Can Equity Be Mandated and Achieved? Examining the Relationships Among Policy, Local Context, and the Production of Racial Inequities in Special Education

Catherine Kramarczuk Voulgarides, Alexandra Aylward, Adai A. Tefera, and Alfredo J. Artiles

Despite legal protections provided by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), students of color are disproportionately represented in high incidence disability categories and disciplinary outcomes. This issue has been under examined in suburban communities. We used mixed methods to understand the contextual factors that contribute to the educational paradox between a policy framework designed to provide equal opportunity and persistent racially disproportionate outcomes. Findings show: (1) among suburban districts, the greater percentage of students of color and higher poverty rates increased the likelihood of disproportionality, and (2) IDEA mandates were disassociated from contextual factors, such as residential segregation and sociodemographic changes, which practitioners reported as having a strong influence on practice.

Fri, April 8, 12:00 to 1:30pm, Convention Center, Level Two, Exhibit Hall D Section D

School Contexts, Teachers' Perceptions of Student Ability, and Implication for Special Education Disproportionality

Roey Ahram and Alexandra Aylward

This study uses a multilevel analysis of data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99 (ECLS-K) to better understand the relationship between schools' socioeconomic and racial demographic characteristics, and perceptions of Black students' academic ability. The analysis shows that Black students are perceived as having lower levels of literacy compared to their peers, even when controlling for their actual reading ability. Moreover, in schools with greater concentrations of Black students, students' were perceived as having higher literacy skills compared to students in schools with lower concentrations of Black students. This may help explain why Black students are more likely to be classified as learning disabled or mentally retarded in schools district with lower concentrations of Black students.

Fri, April 8, 2:15 to 3:45pm, Convention Center, Level Two, Exhibit Hall D Section A

Also Check Out:

"Dangers Seen, Unseen, and Unforeseen": The Experiences of Black Male Researchers Interviewing K–12 Black Males

David E. Kirkland – Discussant

Sat, April 9, 4:05 to 5:35pm, Convention Center, Level One, Room 155

A Nation at Promise: Challenging Deficit Constructions of Male Youth Labeled "At-Risk"

David E. Kirkland – Chair

Sun, April 10, 10:35am to 12:05pm, Marriott Marquis, Level Four, Liberty Salon K

Lessons in Community School Implementation: Case Examples From Oakland, Chicago, and Utah

Joseph P. McDonald – Discussant

Sun, April 10, 2:45 to 4:15pm, Marriott Marquis, Level Two, Marquis Salon 2

Social Context and Social Media: Extending Our Research Through a Professional Online Presence

David E. Kirkland – Invited Speaker

Mon, April 11, 7:45 to 9:15am, Marriott Marquis, Level Two, Marquis Salon 5
Examinig the Root Causes of Racial Disproportionality: Analyzing the Role of Beliefs, Policies, and Practices in the Production of Disproportionate Outcomes in Special Education and Discipline

Maria G. Hernandez, Catherine Kramarczuk Voulgarides, Patrick Jean-Pierre, and Alexandra Aylward

The American educational system has a troublesome history with racial disproportionality in disciplinary outcomes and special education placement and classification. This paper takes up the complexity associated with identifying the root causes of disproportionality. It employs a document and content analysis of 5 school district’s “Root Cause Reports” which are a compilation of qualitative and quantitative data points related to disproportionality. The “Root Cause Reports” were generated by a technical assistance center that works in partnership with disproportionate school districts to identify beliefs, policies and practices contributing to disparate outcomes. Findings indicate 1) disproportionality tends to manifest more in middle and high schools; 2) practitioner beliefs about students and notions of colorblindness permeate all districts in the study.

Sat, April 9, 8:15 to 9:45am, Convention Center, Level Four, Independence Salon D

Still Searching: Understanding Black Males in (Literacy) Education

David E. Kirkland

Deficit assumptions of Black males persist in literacy education because relatively little is known about the literacies Black males practice. The paper asks: How are Black male literacies practiced across various stages of social development, and for what purposes? By addressing this question, this paper examines literacy, in relation to ideology—a specific theory of beliefs informing practice. It is guided by nuanced understandings of race, gender, and geography—e.g., post-feminist conceptions of intersectionality and complex masculinities (hooks, 2004), neo-formulations of Blackness (Coates, 2015), and critical geographic understandings of space (Kinloch, 2009). Findings suggest that Black males have used literacy to navigate a life beyond various forms of plights—the most recognizable being physical incarceration and chronic un(der)employment (Muth & Kiser, 2008). Such findings give rise to a new logic on Black males as highly literate consumers and creators of symbolic culture. Hence, negative associations of Black males, as projected in the media as well as a variety of literacy research studies, this study concludes, mischaracterize young Black men by ignoring the rich and resilient practice of literacy in their lives.

Sun, April 10, 10:35am to 12:05pm, Marriott Marquis, Level Four, Liberty Salon K

#BlackLivesMatter: Rethinking Urban Education in the Age of Mass Incarceration

David E. Kirkland

This paper inquires into the ways in which U.S. schools—particularly in the conceptual and ideological space of the Black Lives Matter Movement—have kept pace with U.S. prisons and jails in producing a new social group of outcast citizens who are joined by their shared experience of incarceration/detention, crime/rule violation, poverty, racial minority status, and school failure. This paper calls for new types of analyses/methodologies that reframe topics of social justice in urban schooling as critical inquiry designed to peer into transinstitutional sites of discovery, like the space between schools and prisons. The session will include discussions of collaborative methodologies targeted at topical/systemic intersectional analyses, and topics on cross-disciplinarity, ways to research schools by researching prisons (and vice versa), and how educational research aimed at ending mass incarceration might also interrupt other forms of educational inequity.

Mon, April 11, 4:30 to 6:30pm, Marriott Marquis, Level Two, Marquis Salon 10