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Leadership in Diverse Schools: An Examination of Early College High School Principals in North Carolina

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The purpose of this qualitative, multi-site, multi-case study was to examine how three early college high school principals in North Carolina promote the success of the first generation, students of color and low-income students they serve. The study examined these principals through a conceptual framework of democratic, socially just, culturally responsive leadership. Findings show that two out of the three principals demonstrated the qualities and characteristics of democratic, socially just, culturally responsive leaders. Additionally, each principal led their school based on the values and beliefs each held about student achievement, access, equity and educational opportunity. The study has implications for the skills, dispositions and knowledge principals of diverse school should have in order to promote the success of their culturally and linguistically diverse students.

KEYWORDS: socially just leadership, culturally responsive leaders, culturally and linguistically diverse students

In 2012, the U.S. Census released data showing that by the year 2040, the majority of children born in this country will be children of color (Kayne, 2013). As the general population becomes more diverse, so does the public school population. If the educational experience that most first generation, students of color and lower-income students have traditionally experienced continues, then the country's economic outlook will worsen as these students fail to secure jobs, attain college degrees, or invest in America's economy (OECD, 2011). According to Murphy (1990), most school reforms fail to acknowledge the unique needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. However, one school reform initiative that goes against this trend is the Early College High School Initiative (ECHSI).

Started in 2002, the purpose of early college high schools (ECHSs) is to increase college access and high school completion rates for first generation, lower-income, and students of color (NC New Schools, 2013). Most research on ECHSs has centered on their creation and success with helping traditionally underserved and underrepresented students graduate with a diploma and a 2-year degree (AIR & SRI, 2008; 2009); however, few studies have examined principals and their role in these schools' success. As of 2016, there are over 400 ECHSs nationally and the majority are located in Texas, North Carolina and California. Since ECHSs have had successful outcomes with students that traditionally are underserved and unsuccessful in traditional high schools, an examination of the actions and practices principals take that help change the educational trajectory for these students is warranted.

According to Leithwood et al (2008), leadership is second to classroom instruction in factors that affect student learning. Principals are considered to be the person at the school-level

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that is responsible for maintaining and implementing the goals and objectives of a school reform initiative such as the ECHSI (Good, 2008). As schools become more diverse and demands to increase student achievement persist, principals must be able to successfully navigate competing values and interests, especially as schools seek ways to reform and improve. With this in mind, there is a need to examine how ECHS principals balance two competing interests: raising student achievement while helping the target student population (first generation, students of color and low-income students) earn a high school diploma and a college degree. Therefore, the current paper examines what actions and practices of ECHS principals promote the success of their culturally and linguistically diverse students?

Literature Review

Role of the Principal

The Wallace Foundation (2011) posited that principals perform five key functions including shaping a vision of academic success for *all* students, creating a welcoming and safe learning environment, cultivating leadership in others, focusing on improved instruction so teachers teach their best and student learning is optimum and managing people, data, and processes that promote school improvement. Performing these five functions are imperative as principals manage the demands of numerous stakeholders; therefore, successful principals must possess a strong and well-articulated values orientation (Day, 2004; Leithwood, 2004). What differs among principals is the way leaders apply these practices and demonstrate the principal's responsiveness to, rather than dictation by, the contexts where they work.

One study that sought to examine leadership practices *in situ* was the International Successful School Principals Project (ISSPP) (Day, 2004). The goal of this project has been to collect data from multiple perspectives, compare effective leadership in various contexts, and identify the personal qualities and dispositions leaders share (Day, 2004). As of today, over 200 studies have been conducted using the ISSPP protocols. Despite the number of studies within the ISSPP, few studies have examined principals who practice at schools that are part of a high school reform initiative designed to promote the success of students that have traditionally been underserved and disenfranchised in traditional high school settings.

Conceptual Framework

Since early college high schools target first generation, students of color and lower-income students, issues of race, ethnicity, and social justice are inherent and should be explored (Watlington, 2008). With this in mind, the current study uses a conceptual framework that views ECHS principals as democratic, socially just, culturally responsive leaders who promote the academic success of traditionally underserved and underrepresented students in three ways: increasing access to higher education; removing barriers to student learning using innovative solutions; and increasing opportunities for traditionally underserved and underrepresented students to attend ECHSs and earn both a diploma and a 2-year degree.

Democratic Leadership

Thoughts about democratic leadership originated with John Dewey's notion that educators could not function within a democracy if they did not practice those same beliefs in schools (Dewey, 1916; Rusch, 1995). Democratic leadership is participatory, interactive, and collaborative with the end goal being that everyone's voice is heard and no one is excluded from the decision-making process (1995).

Democratic leaders are active and know that their influence over the school's development is important and can only be achieved by deciding on an agenda or purpose, leading discussion and dialogue with others inside and outside the school building and being the chief learner in the building (Johansson, 2004). At the heart of democratic leadership is a focus on the values principals possess and the ones they place on specific actions and goals (Leithwood & Duke, 1999). These values "become the mental map that guides an individual's actions and thoughts and serves as the foundation for these processes" (Johansson, 2006, p. 623).

Social Justice Leadership

Socially just leadership derives its origins from Freire (1970) who believed that education should emancipate and people should engage in constant reflection before acting to make the world a more equitable place for all.

Socially just leaders understand that they lead based on their values and in order to ensure justice for all sometimes they will need to "leave the comforts and confines of professional codes and state mandates for the riskier waters of higher moral callings" (Rapp, 2002, p. 233). Socially just leaders also realize that not discussing or addressing issues of race and income within schools will allow deficit thinking and the status quo to continue (Larson & Murtadha, 2002; Larson & Ovando, 2001). Foster (2004) implored leaders to serve as change agents that challenged systemic institutional beliefs within schools, especially in relation to students of color and low-income student's academic achievement and degree attainment.

Culturally Responsive Leadership

Ladson-Billings (1994) conceived the term "culturally relevant pedagogy" in her book, *The Dreamkeepers*, which examined the teaching practices of eight teachers that successfully worked with African American students. Ladson-Billings believed culturally responsive practitioners should aid students in being successful while maintaining cultural competence and developing a critical consciousness that challenged the status quo (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Although most research using culturally responsive pedagogy centers on teacher practices, there is a growing call for this pedagogy to be applied within school leadership, particularly in schools that have high numbers of students of color and lower-income students (Johnson, 2007). Most studies on culturally responsive leaders have focused on Black principals that practice in urban schools (Reitzug & Patterson, 1998; Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Lomotey, 1989). These principals emphasized high expectations for students, an ethic of care, and commitment to the community.

Research Design and Methods

The current paper reports findings from a larger qualitative, multi-site, multi-case study on ECHS principals. Research protocols were designed from two sources: The International Successful School Principals Project (ISSPP), an international network that compiles research on successful principals around the world (Day, 2004) and Santamaria and Santamaria's work on critical leadership (2011). The goal of the ISSPP project was to collect data from multiple perspectives, compare successful leadership in various contexts and identify the personal qualities and dispositions school leaders share (Day, 2004). On the other hand, the goal of Santamaria and Santamaria's research was to determine how and why leaders act within an organization to challenge and change the status quo. Both studies closely mirror how research on principals should be conducted because they relied on multiple sources including face-to-face interviews, focus groups, and archival data analysis to document the experiences and practices of school leaders (Gopaldas, 2013). The study also included questions centered on the context of the study, early college high schools.

Purposive sampling was used to select three ECHS principals in North Carolina that served at schools with the following criterion: student body population that had 40% or more non-white students; school had to carry a Title I designation; and the principal must have led the school for four or more consecutive years. Finally, principals had to believe that they demonstrated the qualities and characteristics of democratic, socially just, culturally responsive leaders as outlined in the aforementioned framework.

Data included archival documents, state databases, interviews (with higher education representatives and teachers at School B), focus groups (with teachers, students and parents), and interviews with each case: School A Principal Joan Robinson, School B Principal Karen Lewis and School C Principal James Washington. A total of 45 people participated in this study and descriptive information for the three principals and the school contexts can be found in Table 1. All interviews and focus group data was transcribed and coded with open coding and axial coding in NVivo 10. All analyzed data was compared and contrasted against field notes for further meaning and greater understanding of the cases.

Table 1. Principals and School Context Information

	Principal Joan Robinson	**Principal Karen Lewis**	**Principal James Washington**
Principal race and gender	White female	White female	White male
Principal Age	Mid-30s	Early 50s	Early 60's
Yrs. in Education	15	26	40
Yrs. principal at school	4	7	8
School Information			
Total Study Participants	15	14	16
Enrollment	360	140	200
Racial composition (%)			
Black	6	36	56
White	49	45	30
Latino/a	20	11	12
Asian	20	2	0
Other	4	5	3
Free/Reduced Lunch %	53%	95%	65%

Findings

The following section provides a brief description of the school and community setting as well as each principals' practices or actions that demonstrated whether or not they were democratic, socially just, culturally responsive leaders.

School A Principal Joan Robinson

Principal Joan Robinson's actions and practices point to a complex picture of a principal that valued success and achievement over promoting access for students that are traditionally underserved and underrepresented. Principal Robinson demonstrated democratic leadership with her staff when she encouraged teachers to plan and work collaboratively (Rusch, 1995). Additionally, she solicited participation from others when she asked parents to volunteer every Wednesday so teachers could have common planning. This volunteerism, though, could be viewed as non-democratic since parents at School A were required to volunteer for four hours yearly or their child could not march at graduation.

Principal Robinson's democratic leadership with her students also showed a conflicting picture. On one hand she was described as being "more interactive with the students than traditional high school principals" during two monthly grade-level meetings, but some students reported that during these meetings she talked *at* the students instead of *with* the students which led one female student to describe her as "abrasive". According to a male student:

> I think one of the criticisms you could make is that she is almost overly involved in the student body a lot of the times, and when we do have meetings we oftentimes have meetings that are unnecessary [or] that we really don't need to have.

Although Principal Robinson sought student input on some school issues at these meetings or from the Student Government Association, students that were part of SGA stated that their ideas and voices were usually stifled because they never believed she would approve their suggestions. One student explained:

> When I was president of SGA, whenever we proposed ideas, the whole topic on the floor became do you think [Principal Robinson] would approve that. Like whenever we proposed something, that's the first thing she [our SGA advisor] would say is, 'Do you really think [Principal Robinson] would approve that? It wasn't a question of, 'Alright, let's take it to her and see what happens.' It's like, 'No, it's probably not going to happen.'

Students expressed that it was frustrating to know that even if Principal Robinson heard what they wanted most assumed she came to conversations with them already knowing what actions she would or would not take.

Principal Robinson did not exhibit many characteristics or interests of a socially just leader. Although she engaged in dialogue with stakeholders, the dialogue was not to "stimulate doubt, curiosity, risk-taking or creative" (Freire, 1970). Principal Robinson did not understand that she needed to, "leave the comforts and confines of professional codes and state mandates for the riskier waters of higher moral callings" (Rapp, 2002, p. 233). According to one teacher:

> I was talking to her one day at our summer meeting about how something was misunderstood among some of the staff or some of the newer teachers. She, I don't want to say took it personally, but she really took it to heart because she said, "I take that as not that you're saying 'I'm a bad principal', but my job is to teach the model. I know the model. My job is to run the model.' She said, '…that's why it works…I didn't make up what I'm doing. It's the model.'

This quote demonstrates that Principal Robinson was so interested in making sure that her school followed the early college high school model and remained at the top academically that she failed to take risks or come up with creative, innovative solutions to challenges or concerns in her school.

Another way Principal Robinson showed that she was not a socially just leader was when she maintained the status quo on providing access and equitable opportunities for admission to the school (Foster, 2004). She did not seem interested in coming up with new ways to attract more Black and male students to the school. When Principal Robinson was asked about this she replied: "They don't apply" and when she traveled to middle schools to recruit, "They'll raise their hands, like they'll ask 'What sports do you have'? And as soon as I say we don't have football, the whole crowd will be like, 'Ugh' and I'll say, 'We have basketball', and they'll say 'But do you play so-and-so'?" Instead of figuring out a way to explain her school's program to local Black and male students and their families, Principal Robinson maintained the status quo by defaulted to a stereotypical view on why these students did not apply for nor attend the school.

As a socially justice leader, Principal Robinson could have worked to be a change agent during the time she was at School A. Instead, she and her staff put forth minimal effort to change who applies for and enrolls in the school. According to Principal Robinson:

> We've done the church route. We have tried to go to the churches. I'm just -- It's a block. It's a thing, for real, [but] it's a statewide thing. I mean, it's not -- It's a push, I should say. It's a push statewide to really draw minority -- We don't typically draw -- We draw

Hispanic minority, which is also a push and African-American and Hispanic minority males are [also] a push statewide. We do draw Hispanic minority, but we don't typically draw African-American minority.

This quote shows that Principal Robinson failed to be accountable for the lack of Black and male students at her school and instead chose to place the blame for this on outside forces.

Principal Robinson demonstrated a couple of behaviors of a culturally responsive leader. She set high expectations for herself, the staff and students (Reitzug & Patterson, 1998; Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Lomotey, 1989). She was committed to making sure students reached their highest potential, strived for excellence and knew they were supported as they embarked on and completed school with both a diploma and a 2-yr degree. Teachers credited Principal Robinson with helping create a more collaborative culture among teachers and students that was interdependent and connected, but according to most study participants she did not have a true relationship with any of the school's stakeholders (Ladson-Billings, 2009).

Principal Robinson also had cultural expectations for her faculty and staff members which she called "community norms." These "community norms" dictated behaviors and actions faculty and staff should take to make the environment "more inviting and less disruptive." Principal Robinson explained:

Our community room, this space, how do we want that to be, all the way down to not wearing perfumes or lotions that are strong smelling, or cooking fish, or popcorn that could be abrasive to somebody. I mean we really have created community agreements that we all just really highly respect each other.

Again, this demonstrated that Principal Robinson was not challenging the status quo or allowing students and staff to be free to express their true selves. The only time that student's cultures were acknowledged or embraced was during a yearly international festival, which runs counter to actions a culturally responsive leader would take.

School B Karen Lewis

Principal Karen Lewis demonstrated characteristics and behaviors of a democratic leader when she sought to hear all sides of issues between students and teachers before making a decision. One student stated:

She's willing to compromise with you as well, so if you and a teacher have a fallout, she's willing to listen to both sides and see whether the student was incorrect in what they may have done, or whether the teacher was a little too harsh on the student, because maybe the student perceived it in a different way. She also targets certain students that just want to slack off and pulls them in to talk to them and make deals with them, like 'I'll do this if you do that.'

Although some teachers reported that they did not like Principal Lewis' discipline style, students appreciated that she did not use a one-size-fits-all approach to discipline. Principal Lewis' style provided students and staff an equal opportunity to voice their concerns about disciplinary issues instead of immediately punishing the student and not helping the student (and sometimes the teacher) see how the situation could have been resolved better. This approach to discipline,

which flies in the face of zero-tolerance discipline policies, shows that Principal Lewis valued democratic processes, compromise, and accountability.

Principal Lewis also showed socially just leadership qualities when she advocated for students outside the school. For example, she spoke on behalf of students at the district-level in relation to the hoodies students wanted to wear. Students were constantly being written up for having the hoodies during the winter months at the school, so instead of continuing to punish students over a clothing item, Principal Lewis appealed to the school board to allow the hoodies as long as they did not cover a student's face. One student reported:

> She cares about our personal experiences because the only reason why I'm wearing this (the hoodie) is because of her. She literally called for the Board of Education to allow us to be more open with clothing, because if not, we wouldn't be able to wear these things.

This practical solution revealed that not only did Principal Lewis advocate for students; she also sought creative solutions to problems. Another reason the school's early college program has been successful is because Principal Lewis and her staff help parents that traditionally are not involved in school processes understand the benefits of the program. One teacher explained:

> This is an impoverished area, and a lot of kids, their parents haven't gone to school, so this was one way to get them to buy into it, especially because of the low income clientele that we have, getting these services virtually for free, and then not only that, but having a support system right here to kind of wean them into it.

As a socially just leader, Principal Lewis was determined that her students would receive an education equal to every other student in the state and that the school's rural, economically poor location would not dictate a student's success or future (Larson & Murtadha, 2002; Larson & Ovando, 2001). Principal Lewis' actions did not go unnoticed from students who described her as being "caring" and "energetic" and "loving".

Finally, Principal Lewis possessed many qualities of a culturally responsive leader. She believed that the early college program would help prepare students to leave the town's rural area and become forces for change in the world. Even though she did not come from the same cultural or economic background as many of her students, she still valued their success and challenged deficit thinking among teachers about student's abilities and futures.

School C Principal James Washington

Principal James Washington demonstrated numerous characteristics and behaviors of a democratic leader when the majority of his teachers and students reported that they felt empowered to participate in running the school and knew that their voices were included in the decision-making process (Rusch, 1995). Principal Washington explained that he tried to be "hands off" with the teachers because:

> They know their subject area and what they need to teach, so me hovering over them all the time wouldn't help. Part of my job is to prepare teacher leaders that can have a bigger voice and impact in the school.

Principal Washington's democratic approach to leadership helped his teachers take ownership over numerous decisions at the school and led teachers to describe their relationship with him as one that was "like we're related or like brothers and sisters" instead of boss and subordinate.

Additionally, Principal Washington showed that he was an advocate for students within the school. Students stated that they came to him with problems or concerns before they went to teachers because they knew he would listen to both sides of the issue before making a decision. Although this approach to discipline frustrated teachers at times, his approach helped students know he would advocate for them even if it meant upsetting his colleagues (Conley, 1991). One teacher jokingly described Principal Washington's relationship with the students:

> If they're in trouble, they go to him. We're the bad guys and they're more afraid of us than him. They still listen to him though and respect him a lot."

Even though some teachers thought Principal Washington needed to be a tougher on the students at times, students appreciated the close almost father-like relationship they had with the principal. One student explained:

> [He]s involved in our lives and pushes us to try our best in school and our college classes. He always lets us sit in his office if we need a quiet place to work and is always available if we need to talk to him about anything.

Principal Washington's socially just leadership style helped students know that he had their best interests at heart in all his decisions. One action that showed Principal Washington's socially just leadership was his decision to work with stakeholders to start the early college eight years ago. According to Principal Washington:

> My mission here is to give the kid who doesn't have that opportunity an opportunity. We have some that make all A's or they have perfect attendance, very few, but we do have some. You can't have the whole school just of all C students because that wouldn't be good. That's like tracking. You've got to have the high end and low end all together to make things work, but the main mission is to give those children an opportunity.

Principal Washington believed that the best way for students to overcome the poverty and low educational attainment many of them grew up around was to give them an opportunity to participate in the early college program (Larson & Murtadha, 2002; Larson & Ovando, 2001).

Finally, Principal Washington possessed many qualities of a culturally responsive leader. Principal Washington challenged deficit thinking among past teachers about student's current abilities and future, which was why so many teachers had left over the past four years. Principal Washington explained that his current hiring process existed because he wanted to find teachers that would add to the culture and mission of the school while choosing teachers that cared about the students:

> When I first started, that's what I hired were people who cared, and still were confident, but they cared. That was the first rule, and I got away from that because I started letting teachers hire, so it was me along with everybody else, and we got to where we were hiring who we thought would be most competent and away from who would still be able to do different things in the classroom. They'd be open to change and that kind of stuff, but some of them we hired did not. They didn't care one bit about the kid. It was about their kid and it was about their subject. I'm into teacher empowerment, but we're not doing a good job of hiring teachers the way I want to hire teachers and so this last time I did the hiring by myself.

Despite this turnover, current teachers thought that Principal Washington was a good principal because his purpose and mission was all about the students and their success. According to one teacher:

> He really just wants them to do well. His vision is when they leave here that they can be thinkers. He wants them to be challenged and contribute. I don't think he necessarily wants them to leave with an associate's degree - I don't think that's the end all for him. He has said grades don't matter to me, which makes us cringe sometimes, but I know that grades are not the final determination of whether you're a success or not. In his mind, he really just wants the kids to be successful, make progress and be happy because it's like they and us are his kids and he's like the patriarch of our school family.

Teachers at School C trusted Principal Washington because they knew that he was doing whatever was in the best interest of them and the students, which points to the impact of his culturally responsive leadership.

Discussion

A cross-analysis of the three cases shows that all three principals demonstrated the qualities and characteristics of being democratic, socially just, culturally responsive leaders in varying degrees and results at the school level. ECHS principals must balance several competing interests such as access, relationship building, management of the organization and school accountability. The purpose of early college high schools is to increase college access and high school completion rates for first generation, lower-income students and students of color (NC New Schools, 2013). At times this purpose conflicts with federal and state mandates specifying that principals must show that *all* students are successful and achieving as measured through standardized tests.

All three principals demonstrated democratic leadership, but at various levels. Principal Robinson encouraged collaboration among teachers using weekly planning meetings while Principals Lewis and Washington had open door policies where teachers and students felt welcome. Although Principal Robinson sought student voices during monthly grade level meetings, she usually did not take their opinions or desires into consideration when making decisions that impacted the student's experiences. Lastly, Principal Robinson was not an advocate for her students inside or outside the school.

Conversely, Principals Lewis and Washington advocated for students as evidenced by them constantly working with teachers to help them understand that discipline should be administered based on student's individual cases not through blanket, zero-tolerance policies. Although both principals' actions at times conflicted with teacher's beliefs on discipline, Principals Lewis and Washington thought that treating students with respect and valuing them as individuals was more important.

Many educators say that they want *all* students to succeed, but words without deeds or actions changes nothing. A socially just leader, however, acts upon their belief that *all* students should have access to a quality education. With this in mind, Principal Robinson did not demonstrate socially just leader because she valued achievement and having top test scores over ensuring that traditionally underserved and disenfranchised students had access to her school. For example, only 5 out of 400 students that applied for admission two years ago were Black yet neither Principal Robinson nor the teachers and parents seemed to be concerned about this fact.

School A participants believed that gaining access to the school was a privilege and that only select students should have the opportunity to attend the school, which runs counter to the beliefs and actions of a socially just leader and the purpose of ECHSs.

On the other hand, Principals Lewis and Washington personified socially just leadership. Both principals wrote grants that started their schools and then allowed open access because they believed that historically underserved and underrepresented students should have the same education and services that more affluent students received. Study participants reported that both principals showed that they loved, respected and cared about their students, which helped students be more willing to take risks and participate in each school's rigorous early college program.

Each principal demonstrated culturally responsive leadership, although Principal Robinson's actions painted a contradictory picture about cultural responsiveness. All three principals had high expectations of their students and worked to create a family-like environment within their schools, but this is where the similarities between the three ended.

Principal Robinson's push to establish "community norms" about everything from what people could warm up in a microwave to what type of perfume or clothing a person could wear showed that she expected students to assimilate into the mainstream culture upon arrival at the school. On the other hand, Principals Lewis and Washington exhibited cultural responsiveness when they challenged teacher's deficit thinking about student's behavior and achievement. Both principals also had an ethic of care and love toward their students and the communities where they served. Principal Washington gained credibility with parents and students when he fired and dismissed teachers that did not value the student's or the school's purpose and mission.

Based on the findings from this study, each leader promoted student success by creating organizations that were aligned with their personal values and beliefs on achievement, access, equity, capacity-building and relationships (Harris, 2002). While Principal Robinson created an organization that promoted student success as measured by standardized test scores and academic performance, Principals Lewis and Washington created organizations that promoted access and opportunity over academic performance and standardized test scores.

Implications

The current study is significant because schools in this country are becoming more diverse and will require principals that demonstrate democratic, socially just, culturally responsive leadership to lead them. The reason these types of principals are necessary is because the educational history and experiences of most students of color and lower-income students in America has been overwhelming negative and counter to many educator's claims of wanting equitable, quality educational opportunities for *all* students. If our country wants to remain competitive globally and relevant in the future, then a dramatic change must occur. Since school leaders are typically the person tasked with leading such changes at the school level, then current and future principals, along with stakeholders, mush acknowledge historic injustices and take clear, purposeful actions within and outside schools to bring about substantial change. This study also study has implications for states that have ECHSs or are planning to start an ECHS program or school. Principals at early college high schools must practice democratic, socially just, culturally responsive leadership if they desire to be an effective ECHS leader.

The current study has implications for traditional schools. If principals, teachers, and policymakers continue to view students of color and lower-income students as deficient and

incapable or unwilling learners, then the results schools have seen with these students for decades will continue unabated. In light of numerous local and national protests against police brutality, unfair judicial systems, and education systems that disenfranchise students of color and lower income students, public school leaders, and teachers must accept their responsibility in leading conversations, practices, and processes that promote equitable, socially just, and culturally responsive educational opportunities for *all* students. School leaders, particularly those that serve at diverse schools, must consider how their action, or inaction, contributes to negative school experiences and outcomes for students of color and lower income students.

This study contributes to the body of literature on principal leadership, especially principals that serve at schools that are a part of the ECHSI. The current study also adds to literature on the actions and practices principals must take while serving in schools that predominantly enroll students of color and lower-income students. Finally, the study adds to research on the skills, knowledge, and dispositions principals at diverse schools need in order to be successful and effective leaders in those contexts.

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