Microaggressions in K-12 Schools: A Call for Culturally Proficient Leadership

Abstract
School districts operate within and contribute to the larger societal norms that systemically perpetuate inequitable academic and social emotional outcomes for students of color that often manifest in the form of microaggressions. Microaggressions in the classroom can be extremely damaging overtime, negatively impacting academic performance and related school behaviors by creating emotional turmoil and depleting psychological resources. Students of color describe racial microaggressions as patterns of being overlooked, under-respected and devalued because of their race. There is an urgent need to reverse unrelenting inequities within K-12 schools. School Leaders are the front-line of this work and are responsible for managing the dynamics of diverse school communities to ensure respect, support, and equitable outcomes for students, their families, and staff. The questions explored were: How are school leaders aware and understanding of the barriers to cultural proficiency that can lead to microaggressions in schools? In what ways do school leaders manage the dynamics of difference and embrace racial and cultural diversity to address microaggressions in schools? How do school leaders value the diversity of race and culture to prevent microaggressions in schools? How do school leaders and the school district institutionalizing the guiding principles of cultural proficiency to inform microaggressions in schools? A conceptual framework was used to guide the study and answer the questions. The overall findings show: (1) School leaders demonstrated a high level of self-awareness and understanding of the barriers to
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