trustworthiness regarding how we individually interpreted the intersecting data. We realized TSES models were not only being used at the state and local level to guide instructional and assessment priorities, but were also included as part of the supervision and professional development process. In addition, some states adopted instructional frameworks as performance

scoring rubrics that determined teachers' evaluation of their effectiveness. We identified and included these terms in this category: *instructional frameworks or models (varied titled models), student outcomes, student learning objectives, student learning goals, instructional standards, learning standards, and performance standards.*

Ultimately, we identified and categorized these intersecting terms according to their unique purposes, differentiated interpretation, and application at the state- and local levels. This level of analysis provides a nuanced analysis of the data within and across states, representing the potential conflation or overlapping of supervision and evaluation terms and practices.

(4) Data trend analysis and display of findings.

Finally, we organized the data into comparative data tables to analyze and quantify state- and local control TSES dynamics and trends across the whole 50 state data set. We organized and cross-referenced our final categories of TSES policy development and implementation at the state- and local-levels: (1) requirements placed on TSES models, (2) requirements on TSES models based on student outcomes, (3) requirements of TSES models on student outcomes and teacher ratings, (4) embedded TSES development and student growth, (5) use of formative feedback in summative evaluation and TSES development, and (6) use of self-reflection in TSES model.

We then transferred the tabular data and codes to create six corresponding graphical map displays, shown and discussed in the findings section as Figures 1-6. These graphical displays provide theoretically grounded representations of six major patterns that we identified within and across the states

as a national sample of TSES policy development and implementation at the state- and local-levels.

Findings

Drawing on our 50-state analysis, we describe how state-level TSES plans are governing local districts' development and implementation of TSES frameworks. We organized our descriptive analysis and findings into six subsections, aligned with Figures 1-6: 1) Application of required external frameworks in TSES model development, 2) Student outcome requirements on TSES models, 3) Requirements for student outcome measures included in teacher ratings, 4) Requirements of student growth included in TSES development, 5) TSES models' formative feedback required with summative evaluation, and 6) Use of teachers' self-reflection required as an evaluative data point in TSES models.

Our analysis shows how TSES continue to be heavily regulated by federal- and state-level policy makers, constraining the control and authority of local systems leaders to develop and implement TSES that are grounded in the power of their respective communities.

Application of required external frameworks in TSES model development

Our first set of findings indicate that a majority of U.S. states governments have designed policies that preference the use of externally developed instructional frameworks to guide local TSES development. As shown in Figure 1, our analysis demonstrates the limited capacity for local districts' control of TSES models, with just 26% (13 states) allowing LEAs to select their own TSES model using an established state framework. This leaves a significant majority of states (74%) requiring specific TSES model development, with 52% of these requiring the use of predominantly

Danielson or Marzano models (26 states), and 22% requiring implementation of other identified state-level model (11 states). The local effects of external mandates have resulted in districts and states selection and reliance on external tools and instructional models designed to standardize instructional supervision and evaluation processes.

This finding suggests the challenges that systems-level leaders to try to balance, or merge, external influences and requirements meant to improve instruction with locally developed priorities and pedagogical innovations.

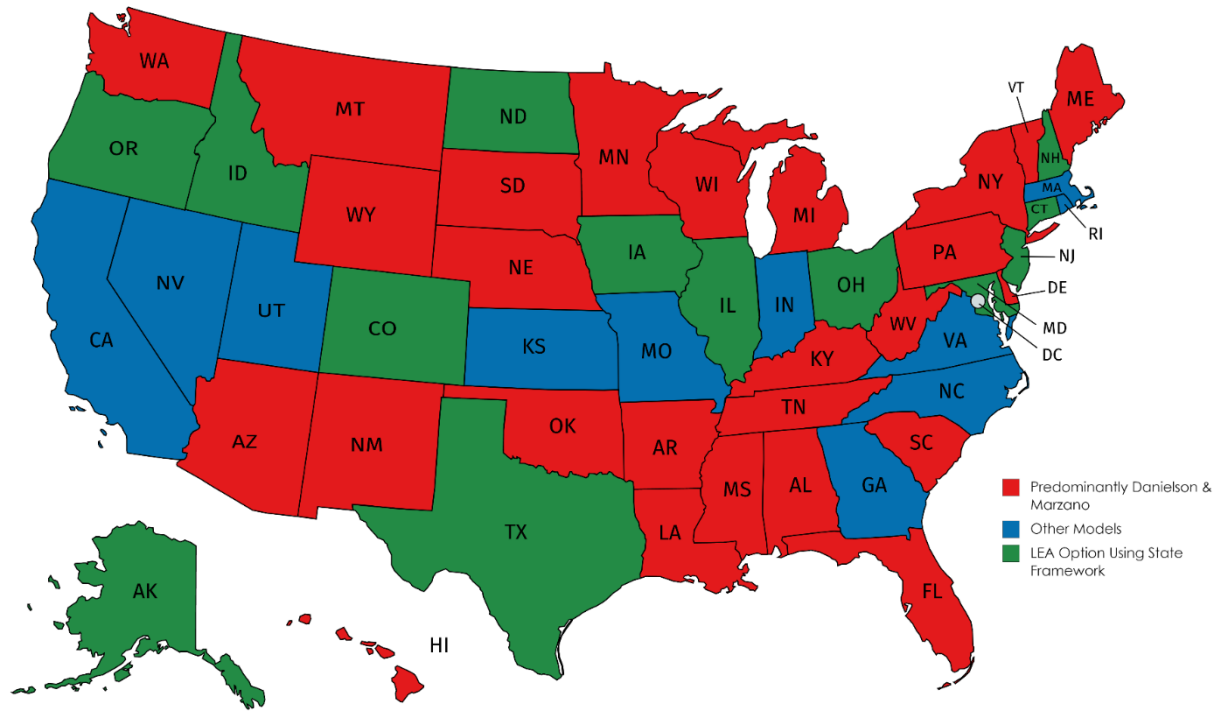
We acknowledge that within school districts that teachers are likely empowered to apply the external frameworks in different ways, and to select and emphasize various elements of the frameworks to improve instruction and student outcomes aligned with local TSES initiatives. However, the limitation of LEAs to select their own TSES model highlights how much control has been lost to state policy requirements, particularly over the course of NCLB and ESSA implementation.

This policy-driven model places school systems in the position of focusing most on adapting and adhering to external mandates, and working to ensure that external mandates are supporting, and not constraining local system initiatives.

This approach also assumes that one-size-fits-all models presume to identify and address teachers' instructional and students' learning needs at the local level. This potentially stifles local instructional, assessment, and professional development innovations guided by meaningful TSES systems that are mutually developed and implemented in collaboration by local administration, teacher leaders, and teachers.

Figure 1

Application of Required External Frameworks in TSES Model Development



Student outcome requirements on TSES models

Integrated over time as part of NCLB and ESSA policies, states have continued to require student outcome evidence as part of local schools and teachers' progress. In our second set of findings, we separated out student outcomes from student outcome measures (in Figure 4) because states provide different definitions and applications of the term *student outcomes*. Based on the data, we also separated out local implementation of assessment tools to inform instruction and professional development, versus varied types of quantifiable outcome measures on standardized tests intended to determine

district, school, or teacher effectiveness over time. Local school systems' control to establish how and in what ways TSES models account for student-based outcomes are largely determined by state-level policies.

Figure 2 shows that roughly $\frac{1}{4}$ of all states (26%) remain neutral on placing requirements on TSES models to include student outcomes in the evaluation of teachers (13 states). Just 14% of states suggest, but do not require, the use of student outcomes (seven states), while 60% require the use of student outcomes in their TSES models (30 states). The smallest minority of the states that neither have requirements on TSES model

Requirements for student outcome measures included in teacher ratings

Given the national split regarding the requirements of student outcomes in TSES models, we extended our analysis to determine student outcome designations and how the states used this outcome measures data. In our third set of findings, we found that among the states that required student outcome measures, the states applied these measures in part to determine local teachers' performance ratings.

Figure 3 shows the requirements placed on TSES models as well as the respective percentages applied to teacher ratings, with 10% (five states) applying 50% or more of student outcome measures to teacher ratings, 18% (nine states) applying 35% – 49% of student outcome measures to teacher ratings, and 12% (six states) applying 20% – 34% of student outcomes to teacher ratings. One other state (Indiana) requires 25% – 50% of student outcomes be tied to teacher ratings.

This leaves almost 60% (29 states) where the states the permit flexibility to local districts to determine how student outcomes are tied to teacher ratings. From among these 29 states, 10 states require student outcomes be tied to teacher ratings but do not define the amount for LEAs (20% of all states), while 19 states suggest or remain neutral (but do not require) student outcomes be tied to teacher ratings (38% of all states).

This finding indicates that systems level leaders have some flexibility in approximately half the country to determine

how to apply student outcomes data to their respective district level TSES systems. However, a significant number of systems leaders need to develop local systems that account for broadly disseminated and administered state-level assessment data.

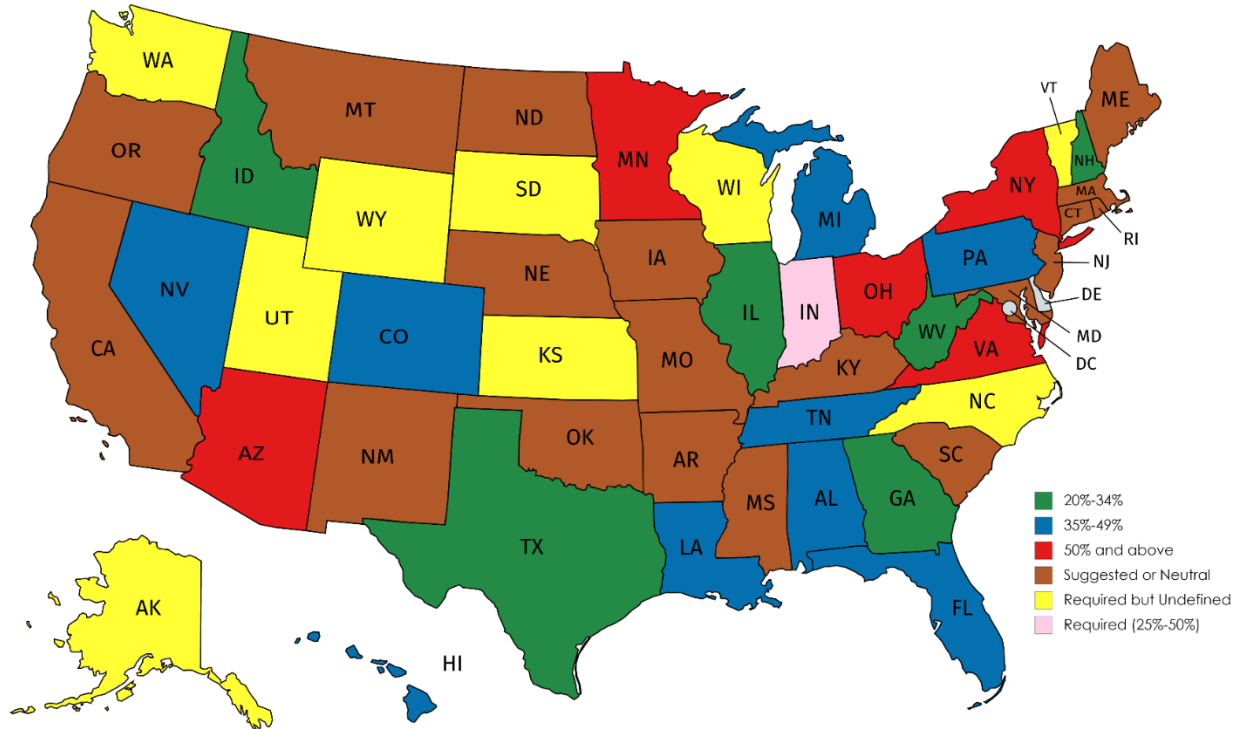
The evidence indicates that a majority of states' TSES assessment or growth model policies throughout the U.S., not local education agencies, determine how teachers and instructional leaders are assessed, impacting the professional support structures that can be put in place for educators at the local level. In previous iterations of contemporary federal level policy under NCLB and Race to the Top (RTTT), policymakers applied student learning in distinctive ways.

For example, under NCLB student outcomes were included as measurable student test scores in at least English Language Arts and Mathematics, and measurable ratings of performance were applied at the district and school level. During RTTT, states were required to connect student learning outcomes, in part, as a measured test score or as a standard of learning progress artifact, as part of an individual teacher's performance evaluation.

The persistent remnants of these NCLB and RTTT policy levers applied under ESSA indicate that when given flexibility, states differ regarding how student outcomes connect with and are material evidence of teacher growth or professional performance.

Figure 3

Requirements for Student Outcome Measures Included in Teacher Ratings



Requirements of student growth included in TSES development

Further developing our analysis of states' application of student outcome data, we discovered that states have continued to develop the use of student growth measures and models to determine local school effectiveness over time.

Figure 4 shows that 88% of all states have some sort of state requirements to show student growth and embed this in TSES model development. Of these, 28% (14 states) require the use of student learning objectives, 12% (6 states) require student growth models, such as value-added models or other state approved models, and 14% (7 states) require some sort

of student growth as measured through scores, percentiles, or other measures. Additionally, 34% (17 states) of all states do allow for student growth to be determined at the local level or through a combination of measures, while only 12% (6 states) of all states do not define any student growth requirement in their TSES models.

This finding suggests that systems-level leaders need to develop longitudinal assessment plans matched with developing multi-year instructional improvement plans, elevating the importance of strategic planning and collaborative visioning. The evidence points to a majority of states which have retained the top-down model of state-level

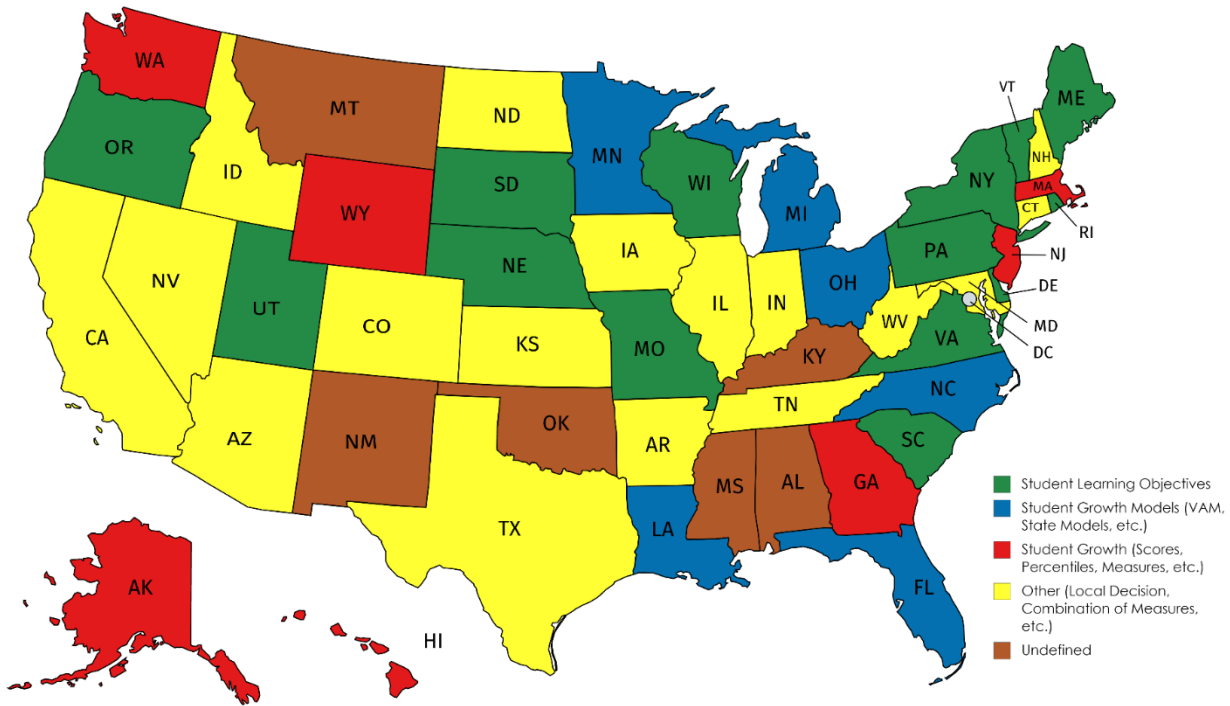
control to determine TSES model implementation during ESSA. States have continued to apply student outcomes broadly as a tool for instructional decision making, as means to determine elements of teachers' performance effectiveness, and as a tool to help determine district or school performance and student learning growth over time.

The ESSA era has not dissuaded a majority of state level policymakers to design and implement teacher effectiveness

requirements that include student measures, and within this group of states, few states designate LEA's with the decision-making authority to determine contextualized applications of state codes. The evidence demonstrates that a persistent cultural shift has occurred post-NCLB and RTTT, and states have adopted a heavily bureaucratic, top-down stance towards evaluating teachers in terms of standardized, measurable assessment outcomes and methods to determine student learning and growth over time.

Figure 4

Requirements of Student Growth Included in TSES Development



TSES Models' formative feedback required with summative evaluation

Focusing on the particular language of state-level TSES models aimed to support teacher growth and development, the final level of our analysis revealed that a significant majority of states codify the professional feedback processes as part of their respective TSES models. To determine how state TSES models structure the professional development of teachers and instructional leaders' practices, we analyzed the integration of formative feedback on teachers' instruction within TSES models.

Figure 5 displays that 82% (41 states) of all states embed formative feedback in their TSES models, which on the surface seems useful in the development of educators. However, the evidence revealed that this formative feedback is embedded in the summative evaluation of the TSES model, meaning that the ongoing formative feedback, which, by definition, is meant to be non-evaluative and help educators grow professionally, is actually used in the formal, summative evaluation of an educator. This means that just 18% (9 states) of state TSES models do not formally conflate the two respectively unique processes in state code.

This finding indicates that systems leaders in the majority of the country may need to establish and communicate purposeful structures and processes to separate the supervisory and evaluative processes that involve coaching, instructional feedback, and formative professional growth opportunities.

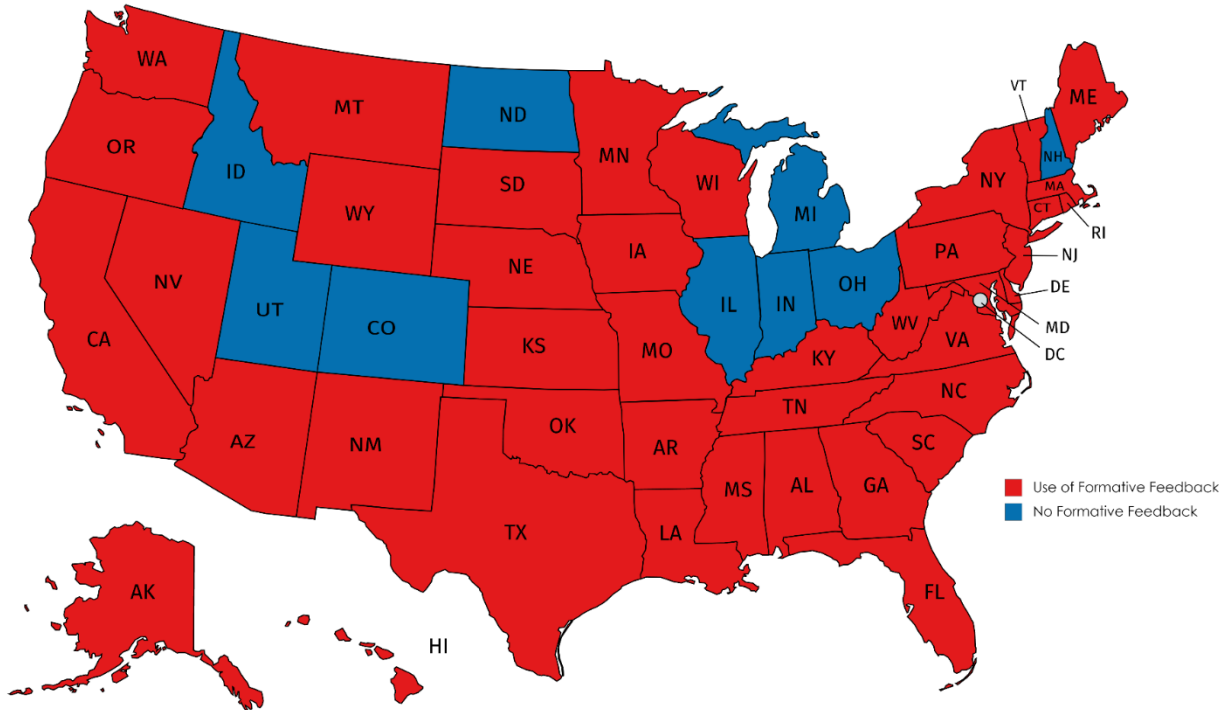
The conflation of supervision and evaluation potentially affects how teachers perceive and understand the dimensions of the supervision and evaluation process, impacting the nature of the administrative relationship which should be rooted in trust.

As we defined and described on our analytical framework, the formative functions of feedback provide teachers with elements of instructional coaching, peer feedback, professional learning, and support to enact ongoing pedagogical adjustments that teachers need to respond to students' needs. As an essential part of these processes, formative feedback requires a distinct separation from the aspects of TSES models that involve evaluative scoring, performance labels, and potentially coercive professional impacts which can impact a teacher's career.

Although we acknowledge that is difficult to separate the daily, temporal elements of an administrator's practice that can mentally integrate their observations from informal observations and formal evaluative observations, we question the merged codification of these processes at the state level. Teachers need professional space to engage in space professional conversations, which encourages risk-taking, the development of trust, and can spur innovation at the local level. Additionally, we found additional evidence of conflated formative professional growth processes regarding teachers' reflection embedded within TSES models, which we describe in the next part of our findings.

Figure 5

TSES Models' Formative Feedback Required with Summative Evaluation



Use of teachers' self-reflection required as data point in TSES models

We discovered that the formative, and intrinsic process of teachers' reflective practices were integrated into TSES models at the state level but were in some state contexts were conflated with evaluative functions.

Figure 6 shows 78% (39 states) of all TSES models require the use of self-reflection as an aspect of summative evaluation, even though self-reflection is an internal process that an evaluator cannot actively see or observe.

An evaluative-focused reflective process would require teacher-principal dialogue, paired with subjective, external

criteria to judge a teacher's reflective practices. This diverges from the intent of reflective practices, which encourages teacher reflection as a means to adjust instruction, innovate methods, and experiment to continuously refine their practices. As such, just 14% (7 states) use self-reflection solely for professional growth and/or professional development, 6% (three states) do not define the use of self-reflection in any way, and one state (Florida) varies the use of self-reflection based on LEA determination.

This finding can potentially impact on how district level leaders consider how to develop and implement structures and processes that support the development of teachers' and instructional leaders'

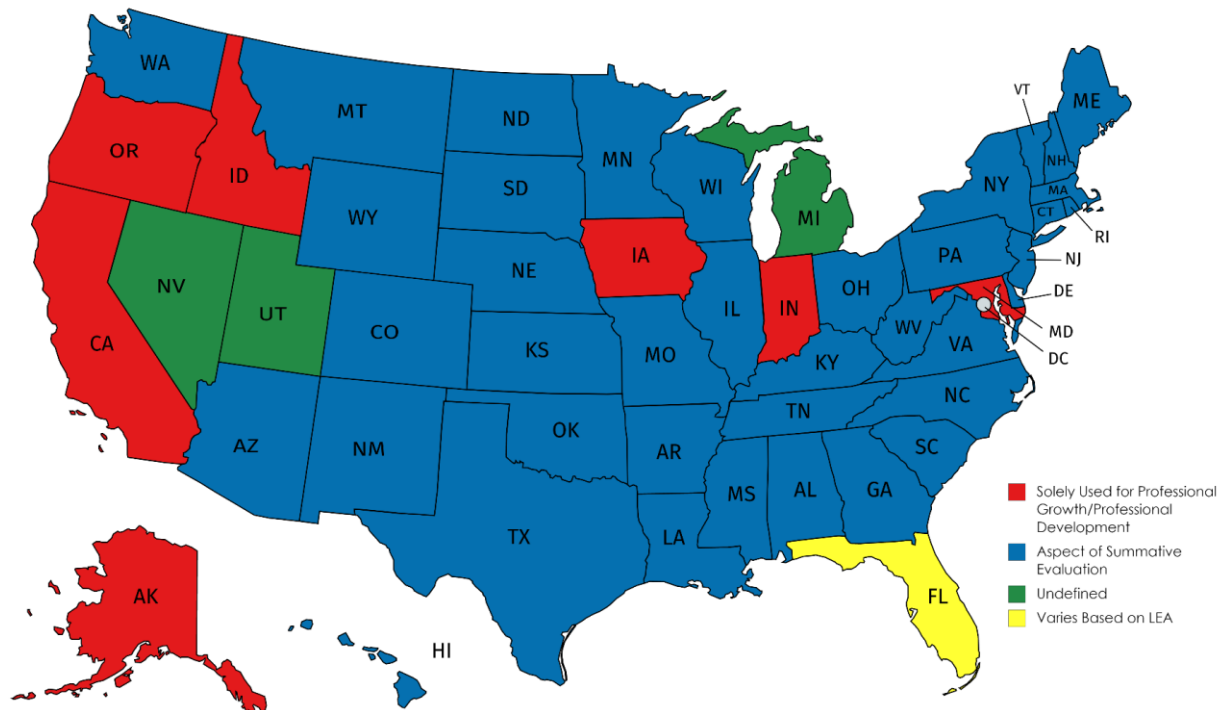
engagement and professional relationships within TSES systems. Although the process of reflection is often part of external instructional frameworks and models, the process has been overwritten by evaluative structures and policies that are using reflection in ways that are potentially counterproductive to teacher growth and development.

Given the diverse nature of the teacher workforce and positioning each professional as a lifelong learner with different styles, experiences, and identities, the codification of reflective processes or modalities limits the expressive nature of personal and professional reflection, and thereby limits its potential to

impact pedagogical development. Matched with formative feedback, the overlapping, evaluative emphasis which is codified in a significant number of state contexts potentially short-circuits the intended and research-based practices of reflection, coaching, and informal professional supports necessary to support teachers' growth and development during their careers. Systemically at the state and district levels, these conflated formative and summative processes can also impact the professional aspects of collaboration, trust, and safety necessary to develop positive professional cultures focused on instructional improvement and growth in student learning.

Figure 6

Use of Teachers' Self-Reflection Required as Evaluative Data Point in TSES Models



Discussion and Implications for Systems-level Leadership Practice

The purpose of this study was to investigate how 50 U.S. states have developed their respective TSES policies to provide local guidance to school district leaders and teachers. To review, we posed two research questions: 1) During ESSA implementation, what state-level TSES policy requirements govern local school districts' TSES development and implementation; and 2) What are the implications of these state-level TSES requirements for systems-level leadership practices at the district level?

In response to question one, our findings indicate that a majority of U.S. states have developed and implemented potentially prescriptive requirements that determine how local school districts support and evaluate leaders' and teachers' professional growth and performance. The evidence demonstrates that these policies rely on several elements that govern local district practices, namely external instructional frameworks, measures of student outcomes and growth over time, and mandated application of formative feedback and reflective practices that are simultaneously integrated into summative teacher evaluation processes.

These requirements potentially conflate instructional supervision practices that are intended to support teachers' growth and development and restrict local innovation and experimentation to improve student learning and experiences in schools. The findings also highlight the infiltration and influence of the educational improvement industry and profit driven economy that is potentially a factor in the development of standardized TSES policies at the state-level. Evaluation approaches drawn from products in the marketplace, such as applying score rubrics connected to

instructional frameworks, were never intended to become metrics for teacher performance and evaluation. This potentially creates a complex problem caused by an overreliance on tools that are unreliable methods to gauge teacher performance, compounded by evaluations based on student data, which may be interpreted against external frameworks or state assessments that are misaligned and being misapplied.

The evidence suggests that states and schools continue to grapple with how to provide adequate support for teachers and leaders at the local levels, relying on state-level mandates to structure leaders' and teachers' improvement efforts. In a significant majority of states, policymakers' default response has become a top-down accountability approach which indicates continued efforts to apply standardized methods to teachers' professional development, leaders' instructional supervision, and formalized teacher evaluation practices.

Despite the best research-based teaching and learning practices across the student grade-levels and content areas, policymakers continue to reduce instruction to a series of standardized list of classroom cues or teacher behaviors, neglecting the complexities of holistic pedagogy and student-centered instruction embedded within community contexts.

The emphasis on the standardization and accountability of TSES processes present significant challenges to systems-level leaders at the district-level, who have obligations to cultivate collaborative, responsive, and contextually relevant practices with the stakeholders in their respective communities. As a result of our findings, there are several

implications for systems-level leadership practice.

In response to research question two, we interpreted the evidence from our findings to discuss three main implications for systems-level leaders' practices: 1) prioritize localized visions for teaching and learning, 2) clarify teacher supervision and evaluation processes, and 3) provide instructional leaders with TSES professional development. Our goal is to provide practical suggestions to help leaders develop and implement locally responsive TSES systems within the ESSA policy era.

Systems leaders need to prioritize localized visions for teaching and learning

Citing evidence of policymakers' emphasis on top-down state-level TSES mandates, systems leaders will need to develop and implement contextually relevant visions for teaching and learning practices with teachers, building level principals, and community members.

Based on our analysis, a majority of state policymakers are requiring districts' use of externally developed teaching frameworks to determine local instructional and assessment practices. These external frameworks are designed to be generic, content-neutral, and vacant of contextual relevance. If systems-level leaders seek to prioritize community-oriented goals and employ pedagogical practices that are responsive to teachers' and students' needs, then leaders will have to enact proactive steps to integrate top-down mandates.

These steps will require a learner-centered approach to ensure teachers and leaders are working in unison and engaged in meaningful instructional supervision and evaluation processes. For example, teachers

and leaders will need to collaboratively create professional development that defines unique grade-level, content-area, and assessment applications that can be merged with external instructional frameworks. These applications necessitate the development of pedagogical language to bridge leader-teacher feedback conversations during the supervision and evaluation process, to build shared, site-level understandings of pedagogy, content, and assessment across unique, diverse classroom contexts.

As designed, these external frameworks are not intended to effectively meet students' learning goals, or teachers' professional growth needs, so systems leaders will need to develop these connective processes locally to provide meaning to local stakeholders.

Systems leaders need to clarify teacher supervision and evaluation processes

Citing evidence that indicates the conflated application of teachers' formative, reflective, and growth-oriented processes within TSES state-level evaluation policies, systems leaders will need to develop purposefully compartmentalized domains of supervision and evaluation processes to sustain professional growth cultures that protect and encourage professional safety, trust, and innovation.

We recommend a clearly articulated plan which outlines in what domains these respective processes are going to be applied, where a broadly defined, collaborative effort integrates the use of peer coaching, mentoring, teacher leadership, and non-evaluative personnel positions to delineate supervision from evaluative areas of practice.

These local TSES systems will need to address two main areas of overlapping

supervision and evaluation procedural tensions that emerged from our data analysis.

(1) Clarify purposes for assessment data in TSES models.

First, systems leaders will need to continue to develop local assessment practices and cultures that support ongoing student and teacher learning. Our study indicated two overlapping assessment processes conceptualized through ESSA policies. One process applies student outcomes data, which was described as locally developed assessment tools, district assessment monitoring, or integration of state assessment data systems, which is part of TSES models. Another process applies state-level longitudinal student growth data modeling through the administration of large-scale state assessments, district-wide assessment measures, or other assessment tools linked to respective state TSES models. Among both, TSES models include assessment data are applied to both supervision and evaluation processes at the local district level, and a majority have adopted these assessment purposes for teacher evaluation. Systems leaders will need to define specific purposes for assessment within respective supervision and evaluation practices, particularly given that assessment data can be used as formative monitoring of student learning coupled with teacher innovation to respond to students' needs on a daily basis. It is through these formative, experimental activities that teachers can demonstrate the most adaptive practices to expand their repertoire and document evidence of increased student learning.

(2) Engage in supervisory dialogue that supports teachers' reflection and formative growth. Second, systems leaders will need to consider how they support and facilitate teachers' reflective practices. In practice, the lines have always been temporally blurred between supervision and evaluation, and we acknowledge that on behalf of the administrator, it is difficult to mentally separate these situated moments of practice. However, state-level ESSA policies have taken this a step further and formally codified the feedback and reflective processes as related practices that span supervision and evaluation interchangeably. State-level ESSA policies have codified teachers' reflection within TSES models, integrating mandated evaluation of reflective practices via the application of external teaching frameworks. The process of feedback, reflection, and pedagogical dialogue was never intended to be a codified, evaluated practice, and requires teachers to engage with peers and administrators through relationships built on trust, transparency, vulnerability, and safety. Systems leaders can compartmentalize and protect the formative, supervisory functions of feedback and reflective practice by designing peer-reliant procedures that utilize dialogue and reflection with peer coaches, teacher leaders, colleague walk-throughs, and teacher mentoring at the grade, content, and team levels. These local practices can selectively buffer and supplement how external teaching frameworks are applied in relevant ways, addressing the local districts' needs and priorities through collaborative engagement

which necessitates the development of reflective pedagogical cultures and capacity building at the organizational level.

Systems need to provide instructional leaders with TSES support

Related to our previous suggestions, but important to state independently, systems leaders need to consider how to provide their building-level leaders, teacher leaders, instructional coaches, and teacher mentors with ongoing TSES professional development and support.

Engaging these individuals and instructional leadership teams in planning and implementation conversations about the purposes of supervision and evaluation and communicating their respective roles to teachers is critical to developing trust and positive cultures focused on innovation and risk-taking. While policy guidance can be helpful, it is a minimum marker for practice, and is limited by generalized tools, forms, and frameworks that may be disconnected from local vision, strategic goals, and community priorities.

Conclusion

Our analysis indicates that during the ESSA era, state-level policymakers have continued to develop and implement standardized methods

for teacher supervision and evaluation, raising the likelihood that local control of teacher development is a potentially outdated concept in educational governance practice.

State-level policymakers are increasingly becoming the main source of authority in the development and implementation of local TSES processes, even when provided with more federal options and flexibility to initiate greater levels of local district governance.

The emphasis on the standardization and accountability of TSES processes present significant challenges to systems-level leaders at the district-level, who have obligations to cultivate collaborative, responsive, and contextually relevant practices with the stakeholders in their respective communities.

In a country which is increasingly diverse, and where local communities comprised of students, families, and teachers require personalized supports, ESSA represents a paradoxical problem for systems leadership practice.

In response, systems leaders will need to collaboratively reaffirm shared community commitments and take actions to retain local control of teacher development and instructional priorities.

Author Biographies

Douglas Wieczorek is an associate professor at Iowa State University's Educational Leadership, Organizations, and Policy. A former K-12 and university administrator, he researches how principals and teachers interpret and respond to state and federal educational policy changes. E-mail: dwieczor@iastate.edu

Israel Aguilar is an assistant professor in the department of organization and school leadership at the University of Texas, Rio Grande Valley. He has experience as a former school administrator in Dallas, TX., and a teacher in Austin, TX., and in Brownsville, TX. He currently researches social justice issues in the context of K-12. E-mail: israel.aguilar@UTRGV.edu

Ian Mette is associate professor of educational leadership at the University of Maine. His research includes supervision and the democratization of schools. His book, *A New Leadership Guide for Democratizing Schools from the Inside Out*, is coauthored with Carl Glickman. E-mail: ian.mette@maine.edu

References

- Author Three. (2017).
- Bowen, G.A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27-40.
- Close, K., Amrein-Beardsley, A., & Collins, C. (2018). State-level assessments and teacher evaluation systems after the passage of the every student succeeds act: Some steps in the right direction. Boulder, CO: National Education policy Center.
- Close, K., Amrein-Beardsley, A., & Collins, C. (2020). Putting teacher evaluation systems on the map: An overview of state's teacher evaluation systems post-every student succeeds act. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 28(58), 1-31.
- Debray-Pelot, E., & McGuinn, P. (2009). The new politics of education: Analyzing the federal education policy landscape in the post-NCLB era. *Educational Policy*, 23(1), 15-42.
- Donaldson, M., Mavrogardato, M., Youngs, P., Dougherty, S., & Al Ganem, R. (2021). "Doing the real work": How superintendents' sensemaking shapes principal evaluation policies and practices in school districts. *AERA Open*, 7(1), 1-16.
- Edgerton, A.K. (2019). The essence of ESSA: More control at the district level? *Phi Delta Kappan*, 101(2), 14-17.
- Every Student Succeeds Act, 20 U.S.C. 6301 (2015).
- Ford, T.G., & Hewitt, K. (2020). Better integrating summative and formative goals in the design of next generation teacher evaluation systems. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 28(63), 1-34.
- Gagnon, D.J., Hall, E.L., & Marion, S. (2017). Teacher evaluation and local control in the US: An investigation into the degree of local control afforded to districts in defining evaluation procedures for teachers in non-tested subjects and grades. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy, & Practice*, 24(4), 489-505.
- Hazi, H. (2018). Coming to understand the wicked problem of teacher evaluation. In Zepeda, S.J. & Ponticell, J.A. (Eds.), *The Wiley Handbook of Educational Supervision* (pp. 183-207). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Kim, J., & Sun, M. (2021). The implementation and potential effects of teacher evaluation under local control. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 32(2), 279-305.
- Kirst, M.W. (1984). The changing balance in state and local power to control education. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 66(3), 189-191.

- Koppich, J.E., & Esch, C. (2012). Grabbing the brass ring: Who shapes teacher policy? *Educational Policy*, 26(1), 79-95.
- Lane, J.L. (2020). Maintaining the frame: Using frame analysis to explain teacher evaluation policy implementation. *American Educational Research Journal*, 57(1), 5-42.
- McGhee, M.W. (2020). The supervision-evaluation debate meets the theory-to-practice conundrum: Contemplations of a practitioner turned professor. *Journal of Educational Supervision*, 3(2), 1-5.
- McIntyre, D.J., & McIntyre, C. (2020). The evolution of clinical practice and supervision in the United States. *Journal of Educational Supervision*, 3(1), 5-17.
- No Child Left Behind of 2001, P.L. 107-110, 20 U.S.C. 6319. (2002).
- Pauffler, N.A., King, K.M., & Zhu, P. (2020). Promoting professional growth in new teacher evaluation systems: Practitioners' lived experiences in changing policy contexts. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 65, 1-9.
- Race to the Top Act of 2011. H.R. 1532- 112th Congress. (2014).
- Schneider, J., & Saultz, A. (2020). Authority and control: The tension at the heart of standards-based accountability. *Harvard Educational Review*, 90(3), 419-445.
- Silverman, D. (2000). Analyzing talk and text. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.), (pp. 821-834). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stosich, E.L. (2020). Central office leadership for instructional improvement: Developing collaborative leadership among principals and instructional leadership team members. *Teachers College Record*, 122(9), 1-42.
- Tuytens, M., Devos, G., & Vanblaere, B. (2020). An integral perspective on teacher evaluation: A review of empirical studies. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Accountability*, 32, 153-183.

A Framework for Cohesive School Improvement: Integrating School Improvement Plans, Evidence Use, and Resources

Gul Nahar, PhD
Post-Doctoral Research Associate
Center for Educational Development and Research
Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education
University of Oklahoma
Norman, OK

Angela Urick, EdD
Associate Professor
Department of Educational Leadership
School of Education
Baylor University
Waco, TX

Stephanie M. Wescoup, MEd
PhD Candidate
Counseling Psychology
New Mexico State University
Las Cruces, NM

Chang Sung Jang, MEd
PhD Candidate
Department of Educational Leadership
and Policy Studies
Jeanine Rainbolt College of Education
University of Oklahoma
Norman, OK

Casey J. Cascio, PhD
Research Analyst
Institutional Research and Planning
University of North Carolina, Wilmington
Wilmington, NC

Shelly K. Unsicker-Durham, MEd
Graduate Research Assistant
PhD Candidate
Instructional Leadership & Academic Curriculum
Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education
University of Oklahoma
Norman, OK

Abstract

Many school educators struggle to reconcile the onslaught of mandatory and competing, top-down policies. Educators must merge policies into a singular plan that reflects the local stakeholders' goals and values. Given the federal and state accountability movement, schools are forced to build capacity around the use of on-site data and research literature to study if interventions are improving outcomes. For capacity building and to implement reform, schools must have the appropriate resources and understand how to distribute them equitably. Therefore, available resources and their distribution must be tracked alongside the progress of interventions. The purpose of this evidence-based practice article is to integrate these discrete areas of research literature into a framework that educators can follow for cohesive school improvement.

Key Words

school reform, school finance, evidence use, data driven decision making, school improvement plans, education policy

Problem Statement

For several decades now, a myriad of complex reforms has descended upon U.S. school districts as an attempt to improve academic outcomes for all learners. While these attempts are well-intended (Bryk, 2015), they often transpire in a ‘reactive rather than proactive way’ (Daly & Finnigan 2014, p. 1). No Child Left Behind (NCLB), tied federal funding to evidence of student improvement and the use of research-based practices for the first time, and marked the beginning of a national high-stakes accountability era (Daly & Finnigan, 2014).

A series of reforms followed NCLB: Common Core State Standards, academic standards defining knowledge and skills throughout grades K-12 (National Governors Association & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010); i3 grants, designed to scale up innovative ideas proven to work for school districts and consortiums (U.S. Department of Education, 2010), and the Blueprint for Reform, reauthorizing and extending policies begun in 2009 (U.S. Department of Education, March 2010).

By 2015, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the current U.S. education act (U.S. Department of Education, 2015), attempted to ease some of the constraints as states struggled to meet mandates but kept many of the foundational reforms in motion.

Reforms from these policies included *high stakes accountability*, *value-added measures*, and *evidence-based* practices as part of assessing teacher and school effectiveness (Bryk, 2015; Finnigan et al., 2013). Efforts to reform the U.S. educational system continue to build so too, do the unintended consequences, including lack of improvement, as well as

fragmentation (Bartell, 2001). Despite decades of reform and scrutiny, educational inequities remain (Daly & Finnigan, 2014), leaving schools and educators with overwhelming tasks: sifting through data, most often state testing results (Bryk, 2015; Finnigan et al., 2013), improving targeted areas of concern, negotiating the needs of an increasingly diverse population, and an explosion of professional knowledge (Bryk, 2015).

While some research findings may demonstrate that using data *effectively* helps with student progress, the mere existence of data does not drive improvement. The work of ‘human capital to understand and make sense of the data,’ promotes meaningful reform (Beaver & Weinbaum, 2015, p. 479).

However, the very policies enacted to bring about change are often disconnected from the classroom level, and may disregard instruction and learning (Duyar, 2006). Educational leadership is left to bridge the disconnect between policies, which may distract from instructional time and needs of teachers, to develop and maintain a focus on goals for improved student learning (Bryk, 2015; Finnigan et al., 2013; Robinson et al., 2008). Further, resources are often disconnected from these goals and reforms leaving schools with continued disparities for the most vulnerable student populations (i.e. Condrón & Roscigno, 2003).

Because of this high pressure in a changing context, school and district leaders must continually integrate and assess interventions, and resources attached to these interventions, in order to make progress toward more equitable access to learning (see Urick et al., 2018). The current terrain of educational reform necessitates that educators must learn

to learn (Bryk et al., 2015; Fernandez, 2011). With that in mind, *how do schools create a cohesive plan for improvement?*

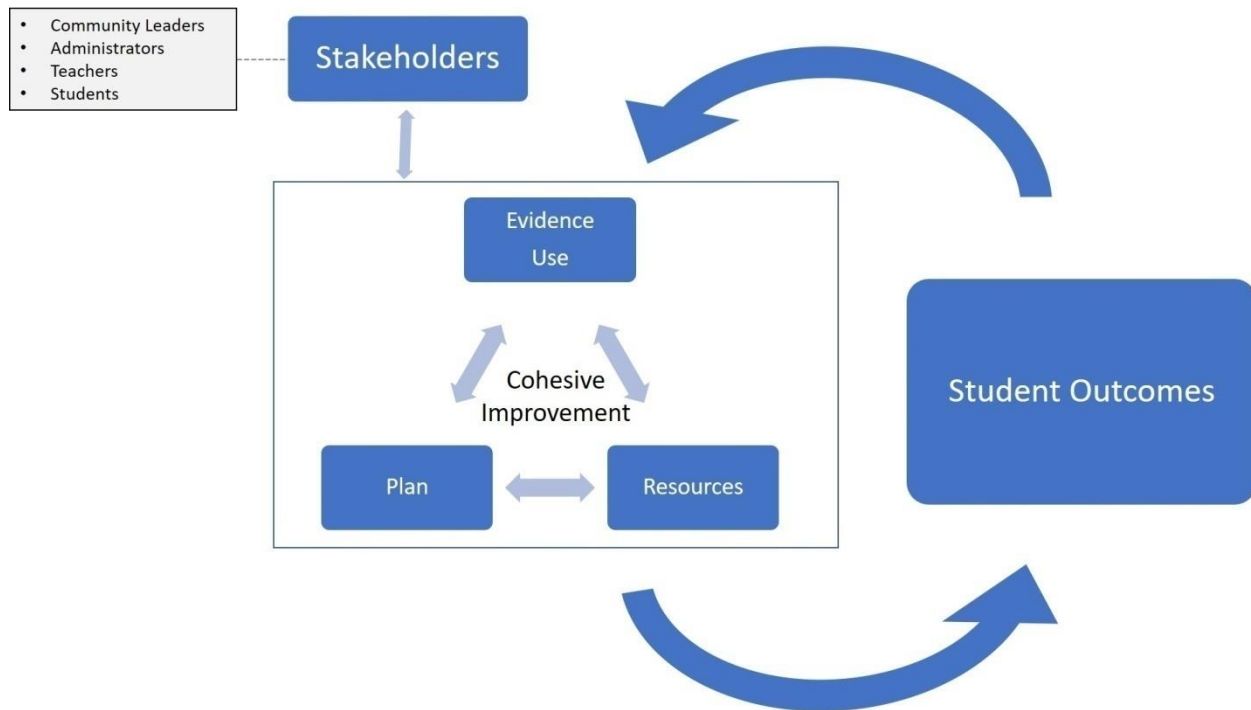
A New Direction to Align Reforms I” Policy and Practice

We synthesized scholarly literature on discrete areas to propose a new framework for school improvement that incorporates key intervention components to increase student outcomes in an active feedback loop. These

components, although separate, are interacting, changing, and evolving based on community, regional, and national structures, and stakeholders. Therefore, a new system must be clearly defined, but flexible to meet the needs of students, teachers, administrators, policy makers, and the overall community. Through a careful evaluation of literature on improvement plans, evidence use, and resources, a new conceptual framework of *cohesive school improvement* was developed.

Figure 1

Comprehensive Framework for Cohesive School Improvement



The purpose of the cohesive school improvement framework is to combine multifaceted policies into a singular, evolving direction based on a school's specific context and stakeholders.

Overall, scholars have indicated the importance of a robust, flexible, and all-inclusive system to guide communication and coordination between stakeholders with school evidence use, appropriate resources, and formalized improvement plans (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2010; Bryk et al., 2010). For example, Bryk and authors (2010) detail the necessary components to increase outcomes and prioritize resources, and Anderson-Butcher and associates (2010) highlight the importance of collaborative leadership structures to incorporate data and evidence-based programs.

These theoretical components represent categories of focus in formalized school improvement plans (or SIPs). SIPs have been designed to cyclically test and evaluate the effectiveness of 'treatments' on desired student outcomes. SIPs become a primary instrument that might direct decisions across the school (Bryk et al., 2010). Unfortunately, some SIPs are developed without a holistic vision, stakeholder collaboration or approached as a living document (Schildkamp, 2019).

Conversely, SIPs are often accountability-driven and are not incorporated into daily values and actions of the school. An actionable, flexible plan along with aligned data-use should be incorporated into a shared, organizational routine to manage the cohesiveness of interventions and equitable distribution of resources (Schildkamp, 2019). Furthermore, Farley-Ripple and Buttram (2015) called attention to the significance of collaboration between teachers and administrators on school data-use and importance of building collaborative evidence-

use networks. The freedom for teachers and administrators to democratically interact without judgment is viewed as critical for effective data-use (Abbott & Wren, 2016; Roderick, 2012).

A community-driven organizational culture, where constant communication, collaboration, and teamwork is embraced by administrators, teachers, parents, students, and the community, can empower substantial evidence-use. However, the implementation of collaborative cyclical school improvement is not possible without appropriate resources. Oftentimes school budgets are not linked to core change processes within a school (Faubert, 2019). School budgets are a mechanism by which leaders can demonstrate a commitment to what is valued.

Through the alignment of resources to evidence use in SIPs, leaders can invest in equitable and effective outcomes for historically marginalized students. Cohesive improvement stems from this community-driven organizational culture which combines active input from stakeholders with school improvement plans, evidence-use, and the investment of resources for equitable outcomes.

This framework addresses the need for more coordination between theory and policy (see Finnigan et al., 2013). It represents an active feedback loop between improvement strategies, planning, evidence use, and resources for a cohesive process which values input from stakeholders.

This model allows for a holistic approach to combat current problems while actively circumventing future problems rather than attempting to connect each policy to fragments of practice. Stakeholders can freely discuss, implement, and, importantly, adapt to

an ever-changing environment and adjust course of action when desired results are not being achieved. Critically, formalized plans within the framework build the evidence and data necessary to advocate from schools up to policymakers for necessary supports to close inequitable learning gaps.

Improving School Improvement Plans

What are SIPs?

School Improvement Plans (SIPs) serve as a guide for organizing strategies meant to solve problems (Levine & Leibert, 1987) and to continually assess if data-driven interventions are working (Fernandez, 2011). SIPs operate based upon the concept of logic models.

A logic model is a way of testing interventions based upon the scientific method and a prescribed time in which data are collected (McLaughlin & Jordan, 2004). Decisions derived from the evaluation of those data show the feasibility of interventions to create significant changes (Knowlton & Phillips, 2012).

To that end, creating a school culture in which evidence use is the norm requires a common vision to direct collective action (Cosner, 2011a; Eilers & Camacho, 2007). Hamilton and authors (2009) argue that cohesion develops from a unified vision which is imperative for positive student outcomes.

Further, Bolhuis and authors (2019, p. 99) found that leadership teams are most efficacious when they concentrated on student learning, a shared goal, collaboration between teachers and school leaders, and ‘reflective inquiry and analysis and interpretation of data.’ School and district leaders should work to create, support, and maintain a school culture of data-use for SIPs (Bolhuis et al., 2019).

Because of this need for a common culture with norms, Mandinach (2012) calls for incentivizing data-use in schools.

However, for data-use to be successful, educators should understand what data to collect and why. Overarching school improvement theory has provided necessary components to assess and track a school’s progress.

While SIPs are not a new concept, application varies, and they are often not used as an integrated, authentic practice (see Acton, 2021; Hashim et al., 2021). SIPs should engage the entire school community with a vision for constant evaluation of structures and practices related to student learning.

Although leaders are commonly trained to build a vision, and hopefully, engage all stakeholders, fewer leaders are trained to guide evaluation efforts based on research design and intervention (e.g., Reynolds & Neeleman, 2021). The field of educational leadership has been following recent calls to apply improvement science to consistently evaluate incremental changes designed to address problems in structures and practice (see Bryk et al., 2015; VanGronigen & Meyers, 2021).

Improvement science is like logic models but extends this idea by systematically testing improvements and gradually growing implementation with support of a networked community focused on solving common problems. This improvement science process is reflected in a SIP as a living document which aligns goals, implementation, and evaluation for shared progress.

What to improve?

The essential supports theory suggests structural, institutional, and local community

factors that contribute to a school's capacity for improvement (see Bryk et al., 2010).

More specifically, it identifies five, main organizational elements: (1) school leadership, (2) parent-community ties, (3) professional capacity, (4) student-centered learning climate, and (5) instructional guidance. These organizational factors, coupled with relational trust, form a mutually reinforcing system that influences school improvement efforts aimed at increasing student engagement and expanding academic learning (Bryk et al., 2010).

Therefore, educational leaders who invest data collection and resources into these targeted essential supports likely contribute to sustained improvement in student outcomes. These essential supports are based on decades of research on school improvement (see Bryk et al., 2010; Reynolds & Neeleman, 2021). Each of these areas has been proven to increase student learning and represents a long-term approach rather than an immediate intervention, policy, or reform.

Educational leaders, who want to improve learning and assess school progress, can track these five organizational elements over time. SIP goals traditionally focus on student outcomes connected to state accountability systems, which are too far removed from a school's daily structures and practices (see Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008).

This research-based essential supports theory provides a frame to select school elements to measure and assess to demonstrate short-term and long-term school improvement. Although growth in achievement is a by-product of these elements, these five essential supports consist of the routine structures and practices of a school which lead to effective student learning. Therefore, leaders should

track each element and evaluate changes in each area to understand how and why their school or district is improving (or not) over time.

Who is involved?

Administrators, teachers, staff, and parents play an important role in planning, implementing, and evaluating improvement (Bryk et al., 2015; Green, 2017; Kyriakides et al., 2019; Yurkofsky, 2021).

However, an increasing influx of theories and practices about SIPs emphasize the importance of partnerships such as those found in community schools (Blank et al., 2003), full-service schools (Dryfoos et al., 2005), comprehensive learning supports systems (Adelman & Taylor 2006), and community collaboration models (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2010; Warren, 2005).

Significantly, these new partnerships entail cross-system changes in schools and communities that also involve child welfare, mental health, youth development, and so forth (Blank et al., 2012; Owens et al., 2021). These social service and health partnerships are necessary for a well school community, to increase access to programs, and to address consequences of economic and other inequities.

For the successful implementation, capacity-building practices among individual schools, partner organizations, entire districts, and communities are essential (Bodilly et al., 2004; Fullan, 2005).

Cicchinelli and authors (2006) noted, capacity-building efforts contain the following strategies: (1) First-order change extends past-present structures, operations, roles, responsibilities, policies, and practices in a school or district, whereas (2) second-order

change accompanies a break with the past in a school or a district as the innovation tends to be inconsistent with conventional policies, structures, and practices.

Partnership-centered processes involving curriculum alignment, high-quality instruction, and standards-based accountabilities existent in schools and districts are complemented by the development of horizontal linkages connecting schools and districts strategically with their communities.

Ultimately, they create collaborative leadership structures that encourage leaders to utilize data to guide the implementation of multiple evidence-use programs and services (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2010). Further, community involvement is the core component to equitable and just schools through shared decision making, understanding of values, assessment of needs, and synergy around the direction of improvement (see Green, 2017). Overall, community partnerships extend the services a school can provide as well as extend the expertise used to assess and implement change.

Since SIPs have been traditionally tied to accountability goals, many times they are applied top-down from state to district to school (Bernhardt, 2016; Yurkofsky, 2021). When incorporating a SIP into the daily practice of the school, with authentic goals and evaluation tied to organizational elements, the involvement of all stakeholders and external partners, beyond only teachers and staff, is necessary to develop a SIP as a living document that reflects local needs and efforts (Young et al., 2018; Kyriakides, et al., 2019; VanGronigen & Meyers, 2021).

This collaborative process encourages shared data collection and application of evidence to evaluate daily practices which

have meaning in the local learning environment (Bryk et al., 2015; Kyriakides et al., 2019). This collection of evidence allows a school community to track their own progress and needs to communicate from the bottom-up, from local stakeholders to school officials to district to state.

This kind of shared, transparent, and meaningful evaluation becomes a foundation from which educational leaders can advocate for their school community.

Implementing Evidence Use: Data Use and Research Use

Existing data and research literature indicate schools and districts need to develop certain competencies in interpreting information into effective action.

Although both data and research can be meaningfully interlinked as evidence use, we argue a distinction between competency in data use, using on site data collection in SIPs, and competency in research use, using primary research of others to formulate interventions and interpretations (see Datnow et al., 2021; Reynolds & Neeleman, 2021).

Bernhardt (2016) writes about four categories of evidence use school leaders need to be competent in combining research and data to make meaning across a long continuum on demographics, perceptions, school processes, and student learning.

School leaders use insights from a combination of understanding previous empirical research in these areas and measures from original data collection of each vantage point to assess their continuums and overlap for school improvement. Previous research literature and unique data collected from each of these categories are used as lenses to

provide a full picture about the organizational elements within the school.

How to use evidence for improvement

School leaders apply evidence to evaluate each organizational element using scientific inquiry to adjust structures and practice (e.g., Bowers, 2017; Sheard & Sharples, 2016). When in the classroom, like schoolwide use, Mandinach and Gummer (2016) provide an overview of what teachers specifically need to know to use data effectively and efficiently.

Five elements are suggested for data literacy: (1) identification of problems of practice and how to frame questions, (2) knowing how to use data appropriately, (3) converting data into usable information, (4) transformation of that information into real decisions, and lastly, (5) being able to evaluate the outcomes achieved by using data (Mandinach, & Gummer, 2016).

Evidence-use entails appropriately collecting and evaluating data. Data teams should have baseline level of competency in assessment and evaluation in education, which aligns with the purpose underscored in logic models and improvement science practices found in SIPs (see Bryk et al., 2015; Knowlton & Phillips, 2012; Mandinach & Gummer, 2013; McLaughlin & Jordan, 2004).

More specifically in improvement science, educational leaders guide teams to identify a problem, look for variation in local data, review empirical research, examine the surrounding system, develop a theory of action, test interventions on a small scale then extend, and share progress with a larger network (Bryk et al., 2015; Cohen-Vogel et al., 2016). Holistic competency in overall evidence-use is imperative if appropriate and effective interventions are to be chosen for SIPs in the first place (Hamilton et al., 2009).

Gaining competency in data skills is but one piece of the picture when it comes to making decisions based on evidence. Corcoran (2003, p. 2) found that ‘personal beliefs about policy and practice usually prevailed over evidence.’ Farley-Ripple and Buttram (2015, p. 4) explain that ‘data use in schools... is social in nature.’ Further, creating a culture of using data and research to inform decisions is an imperative.

Creating a cohesive culture can support teachers, stakeholders, and school leaders in making coherent decisions to use evidence. Part of creating a successful culture to use evidence to make decisions relies on placing an importance on improvement instead of compliance (Bernhardt, 2016; Yurkofsky, 2021).

The use of evidence is geared toward meaningful goals, growth, and a desire to improve rather than sanctions, blame, accountability, and compliance. This culture of evidence use is particularly necessary when examining issues of equity and the success of traditionally marginalized students to avoid deficit thinking (Baker, 2019) and to purposefully gain student and community support of school improvements (DeMatthews, 2018).

Educational leaders are encouraged to search for other leaders and expert partners who are working to solve similar problems of practice so that evidence, interventions, outcomes, and resources can be shared across a network (LeMahieu et al., 2017).

Integrating Funding and Resource Distribution

Poor funding is a barrier to growth in student achievement, but more specifically it prevents wider school improvement which directs this growth. ‘Money does not educate children,’

(Grubb & Allen, 2011, p. 121) but well-researched and well-managed plans may potentially contribute to the improvement of educational outcomes for students. Above all, prior to planning, a thorough investigation of the availability of resources can determine further steps in building essential resources to adequately address existing gaps.

On one hand, a collaborative effort is critical in obtaining ‘complex’ resources such as: experienced teachers with quality instructional approaches, principals capable of promoting a common vision of educational leadership alongside teachers, and schools with positive climates. This urgency for collaborative effort among teachers, principals, and other administrative leaders is built through curricular coherence and trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Newmann et al., 2001).

On the other hand, “simple” resources, such as smaller class sizes and increases in counselor recruitments, are not as multilayered as complex resources when applied to targeted reforms. In practice, inadequate funding poses a threat to attaining both types of resources (Baker, 2012).

Policymakers need feedback about necessary funding from schools as the implementers of policies, especially to equitably meet needs of students from diverse backgrounds (Baker et al., 2016). An investigation of the relationship between select school inputs and student outcomes is essential to develop fair and adequate educational policy.

Select inputs include programs and services, staffing, materials, supplies and equipment, and educational facilities. Because these inputs can be disproportionate across schools along with their associated student outcomes, policymakers need adequate tools to

measure effectiveness of educational interventions and reform initiatives. Disparity between allocated resources and educational outcomes illustrates barriers to anticipated school reform and improvement. When planning resources, school leaders and policymakers should discern how resources have and have not been distributed to low income and historically marginalized community populations.

How to evaluate funding through the lens of adequacy, equity, efficiency

Funding inequality continues to affect the quality of education received by low income and marginalized student populations in the United States (Baker & Corcoran, 2012). The equity, adequacy, and efficiency of funding depends not only on resources allocated, but also on discrepancies in financial infrastructure, and varying costs of educational programs across districts and schools (Duncombe & Yinger, 1999).

Formulating policy, which advances equity in distribution of funding and resources, is possible by diagnosing visible issues through a solid vision with clearly attainable values. This overarching evaluation of funding through an adequacy, efficiency and equity lens is measured by the quality instructional materials, teacher training, and an evaluation of the differing needs of traditionally marginalized students.

However, the inequalities inherent in school funding systems are also due to the complex make-up of local property taxes and value of commercial property affecting the financial infrastructure of school districts (Wenglinsky, 1998). In fact, not all schools are dependent on school funding from the state government (Picus & Odden, 2011). Consequently, a diverse array of issues ranging from socioeconomic status to local property

taxes are intricately linked to variations of equity, adequacy, and efficiency in school funding across schools and districts.

Since the era of high-stakes accountability in the U.S., education finance reform incorporates both school performance and broader realms of educational policy. In line with this change, Lockridge and Maiden (2014) defined the concept of adequacy as the correlational aftermath between the targeted outcomes and the resources required to reach such outcomes. Further, Hanushek (1994) pointed out the disparity between these two constructs is possibly due to an inadequate funding system.

Funding is more simply allocated to tangible areas such as safety, curriculum, transportation, and facilities, whereas funding for human resources, such as high-quality teachers, and supports for them, is often more complex. Because of these varying and complex needs, providing adequate distribution of funding to reach student success is often a challenge.

Over the last several decades, state budgets have been cut due to the economic recession. These cuts have challenged school and district leaders to bring change to student outcomes with decreased funding (Leithwood & Riehl, 2005; Levine, 2005; Portin, 2005). Principals are accountable for responding to emerging needs such as implementing policies, managing resources, and school finances in conjunction with improving learning outcomes (Leithwood et al., 2004).

However, improving the quality of education seems to be unattainable without acknowledging the broader need for equity across diverse student populations in schools. These communities include students from

diverse racial, ethnic, language, ability, and economic backgrounds. One approach to assessing equity in funding is to understand the per-pupil funding across districts (Berne & Stiefel, 1994; Rolle & Liu, 2007) and correlation between per-student spending and local property wealth (Goldhaber & Callahan 2001; Cortez, 2008; 2009; Odden & Picus, 2014).

In addition, Knight (2017) also noted that such research did not account for differences in expenditures needed to meet varied needs specific to this student population. Considering this factor, Baker and Green (2008) stated that adequate finance systems should provide resources to meet state standards and school finance equity should allocate resources by accounting for these diverse student needs.

The efficient allocation of resources necessitates the budgets for a fair distribution based on the diverse needs of students (Masters & Adams, 2018; Starmans et al., 2017). Such initiative calls for a unified decision from school leadership, teachers, community leaders, and political leaders to establish a process of ‘realistically’ fundable and achievable student improvement goals.

Resources, if structured efficiently and allocated fairly, should potentially meet a ‘consistent’ standard of curriculum, quality teaching, and well-maintained school facilities across differing school settings and student populations. High test scores, graduation rates, and college attendance rates have been used to benchmark the attainment of these standards (Rebell et al., 2012).

However, unless these accountability benchmarks are connected to the extent and nature of how resources were distributed to

students, an understanding of the local budget necessary to meet adequacy, equity and efficiency for all students is lost.

Conclusion

The purpose of this cohesive, school improvement framework is to integrate the necessary, yet commonly discrete, components required to build a singular direction toward progress based on local community needs despite competing, and often top-down, policies and reforms.

While evidence-use and SIPs have been associated with larger high-stakes accountability movements, and added workload pressure to schools, building capacity around these skills can allow educators to adapt these tools to meet local goals rather than to comply to far-removed government policy.

Further, these tools become a language in which educators can communicate the extent to which top-down policy has or has not served their local efforts, and the ways this top-down policy should be revised to serve local needs and practices (see Gardner & Brindis, 2017).

To this end, one of the most important local decisions is the distribution of resources. Many educators, who are charged with the implementation of mandatory reforms, may view them as underfunded or inequitably funded. Further, the process of resource distribution at all levels of the government, down to school decisions, can be detached from specific actions and tasks in interventions connected to a cohesive improvement plan.

Without careful study of evidence to understand opportunity gaps of historically marginalized students within a local school context, a vision and the resources for execution can be misplaced. Overall, the careful tracking and study of school efforts to serve students more equitably would organize the evidence necessary for educators to advocate with policymakers about shortcomings within government policies and resources that prevent or complicate progress.

This evidence for advocacy would help to shift policymaking from a top-down to a bottom-up approach and to re-assign power to local school communities and practitioners with implementation expertise (Lipsky, 1971; Taylor, 2007).

Author Biographies

Gul Nahar is a post-doctoral research associate and director of projects in the Center for Educational Development and Research at the University of Oklahoma. Her research interests include qualitative research, language education, language policy, and multilingual/ translingual writing and pedagogy. E-mail: gnahar@ou.edu

Angela Urick is an associate professor in the Department of Educational Leadership at Baylor University in Waco, TX. Her research interest includes school improvement through principal and teacher leadership and school conditions. She specializes in advanced statistical methods and large databases. E-mail: angela_urick@baylor.edu

Stephanie Wescoup is a doctoral candidate in counseling psychology and minoring in integrated behavioral health at New Mexico State University. Her research interests include culturally competent assessment and culturally relevant interventions for minoritized populations; trauma, survivance, and identity in Indigenous Peoples. E-mail: swescoup@nmsu.edu

Chang Sung Jang is a doctoral candidate in the University of Oklahoma's Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. His research interests focus on cross-national analysis of education policies and school-to-work transition at the (post) secondary education level. E-mail: csjang1227@ou.edu

Casey Cascio is an institutional effectiveness research analyst at the University of North Carolina in Wilmington. His research interests include financial efficiency and accountability in education with a particular focus on higher education and intercollegiate athletics and data driven decision making. E-mail: cascio@uncw.edu

Shelly Unsicker-Durham is a doctoral candidate and graduate assistant/instructor at the University of Oklahoma. Her research interests include student-centered learning, expressive literacy, improving schools by empowering student and teacher voices. She specializes in qualitative research within the teaching of English. E-mail: s.unsicker-durham@ou.edu

References

- Abbott, A. L., & Wren, D. G. (2016). Using performance task data to improve instruction. *The Clearing house: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, 89(1), 38–45. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00098655.2016.1138924>
- Acton, K. S. (2021). School leaders as change agents: do principals have the tools they need? *Management in Education*, 35(1), 43-51. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0892020620927415>
- Adelman, H., & Taylor, L. (2006). *The school leader's guide to student learning supports: New directions for addressing barriers to learning*. Corwin Press.
- Anderson-Butcher, D., Lawson, H. A., Iachini, A., Flaspohler, P., Bean, J., & Wade-Mdivanian, R. (2010). Emergent evidence in support of a community collaboration model for school improvement. *Children & Schools*, 32(3), 160–171. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cs/32.3.160>
- Baker, T. L. (2019). Reframing the connections between deficit thinking, microaggressions, and teacher perceptions of defiance. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 88(2), 103-113. <https://doi.org/10.7709/jnegroeducation.88.2.0103>
- Baker, B. (2012). *Revisiting the age-old question: Does money matter in Education?* The Albert Shanker Institute. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED528632.pdf>
- Baker, B., & Corcoran, S. P. (2012). *The stealth inequities of school funding: How state and local school finance systems perpetuate inequitable student spending*. Center for American Progress. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED535555.pdf>
- Baker, B., Farrie, D., & Sciarra, D. G. (2016). The changing distribution of educational opportunities: 1993–2012. In I. Kirsch & H. Braun (Eds.), *The dynamics of opportunity in America* (pp. 97–136). Springer International.
- Baker, B., & Green, P. (2008). Conceptions of equity and adequacy in school finance. In H. F. Ladd & E. B. Fiske (Eds.), *Handbook of research in education finance and policy* (pp. 203–221). Routledge.
- Bartell, C. A. (2001). Bridging the disconnect between policy and practice in teacher education. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 28(1), 189–198. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ622338&site=ehost-live>
- Beaver, J. K., & Weinbaum, E. H. (2015). State test data and school improvement efforts. *Educational Policy*, 29(3), 478–503. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0895904813510774>
- Berne, R., & Stiefl, L. (1994). Measuring equity at the school level: The finance perspective. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 16(4), 405–421. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1164366>

- Bernhardt, V. L. (2016). *Data, data everywhere*. Eye on Education.
- Blank, M. J., Jacobson, R., & Melaville, A. (2012). Achieving results through community school partnerships: How district and community leaders are building effective, sustainable relationships. *Center for American Progress*.
- Blank, M., Melaville, A., & Shah, B. (2003). *Making the difference: Research and practice in community schools*. Institute for Educational Leadership. Retrieved from <http://www.communityschools.org/assets/1/Page/CCSFullReport.pdf>
- Bodilly, S., Chun, J., Ikemoto, G., & Stockly, S. (2004). *Challenges and potential of a collaborative approach to educational reform*. Rand Corporation. Retrieved from <https://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG216.html>
- Bolhius, E., Voogt, J., & Schildkamp, K. (2019). The development of data use, data skills, and positive attitude towards data use in a data team intervention for teacher educators. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 60 (March), 99-108. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2018.12.002>
- Bowers, A. J. (2017). Quantitative research methods training in education leadership and administration preparation programs as disciplined inquiry for building school improvement capacity. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education*, 12(1), 72-96. <https://doi.org/10.7916/D8K93H16>
- Bryk, A. S. (2015). 2014 AERA Distinguished lecture: Accelerating how we learn to improve. *Educational Researcher*, 44(9), 467-477. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X15621543>
- Bryk, A. S., Gomez, L., Grunow, A., & LeMahieu, P. (2015). *Learning to improve: How America's schools can get better at getting better*. Harvard Education Publishing.
- Bryk, A. S., & Schneider, B. (2002). *Trust in schools: A core resource for improvement*. Russell Sage Foundation.
- Bryk, A. S., Sebring, P. B., Allensworth, E. L., & Luppescu, S. S., & Easton, J. (2010). *Organizing schools for improvement: Lessons from Chicago*. Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago.
- Cicchinelli, L., Dean, C., Galvin, M., Goodwin, B., & Parsley, D. (2006). *Success in sight: A comprehensive approach to school improvement*. Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED491186.pdf>
- Cohen-Vogel, L., Cannata, M., Rutledge, S., & Socol, A. (2016). A model of continuous improvement in high schools: A process for research, innovation design, implementation, and scale. *Teachers College Record*, 118(13), 1-26. <https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811611801301>

- Condron, D. J., & Roscigno, V. J. (2003). Disparities within: Unequal spending and achievement in an urban school district. *Sociology of Education*, 76(1), 18-36.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/3090259>
- Corcoran, T. B. (2003). The use of research evidence in instructional improvement. CPRE Policy Briefs. Retrieved from http://repository.upenn.edu/cpre_policybriefs/27
- Cortez, A. (2008). The status of school finance equity in Texas. *IDRA Newsletter*, 35(10), 1–12.
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED505924.pdf>
- Cortez, A. (2009). *The status of school finance equity in Texas: A 2009 update*. Intercultural Development Research Association. Retrieved from
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED510074.pdf>
- Cosner, S. (2011a). Supporting the initiation and early development of evidence-based grade-level collaboration in urban elementary schools: Key roles and strategies of principals and literacy coordinators. *Urban Education*, 46(4), 786–827. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085911399932>
- Daly, A. J., & Finnigan, K. S. (2014). Beginning the journey: Research evidence from the schoolhouse door to Capitol Hill. In K. S. Finnigan & A. J. Daly (Eds.), *Using research evidence in education: From the schoolhouse door to Capitol Hill* (pp. 1–5). Springer.
- Datnow, A., Lockton, M., & Weddle, H. (2021). Capacity building to bridge data use and instructional improvement through evidence on student thinking. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 69, 100869. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2020.100869>
- DeMatthews, D. E. (2018). *Community engaged leadership for social justice: A critical approach in urban schools*. Routledge.
- Dryfoos, J., Quinn, J., & Barkin, C. (2005). *Community schools in action: Lessons from a decade of practice*. Oxford University Press.
- Duncombe, W. D., & Yinger, J. M. (1999). Performance standards and educational cost indexes: You can't have one without the other. In H. Ladd & J. Hansen (Eds.), *Equity and adequacy in education finance: Issues and perspectives* (pp. 260–297). The National Academic Press.
- Duyar, I. (2006, August 26). Analyzing education productivity. [Review of the book: *The scientific basis of educational productivity* by R. Subotnik & H. Walberg (Eds.)]. *Education Review*, 9(4).
- Farley-Ripple, E., & Buttram, J. (2015). The development of capacity for data use: The role of teacher networks in an elementary school. *Teachers College Record*, 117(4), 1–3.

- Faubert, B.C. (2019). Transparent resource management: Implications for leadership and democracy in education. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 33(5), 965-978. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-02-2018-0066>
- Fernandez, K. E. (2011). Evaluating school improvement plans and their affect on academic performance. *Educational Policy*, 25(2), 338–367. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0895904809351693>
- Eilers, A. M., & Camacho, A. (2007). School culture change in the making: Leadership factors that matter. *Urban Education*, 42(6), 616–637. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085907304906>
- Finnigan, K. S., Daly, A. J., & Che, J. (2013). Systemwide reform in districts under pressure: The role of social networks in defining, acquiring, using, and diffusing research evidence. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 51(4), 476–497. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09578231311325668>
- Fullan, M. (2005). *Leadership and sustainability: System thinkers in action*. Corwin Press.
- Gardner, A., & Brindis, C. (2017). *Advocacy and policy change evaluation: Theory and practice*. Stanford University Press.
- Goldhaber, D., & Callahan, K. (2001). Impact of the basic education program on educational spending and equity in Tennessee. *Journal of Education Finance*, 26(4), 415–435. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20764017>
- Green, T. L. (2017). Community-based equity audits: A practical approach for educational leaders to support equitable community-school improvements. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 53(1), 3-39. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X16672513>
- Grubb, W. N., & Allen, R. (2011). Rethinking school funding resources, incentives, and outcomes. *Journal of Educational Change*, 12, 121–130. Doi: 10.1007/s10833-010-9146-6
- Hamilton, L., Halverson, R., Jackson, S. S., Mandinach, E., Supovitz, J. A., & Wayman, J. C. (2009). *Using student achievement data to support instructional decision making* (Practice guide No. NCEE 2009-4067). National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/dddm_pg_092909.pdf
- Hanushek, E. (1994). A jaundiced view of “adequacy” in school finance reform. *Educational Policy*, 8, 460–469. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0895904894008004009>
- Hashim, A. K., Bush-Mecenas, S., Strunk, K. O., & Marsh, J. A. (2021). Inside the black box of school autonomy: how diverse school providers use autonomy for school improvement. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 1-26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2020.1863433>

- Knight, D. (2017). Are high-poverty school districts disproportionately impacted by state funding cuts? School finance equity following the great recession. *Journal of Education Finance*, 43(2), 169–194. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45093658>
- Knowlton, L. W., & Phillips, C. C. (2012). *The logic model guidebook: Better strategies for great results*. Sage.
- Kyriakides, L., Charalambous, E., Creemers, B. P., Antoniou, P., Devine, D., Papastylianou, D., & Fahie, D. (2019). Using the dynamic approach to school improvement to promote quality and equity in education: a European study. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability*, 31(1), 121-149. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11092-018-9289-1>
- Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (2008). Linking leadership to student learning: The contributors of leader efficacy. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 44(4). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X08321501>
- Leithwood, K., Louis, K. S., Anderson, G., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *How leadership influences student learning: A review of research for the Learning from Leadership project*. The Wallace Foundation.
- Leithwood, K., & Riehl, C. (2005). What do we already know about educational leadership? In W. A. Firestone & C. Riehl (Eds.), *A new agenda for research in educational leadership* (pp. 12–27). Teachers College Press.
- LeMahieu, P. G., Grunow, A., Baker, L., Nordstrum, L. E., & Gomez, L. M. (2017). Networked improvement communities: The discipline of improvement science meets the power of networks. *Quality Assurance in Education*.
- Levine, A. (2005). *Educating school leaders: The education schools project*. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED504142.pdf>
- Levine, D. U., & Leibert, R. E. (1987). Improving school improvement plans. *The Elementary School Journal*, 87(4), 397-412. <https://doi.org/10.1086/461504>
- Lipsky, M. (1971). Street-level bureaucracy and the analysis of urban reform. *Urban affairs Quarterly*, 6(4), 391-409. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107808747100600401>
- Lockridge, C., & Maiden, J. (2014). The tangible impact of school finance litigation. *Journal of Education Finance*, 39(4), 344–369.
- Mandinach, E. B. (2012). A perfect time for data use: Using data-driven decision making to inform practice. *Educational Psychologist*, 47(2), 71-85. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2012.667064>

- Mandinach, E. B. & Gummer, E. S. (2013). A Systemic view of implementing data literacy in educator preparation. *Educational Researcher*, 42(1), 30-37. <https://doi.org/10.3102%2F0013189X12459803>
- Mandinach, E. B., & Gummer, E. S. (2016). What does it mean for teachers to be data literate: Laying out the skills, knowledge, and dispositions. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 60, 366–376. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.07.011>
- Masters, G. N., & Adams, R. (2018). What is ‘equity’ in education? Teacher. Retrieved from <https://www.teachermagazine.com.au/columnists/geoff-masters/what-is-equity-in-education>
- McLaughlin, J. A., & Jordan, G. B. (2004). Using logic models. In J.S. Wholey, H.P. Harty, & K.E. Newcomer (Eds.), *Handbook of practical program evaluation* (2nd ed., pp.7-32). Jossey-Bass.
- National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers. (2010). About the standards. Common Core State Standards Initiative. Retrieved from <http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards/>
- Newmann, F. M., Smith, B. A., Allensworth, E., & Bryk, A. S. (2001). Instructional program coherence: What it is and why it should guide school improvement policy. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 23(4), 297–321. <https://doi.org/10.3102/01623737023004297>
- Odden, A. R., & Picus, L. O. (2014). *School finance: A policy perspective*. McGraw Hill.
- Owens, D., Matthews, D., & Woloch, C. M. (2021). Achievement in urban schools: Linking schools, families, and communities. In *Strengthening school counselor advocacy and practice for important populations and difficult topics* (pp. 1-18). IGI Global.
- Picus, L. O., & Odden, A. R. (2011). Reinventing school finance: Falling forward. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 86, 291–303. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0161956X.2011.578986>
- Portin, B. (2005). School-based leadership in the US in an age of reform: What does it take? *Education Research and Perspectives*, 32(2), 1–23.
- Rebell, M. A., Odden, A., Rolle, A., & Guthrie, J. W. (2012). Four takes on tough times: Efficiency and equity. *Educational Leadership*, 69(4), 11–18.
- Reynolds, D., & Neeleman, A. (2021). School improvement capacity—A review and a reconceptualization from the perspectives of educational effectiveness and educational policy. *Concept and Design Developments in School Improvement Research*, 27-40.
- Robinson, V. M. J., Lloyd, C. A., & Rowe, K. J. (2008). The impact of leadership on student outcomes: An analysis of the differential effects of leadership types. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 44(5), 635–674. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X08321509>

- Roderick, M. (2012). Drowning in data but thirsty for analysis. *Teachers College Record*, 114(11), 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811211401104>
- Rolle, A., & Liu, K. (2007). An empirical analysis of horizontal and vertical equity in the public schools of Tennessee, 1994-2003. *Journal of Education Finance*, 32(3), 328-351. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40704298>
- Schildkamp, K. (2019). Data-based decision-making for school improvement: Research insights and gaps. *Educational Research*, 61(3), 257-273. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131881.2019.1625716>
- Sheard, M. K., & Sharples, J. (2016). School leaders' engagement with the concept of evidence-based practice as a management tool for school improvement. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 44(4), 668-687. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143215580138>
- Starmans, C., Sheskin, M., & Bloom, P. (2017). Why people prefer unequal societies. *Nature Human Behavior*, 1, 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-017-0082>
- Taylor, I. (2007). Discretion and control in education: the teacher as street-level bureaucrat. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 35(4), 555-572. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143207081063>
- Urick, A., Wilson, A. S., Ford, T. G., Frick, W. C., & Wronowski, M. L. (2018). Testing a framework of math progress indicators for ESSA: How opportunity to learn and instructional leadership matter. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 54(3), 396-438. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X18761343>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2010). Application for grants under the Investing in Innovation Fund (i3) Grant Program. [Archived Application Form]. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/innovation/i3-application.doc>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2010, March). A blueprint for reform: The reauthorization of the elementary and secondary schools act. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/blueprint/blueprint.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2015). A new education law: Every Child Succeeds Act (ESSA). Retrieved from <https://www.ed.gov/essa?src=rn>
- VanGronigen, B. A., & Meyers, C. V. (2021). Exploring the association between short-cycle school improvement planning and student achievement in underperforming schools. *Journal of School Leadership*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10526846211018207>
- Warren, M. R. (2005). Communities and schools: A new view of urban education reform. *Harvard Educational Review*, 75, 133-173. <https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.75.2.m718151032167438>

- Wenglinsky, H. (1998). Finance equalization and within-school equity: The relationship between educational spending and the social distribution of achievement. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 20(4), 269–283. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1164325>
- Young, C., McNamara, G., Brown, M., & O’Hara, J. (2018). Adopting and adapting: School leaders in the age of data-informed decision making. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability*, 30(2), 133-158. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11092-018-9278-4>
- Yurkofsky, M. (2021). From compliance to improvement: How school leaders make sense of institutional and technical demands when implementing a continuous improvement process. *Educational Administration Quarterly*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X211053597>

Flipping the Script: Transformational Teamwork for Communicating Equity

Jacob D. Alonso, MEd
 Doctoral Student
 University of Southern California
 Los Angeles, CA

Tasminda Dhaliwal, PhD
 Assistant Professor
 Department of Education Administration
 College of Education
 Michigan State University
 East Lansing, MI

Monica A. Santander, MPP
 Graduate Studies Advisor
 Doctoral Student
 California State Polytechnic University
 Pomona, CA

James Bridgeforth, MEd
 Doctoral Student
 University of Southern California
 Los Angeles, CA

Kate Kennedy, MEd
 Doctoral Candidate
 University of Southern California
 Los Angeles, CA

Taylor N. Allbright, PhD
 Assistant Professor
 Department of Educational Leadership
 California State Polytechnic University
 Pomona, CA

Abstract

Online platforms are increasingly the main point of contact between schools and students, families, and the community. In this article, we present a framework, called *Flipping the Script*, that we developed while researching how students, teachers, and families were portrayed on school websites. Based on a systematic analysis of nearly 1,000 pages of school websites, we use concepts from institutional theory to identify implicit roles for different groups. We then provide concrete steps leaders can take to help align a vision for equitable schools with messages communicated online. The framework invites exploration within the school community that unearths what messages are being broadcast to students, families, and the wider community, and shows how to collaboratively develop new messaging, practices, and mindsets about roles.

Key Words

equity, organizational change, collaborative leadership, community engagement, mindsets, school websites

Introduction

Increasingly, online platforms—rather than the physical school sites—are the main point of contact between schools and students, families, and the community (DiMartino & Jessen, 2018; Jabbar, 2016; Lubienski, 2007).

Websites are where important communications are posted for parents and students, milestones and achievements are celebrated, families and community members get key information about programs, and during COVID-19, where millions of students accessed their remote learning tools.

In this article, we show how school websites can be used to identify and disrupt damaging, deficit-based mindsets and practices in schools. We do this by presenting a framework, called *Flipping the Script*, that we developed while researching how students, teachers, and families were portrayed on school websites.

The purpose of our framework is to help leaders align their vision for equitable schools with the messages communicated through websites and social media. It invites exploration within the school community that unearths what messages are being broadcast to students, families, and the wider community online, and shows how to collaboratively develop new messaging, practices, and mindsets about roles.

The *Flipping the Script* framework was designed as part of a two-year study where we examined 13 high school websites from a mid-sized urban district in the western U.S (Allbright et al., 2021). Systematically analyzing nearly 1,000 pages of school websites, our team investigated what messages were being communicated about the roles of different groups, including educators, students,

and parents. We call those messages about roles *scripts*.

What are scripts?

All organizations, including schools, communicate acceptable roles and behaviors for members, which we refer to as scripts (Jepperson, 1991). In any organization, scripts for its members are shaped by assumptions that are simply taken-for-granted (Cardinale, 2018; Scott, 2008). These assumptions inform the scripts that guide a person's behavior and identity in that organization (Greenwood & Hinings, 1996; Jepperson, 1991).

The concept of scripts emerges from neoinstitutional theory, a field of scholarship within organizational studies, that emphasizes the relationship between individual's cognition and culture (Scott, 2008). Research in this area suggests that human behavior is shaped by cognitive structures, which reinforce cultural patterns at the level of whole organizations or societies. Some of these cultural patterns are so well-established that they become institutions. Institutions are highly stable over time, are adopted almost automatically by people, and tend to resist changes.

For example, have you ever explained to a teacher or new administrator that a certain practice is 'just the way things are in this school'? Behaviors that are inconsistent with the school's script could appear inconceivable. What you were describing was most likely part of an institutional script that is informed by taken-for-granted assumptions about how teachers "act," "behave," or "teach" at a school, which are rarely questioned.

In one example of previous research, scholars described racialized scripts in a school where parents of color were assumed to be

either disruptive or disengaged (Ishimaru & Takahashi, 2017). Schools struggled to engage racially minoritized parents because the script assigned to parents was deficit-based. To address this, researchers worked with the school to interrogate the script ascribed to parents of color, including questioning “taken-for-granted” assumptions about parents’ value and expected behavior. By doing so, the school was able to confront deficit mindsets that created uneven parent engagement in their school, and instead they worked to dismantle inequitable structures.

Scripts for Students, Parents, and Teachers

Building on work in this area, our team analyzed 13 high school websites from a mid-sized urban district, selected to reflect a variety of schooling models (traditional, charter, semi-autonomous, and magnet schools), as well as differences in the demographics of students (Allbright et al., 2021). We examined 124 web pages over 903 print pages using critical discourse analysis (CDA; Wodak & Meyer, 2016b).

CDA is an approach to analyzing data that pays close attention to ideology and power (Wodak & Meyer, 2016a) by carefully deconstructing the language (or discourse)

used in that data. It has been employed in education research to interrogate the ways that schools and districts have perpetuated inequities (Mullet, 2018), particularly by examining norms, policies, and organizational change efforts that failed to manifest meaningful changes in power relations within the organization (Rogers et al., 2016). By using a CDA approach coupled with institutional scripts, our team was able to rigorously and systematically deconstruct the ways that various groups were portrayed on school websites.

In our study, we examined scripts for students, teachers, and parents. Our team found a set of common scripts across all of the websites we analyzed, which we grouped into four categories to help us compare across schools. Across the thirteen sites, we found evidence for a common narrative. Websites suggested that prospective students had an issue or problem (e.g., personal hardship, lack of motivation, deficient cultural background). Schools then positioned themselves as a solution, using various supports or opportunities to transform students in some way (e.g., into college-ready graduates or workers). We further grouped this common framework into four distinct scripts, which we called the *savior*, *cultivation*, *assimilation*, and *marketplace* scripts (see Figure 1).

Figure 1*Scripts In Research*

	Student Script	Teacher Script	Parent Script
Savior Narratives	Students are victims of adversity and need help to overcome future hardship.	Educators are saviors who provide support to make students resilient and help them overcome adversity.	Parents have failed their children in some way and may continue to experience hardships that impede student success.
Cultivation Narratives	Students have potential, but it is unrecognized and untapped.	Educators cultivate students by providing structure and rules, high expectations and clear structures.	Parents need to support the school by reiterating expectations and holding their children to high standards.
Assimilation Narratives	Students lack cultural knowledge, values, and behavior. They can be successful by assimilating into a school norm.	Educators must instill cultural values and behaviors in students.	Parents also lack cultural and linguistic competence and need to be educated by the school as well.
Marketplace Narratives	Students are consumers of educational opportunities, and those who work hard and take advantage of opportunities are successful.	Educators provide a range of activities or programs that students must discover.	Parents must support their students in taking advantage of opportunities.

Other researchers have identified additional common scripts for students, parents, and teachers. Many scripts for students revolve around perceived deficits and what students are lacking (Golann, 2015; Sondel, 2015; Valencia, 2010). The same can be true for parents, where working class and racially minoritized parents

are perceived as deficient in some way (Cooper, 2009; Baquedano-Lopez et al., 2013). This can result in miscommunications and assumptions that parents are not willing or too busy to be involved (Posey-Maddox & Haley-Lock, 2020). There are also scripts for teachers, who are still often confronted with assumptions about

motivation or experience that lead to limited autonomy in curriculum or discipline—while leadership opportunities in schools can be highly constrained (Lopez Kershen et al., 2018; Torres, 2014). Teachers of color in particular can also experience negative scripts regarding their own personal experiences, and are asked to take on the additional burden of managing racial equity initiatives (Kohli, 2018) and serving as experts on students of color (Mabokela & Madsen, 2007).

Our findings pointed to a set of potentially problematic assumptions that school marketing materials communicated to students, parents, and teachers. Websites we analyzed often used deficit-based language in reference to racially minoritized students and families, largely failing to acknowledge them as valuable resources for the school community or creators of knowledge for the school (Delgado Bernal, 2002).

Your school or school system will likely have some common scripts found by researchers, and others that are unique. *Flipping the Script* can help unearth and transform these ideas that have become so embedded in an organization that they are unintentionally communicated through school materials. School and district leaders can begin to think through equity challenges by confronting those scripts using our framework. Yet scholars can also support this work through research-practice partnerships and can assist in refining and expanding our process to disrupt oppressive practices and advance a more just vision for schools.

Flipping the Script

We provide a five-step framework for educational leaders to examine scripts communicated by their school websites and social media messages:

1. Collectively envision empowering scripts.

First, assemble your team. This might be a subcommittee of your equity team, a branch of the PTA, or a diversity, equity, and inclusion committee. We recommend that these teams include all voices, especially parents and students as they imagine what messages they want to convey. Consider the mission statement or other guiding ideas of your organization as you discuss the following questions:

- a. What is your vision for equity in your school/district?
- b. Whose scripts does that vision include?
- c. What are the roles of students, teachers, administrators, and staff?
- d. What is the role of parents and caregivers?
- e. Who is included in your vision, and who is left out?

2. Build awareness and consensus.

Confronting potentially damaging communications and messages can be challenging and uncomfortable. It is also not something many have tried before.

Therefore, we recommend teams spend some time analyzing outside sources to learn about harmful scripts before taking on those in their own schools. For example, consider articles in *Educational Leadership* like Dugan's (2021) piece on 'equity traps and tropes', books like *Dismantling Contemporary Deficit Thinking* (2010) by Richard Valencia, other tools like Bensimon's (2016) *Equity Scorecard*, or key theories like Critical Race Theory (Solórzano,

1997) and Community Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2005). Our reference list also has many articles and books to review.

As your team builds awareness of these issues, reflect on the following:

- a. What do outside sources or experts say about common pitfalls in building equitable schools?
 - b. What are some common assumptions or stereotypes about students, teachers, and parents?
 - c. Who was responsible for confronting harmful messages in the work you read?
3. **Analyze your own website or social media.** As a team, start by looking at a school or district website home page. Try to be expansive and examine how students, teachers, administrators, and parents are portrayed. You might also look at town hall recordings, board meeting minutes, and social media posts for more information. Discuss what you found with the team. In our research, for example, we identified a common set of assumptions about students, teachers, and parents summarized in Figure 1 in this article.

As you examine your website, some key questions to discuss are:

- a. What is expected of each group? What is not expected?
- b. How do school leaders come across?
- c. What is your sense of the school culture?

- d. What assumptions are made about each group?
- e. Are there common depictions by race, gender, ability, or language?
- f. Who is included? Who is not included?

The goal of this process is to understand the differences between your vision and the real messages stakeholders are receiving, but at this stage we simply ask your team to reach some degree of consensus about what is being communicated by the website you chose.

4. **Compare findings to your vision.** Now, return to the vision you brainstormed in Step 1. With your team, begin to reflect on the differences and similarities between your vision and what was communicated by the website or social media page you chose. Some questions to consider are:

- a. Putting the scripts for students, parents, and teachers in particular side-by-side, how did your findings compare to your original vision?
- b. For what groups was there agreement about how much the vision and website aligned? Where were the main areas of disagreement?

The purpose of this step is to identify areas of alignment and gaps in terms of the scripts in your school or system and your vision for equity. Pay particular attention to areas where there was disagreement in the team about how closely the vision and the messages from

the website aligned. While teams may agree that there is more work to be

done with certain groups, disagreement in this area typically indicates that there are groups of individuals whose experiences are typically underrepresented in conversations about equity—and often signals a point of conflict in school systems.

5. **Identify change strategies.** The change process begins by working with the team to develop strategies to revise the school website you chose to analyze and bring it into alignment with the vision you developed. After revising the website, consider how you can change practices within the organization to reflect the vision you described. We know this part of step five is particularly daunting and is typically an ongoing process. However, it is important at this point to develop an action plan that includes concrete steps that can be taken to help bring the vision for equity into greater alignment with practices in your organization.

The goal of this process is not to find closure for an issue. In fact, it is intended to be the *beginning* of a conversation about practices within a school or school system that is inclusive of groups that do not often have a seat at the table.

Reflection and Discussion Questions

After the data collection period for this study had concluded, the district began undertaking a process similar to the one described above. Taking place at the district level, the superintendent brought in an outside consultant to work with their leadership team to align

internal district communications, long-term plans, and public-facing documents (including their website) with their equity vision. While this process is ongoing, it successfully brought in a large number of previously silent stakeholders to discuss how to implement their new equity-focused change strategy.

It also revealed a number of disagreements between the district's stated goals and practices at the school level. In this regard, a process like *Flipping the Script* holds promise to not only improve representation in and engagement with school district websites, but also to begin addressing deep-rooted inequities revealed in those documents.

The steps described here are necessary to ensure that leadership visions result in equitable learning environments, but they require an important and often difficult commitment to examining our own biases.

Throughout this process, we should be asking critical questions about our own roles in maintaining a system of damaging assumptions about particular students, teachers, and parents.

While we presented a framework for leading others through an analysis of school websites, throughout the process we hope readers can consider the following questions that challenge their own mindsets and behaviors.

1. What scripts do we hold about ourselves in our own professional roles?
2. What allows for damaging scripts about students, teachers, or families to persist?
3. What has gotten in the way of changing assumptions, mindsets, or scripts in the past?

Author Biographies

Jacob Alonso is a doctoral student at the University of Southern California. His research examines policy implementation, governance, and engagement in K-12 educational systems. E-mail: jacobalo@usc.edu

Tasminda Dhaliwal is an assistant professor of education policy at Michigan State University. Her research focuses on the ways social and economic conditions shape student outcomes and the effectiveness of policies designed to reduce inequality. E-mail: dhaliw20@msu.edu

Monica Santander is a third-year doctoral student in educational leadership at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, and serves as a graduate studies advisor within graduate studies at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. She has previously served in practitioner roles within diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in higher education. E-mail: msantander@cpp.edu

James Bridgeforth is a former public-school teacher and current doctoral student at the University of Southern California. His research broadly focuses on issues of racial equity and justice in K-12 education policy and practice. E-mail: jbridgef@usc.edu

Kate Kennedy is a researcher and doctoral candidate at the University of Southern California who specializes in social-emotional well-being and school district leadership. E-mail: katekenn@usc.edu

Taylor N. Allbright is an assistant professor of educational leadership at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. Her research examines efforts to advance educational equity in K-12 schools. Drawing on political, organizational, and critical perspectives, she investigates how leaders design and implement policies with equity goals, the enactment of policies intended to mitigate racial inequity, and the politics and process of educational policy change. E-mail: tnalbright@cpp.edu

References

- Allbright, T.N., Dhaliwal, T.K., Alonso, J., Bridgeforth, J., & Santander, M., & Kennedy, K. (2021, April) *Selling the savior narrative: A critical discourse analysis of institutional scripts in high school websites*. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association.
- Baquedano-López, P., Alexander, R. A., & Hernández, S. J. (2013). Equity issues in parental and community involvement in schools: What teacher educators need to know. *Review of Research in Education*, 37(1), 149-182.
- Bensimon, E. M., Dowd, A. C., & Witham, K. (2016). Five principles for enacting equity by design. *Diversity and Democracy*, 19(1), 1-8.
- Cardinale, I. (2018). Beyond constraining and enabling: Toward new microfoundations for institutional theory. *Academy of Management Review*, 43(1), 132-155.
- Cooper, C. W. (2009). Parent involvement, African American mothers, and the politics of educational care. *Equity & Excellence in Education* 42(4): 379–394.
- Delgado Bernal, D. (2002). Critical Race Theory, Latino Critical Theory, and Critical Raced-Gendered Epistemologies: Recognizing Students of Color as Holders and Creators of Knowledge. *Qualitative Inquiry: QI*, 8(1), 105–126.
- Dimartino, C., & Jessen, S. B. (2018). *Selling school: The marketing of public education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Dugan, J. (2021). Beware of equity traps and tropes. *Educational Leadership*, 78(6), 35-40.
- Golann, J. W. (2015). The paradox of success at a no-excuses school. *Sociology of Education*, 88(2), 103-119.
- Greenwood, R., & Hinings, C. R. (1996). Understanding radical organizational change: Bringing together the old and the new institutionalism. *Academy of Management Review*, 21(4), 1022-1054.
- Ishimaru, A. M., & Takahashi, S. (2017). Disrupting Racialized Institutional Scripts: Toward Parent–Teacher Transformative Agency for Educational Justice. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 92(3), 1–20.
- Jabbar, H. (2016). Selling schools: Marketing and recruitment strategies in New Orleans. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 91(1), 4–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0161956X.2016.1119554>
- Jepperson, R.L. (1991). Institutions, institutional effects, and institutionalism, in W.W. Powell and P.J. DiMaggio (Eds), *The new institutionalism in organizational analysis* (pp. 143–163). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Kohli, R. (2018). Behind school doors: The impact of hostile racial climates on urban teachers of color. *Urban Education*, 53(3), 307–333.
- Lopez Kershen, J., Weiner, J. M., & Torres, C. (2018). Control as care: How teachers in “no excuses” charter schools position their students and themselves. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 51(3-4), 265-283.
- Lubienski, C. (2007). Marketing school: Consumer good and competitive incentives for consumer information. *Education and Urban Society*, 40(1), 118–141. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124507303994>
- Mabokela, R. O., & Madsen, J. A. (2007). African American teachers in suburban desegregated schools: Intergroup differences and the impact of performance pressures. *Teachers College Record*, 109(5), 1171–1206.
- Mullet, D. R. (2018). A general critical discourse analysis framework for educational research. *Journal of Advanced Academics*, 29(2), 116–142. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1932202X18758260>
- Posey-Maddox, L., & Haley-Lock, A. (2020). One size does not fit all: Understanding parent engagement in the contexts of work, family, and public schooling. *Urban Education*, 55(5), 671–698. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085916660348>
- Rogers, R., Schaenen, I., Schott, C., O’Brien, K., Trigos-Carrillo, L., Starkey, K., & Chasteen, C. C. (2016). Critical discourse analysis in education: A review of the literature, 2004 to 2012. *Review of Educational Research*, 86(4), 1192–1226. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654316628993>
- Scott, W.R. (2008). *Institutions and organizations* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Solorzano, D. G. (1997). Images and words that wound: Critical race theory, racial stereotyping, and teacher education. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 24(3), 5-19.
- Sondel, B. (2015). Raising citizens or raising test scores? Teach for America, “no excuses” charters, and the development of the neoliberal citizen. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 43(3), 289-313.
- Torres, A. C. (2014). “Are we architects or construction workers?” Re-examining teacher autonomy and turnover in charter schools. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 22(124). <http://dx.doi.org/10.14507/epaa.v22.1614>
- Valencia, R. R. (2010). *Dismantling contemporary deficit thinking: Educational thought and practice*. Routledge.
- Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (2016a). Critical discourse studies: history, agenda, theory and methodology. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of Critical Discourse Studies* (pp. 1–22). SAGE.

Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (Eds.). (2016b). *Methods for critical discourse studies*. Sage.

Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education*.

Mission and Scope, Copyright, Privacy, Ethics, Upcoming Themes, Author Guidelines, Submissions, Publication Rates & Publication Timeline

The *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* is a refereed, blind-reviewed, quarterly journal with a focus on research and evidence-based practice that advance the profession of education administration.

Mission and Scope

The **mission** of the Journal is to provide peer-reviewed, user-friendly, and methodologically sound research that practicing school and district administrations can use to take action and that higher education faculty can use to prepare future school and district administrators. The Journal publishes accepted manuscripts in the following categories: (1) Evidence-based Practice, (2) Original Research, (3) Research-informed Commentary, and (4) Book Reviews.

The **scope** for submissions focuses on the intersection of five factors of school and district administration: (a) administrators, (b) teachers, (c) students, (d) subject matter, and (e) settings. The Journal encourages submissions that focus on the intersection of factors a-e. The Journal discourages submissions that focus only on personal reflections and opinions.

Copyright

Articles published electronically by AASA, The School Superintendents Association in the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* fall under the Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-NoDerivs 3.0 license policy (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>). Please refer to the policy for rules about republishing, distribution, etc. In most cases our readers can copy, post, and distribute articles that appear in the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice*, but the works must be attributed to the author(s) and the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice*. Works can only be distributed for non-commercial/non-monetary purposes. Alteration to the appearance or content of any articles used is not allowed. Readers who are unsure whether their intended uses might violate the policy should get permission from the author or the editor of the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice*.

Authors please note: By submitting a manuscript the author/s acknowledge that the submitted manuscript is not under review by any other publisher or society, and the manuscript represents original work completed by the authors and not previously published as per professional ethics based on APA guidelines, most recent edition. By submitting a manuscript, authors agree to transfer without charge the following rights to AASA, its publications, and especially the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* upon acceptance of the manuscript. The *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* is indexed by several services and is also a member of the Directory of Open Access Journals. This means there is worldwide access to all content. Authors must agree to first worldwide serial publication rights and the right for the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* and AASA to grant permissions for use of works as the editors judge appropriate for the redistribution, repackaging, and/or marketing of all works and any metadata associated with the works in professional indexing and reference services. Any revenues received by AASA and the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* from redistribution are used to support the continued marketing, publication, and distribution of articles.

Privacy

The names and e-mail addresses entered in this journal site will be used exclusively for the stated purposes of this journal and will not be made available for any other purpose or to any other party. Please note that the journal is available, via the Internet at no cost, to audiences around the world. Authors' names and e-mail addresses are posted for each article. Authors who agree to have their manuscripts published in the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* agree to have their names and e-mail addresses posted on their articles for public viewing.

Ethics

The *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* uses a double-blind peer-review process to maintain scientific integrity of its published materials. Peer-reviewed articles are one hallmark of the scientific method and the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* believes in the importance of maintaining the integrity of the scientific process in order to bring high quality literature to the education leadership community. We expect our authors to follow the same ethical guidelines. We refer readers to the latest edition of the APA Style Guide to review the ethical expectations for publication in a scholarly journal.

Themes and Topics of Interest

Below are themes and areas of interest for publication cycles.

1. Governance, Funding, and Control of Public Education
2. Federal Education Policy and the Future of Public Education
3. Federal, State, and Local Governmental Relationships
4. Teacher Quality (e.g. hiring, assessment, evaluation, development, and compensation of teachers)
5. School Administrator Quality (e.g. hiring, preparation, assessment, evaluation, development, and compensation of principals and other school administrators)
6. Data and Information Systems (for both summative and formative evaluative purposes)
7. Charter Schools and Other Alternatives to Public Schools
8. Turning Around Low-Performing Schools and Districts
9. Large Scale Assessment Policy and Programs
10. Curriculum and Instruction
11. School Reform Policies
12. Financial Issues

Submissions

Length of manuscripts should be as follows: Research and evidence-based practice articles between **2,800** and **4,800** words; commentaries between **1,600** and **3,800** words; book and media reviews between **400** and **800** words. Articles, commentaries, book and media reviews, citations and references are to follow the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, **latest edition**. Permission to use previously copyrighted materials is the responsibility of the author, not the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice*.

Cover page checklist:

1. title of the article:
identify if the submission is original research, evidence-based practice, commentary, or book review
2. contributor name(s)
3. terminal degree
4. academic rank
5. department
6. college or university
7. city, state
8. telephone and fax numbers
9. e-mail address
10. 120-word abstract that conforms to APA style
11. six to eight key words that reflect the essence of the submission
12. 40-word biographical sketch

Please do not submit page numbers in headers or footers. Rather than use footnotes, it is preferred authors embed footnote content in the body of the article. Also note, **APA guidelines are changed so that one space is required after the period at the end of a sentence.** Articles are to be submitted to the editor by e-mail as an electronic attachment in Microsoft Word, Times New Roman, 12 Font.

Acceptance Rates

The *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* maintains of record of acceptance rates for each of the quarterly issues published annually. The percentage of acceptance rates since 2010 is as follows:

2012: 22%	2016: 19%	2020: 18%
2013: 15%	2017: 20%	2021: 17%
2014: 20%	2018: 19%	2022: 17%
2015: 22%	2019: 19%	

Book Review Guidelines

Book review guidelines should adhere to the author guidelines as found above. The format of the book review is to include the following:

- Full title of book
- Author
- Publisher, city, state, year, # of pages, price
- Name and affiliation of reviewer
- Contact information for reviewer: address, city, state, zip code, e-mail address, telephone and fax
- Reviewer biography
- Date of submission

Publication Timeline

Issue	Deadline to Submit Articles	Notification to Authors of Editorial Review Board Decisions	To AASA for Formatting and Editing	Issue Available on AASA website
Spring	October 1	January 1	February 15	April 1
Summer	February 1	April 1	May 15	July 1
Fall	May 1	July 1	August 15	October 1
Winter	August 1	October 1	November 15	January 15

Additional Information

Contributors will be notified of editorial board decisions within eight weeks of receipt of papers at the editorial office. Articles to be returned must be accompanied by a postage-paid, self-addressed envelope.

The *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* reserves the right to make minor editorial changes without seeking approval from contributors.

Materials published in the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* do not constitute endorsement of the content or conclusions presented.

The Journal is listed in Cabell's Directory of Publishing Opportunities. Articles are also archived in the ERIC collection. The Journal is available on the Internet and considered an open access document.

Editor

Kenneth Mitchell, EdD

AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice

Submit articles electronically: kenneth.mitchell@mville.edu

To contact by postal mail:

Dr. Ken Mitchell
Associate Professor
School of Education
Manhattanville College
2900 Purchase Street
Purchase, NY 1057

AASA Resources

➔ New and Revised Resources

➤ **AASA Launches ‘Live Well. Lead Well.’ Campaign: Initiative to Focus on Mental, Physical & Emotional Health of School System Leaders**

“We at AASA recognize that school system leaders need our support now more than ever before,” said Daniel A. Domenech, executive director. For more information about the *Live Well. Lead Well.* campaign, visit the AASA website:

www.connect.aasa.org/livewellleadwell

➤ **AASA Learning 2025 Learner-Centered, Equity-Focused, Future-Driven Education Initiative Underway**

Comprised of school system leaders and business and non-profit leaders, AASA’s Learning 2025 Commission was chaired by Daniel A. Domenech, executive director of AASA and Bill Daggett, founder of the Successful Practices Network. A network of educational systems now comprises a Learning 2025 National Network of Demonstrations Systems, whose chief objective is to prepare all students safely and equitably for a workplace and society for the future. For additional information about **Learning 2025 Network for Student-Centered, Equity-Focused Education**, visit the AASA

website www.aasa.org/content.aspx?id=45826 or contact Mort Sherman

at msherman@aasa.org, Valerie Truesdale at vtruesdale@aasa.org or Debbie Magee, program director, at dmagee@aasa.org.

➤ **AASA’s Leadership Network** the School Superintendents Association’s professional learning arm, drives educational leaders’ success, innovation and growth, focused on student-centered, equity-focused, forward-reaching education. Passionate and committed to continuous improvement, over 100 Leadership Network faculty connect educational leaders to the leadership development, relationships and partnerships needed to ensure individual growth and collective impact. A snapshot of over 30 academies, cohorts and consortia is represented in the graphic below. To assist in navigating through the pandemic, AASA has produced and archived over 100 webinars since March 2020 on *Leading for Equity* and *What Works* at aasa.org/AASA-LeadershipNetwork-webinars.aspx. Contact Mort Sherman at msherman@aasa.org or Valerie Truesdale at vtruesdale@aasa.org to explore professional learning and engagement.

continue to next page



PROGRAMS & SERVICES

JOIN THE AASA LEADERSHIP NETWORK!

.....

We offer more than 30 programs

.....

Enroll today in one of the professional learning programs for district and school administrators.

.....

Who Should Join?

The Leadership Network provides programming for School Superintendents, District Team Members, School Administrators, and those who aspire to central office positions, school leadership roles, and the superintendency.

.....

For more information about AASA's Leadership Network, contact Mort Sherman, Senior Associate Executive Director at msherman@aasa.org

PROGRAMS	
AASA Learning 2025 Network of Demonstration Systems	
PREPARE	Aspiring Superintendents Academy® Aspiring Superintendents Academy® Hybrid Learning Aspiring Superintendents Academy® Female Leaders Aspiring Superintendents Academy® Latino and Latina Leaders Collaborative State Aspiring Superintendents Academies (AZ, MT, MN and others) Urban Superintendents Academy Howard University Cohort & University of Southern California Cohort
CERTIFY	AASA National Superintendent Certification Program® AASA National Superintendent Certification Program® States National Aspiring Principal Academy in collaboration with NAESP National Instructional Leader Academy in partnership with AVID
CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS	Equitable Learning Environments Career-Connected Learning Mental Health School Health Innovation Student Bereavement Women and Minority School System Leaders
COLLABORATE & LEARN	Advancing Rural Education Cohort Eastern States Consortium Innovation by Design Large Countywide Suburban District Collaborative Leadership in School Communication in partnership with NSPRA National Principal Supervisor Academy in partnership with CEL National Women's Leadership Consortium Next Education Workforce in partnership with ASU Newly Appointed Superintendents
INNOVATE	Early Learning Cohort Equity in Action Cohort Innovative Districts Empowering All Learners (IDEAL) Cohort Radical Family Engagement Cohort Redefining Ready! Cohort Social Emotional Learning Cohort STEM Leadership Consortia Transformational Leadership Consortium

To ensure each child has access to equitable, rigorous, and relevant educational opportunities, the AASA Leadership Network is committed to supporting a pipeline of diverse school superintendents and educational leaders as they refine the knowledge, skills, and dispositions for highly effective leadership.

- **School District Spending of American Rescue Plan Funding**, an AASA survey of hundreds of district leaders across the U.S. in July (2021) about their plans to utilize American Rescue Plan (ARP) and other federal COVID-19 relief funding to address the pandemic-related student learning recovery. Results: www.aasa.org/uploadedFiles/ARP-Survey-Findings-090121.pdf
- **Resources on leading through COVID**
COVID Guidance, Strategies, and Resources.
www.aasacentral.org/covidguidance/
- **AASA Releases 2021-22 Superintendent Salary Study**
www.aasa.org/content.aspx?id=45378
- **Official Online Industry Suppliers for Educators**
aasa.inloop.com/en/buyersguide

continue to next page

➤ **AASA Main and Advocacy App**

Both apps are designed for school superintendents, central office staff, principals, teachers, policymakers, business and community leaders, parents and more. The Advocacy app enables advocates of public education to connect, network, communicate with other members, access, and share important information directly from their devices.

www.aasa.org/app.aspx

➤ **Superintendent's Career Center**

aasa-jobs.careerwebsite.com/

➤ **2020 Decennial Study of the American Superintendent**

www.aasacentral.org/book/the-american-superintendent-2020-decennial-study

The study is for sale and available at www.aasacentral.org/aasa-books

❖ **Join AASA** and discover a number of resources reserved exclusively for members. See Member Benefits at www.aasa.org/welcome/index.aspx. For questions on membership contact Meghan Moran at mmoran@aasa.org

❖ **Welcome materials may be found at**

www.aasa.org/welcome/resources.aspx

❖ **Resources for educational leaders** may be viewed at AASA's virtual library: www.aasathoughtleadercentral.org

❖ Learn about AASA's **books program** where new titles and special discounts are available to AASA members. The AASA publications catalog may be downloaded at www.aasacentral.org/aasa-books

➔ **Upcoming AASA Events**

AASA 2023 National Conference on Education, Feb. 16-18, 2023, San Antonio, TX