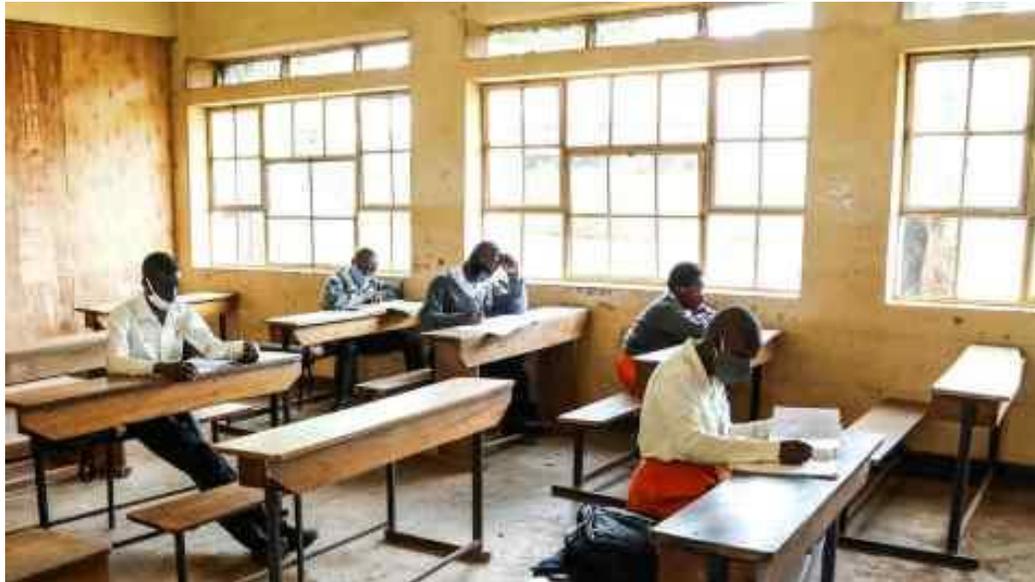


School leadership with 2020 vision: Negotiating multiple inequalities

Ann Phoenix



COVID-19 & leadership for 20-20 vision in schools

COVID-19 highlighted what we already knew:

- Educational institutions are responsible for much more than encouraging attainment.
 - Smooth out some inequalities and so keep them from public view to some extent.
- Schools have always intensified social divisions.
 - Differences between school in terms of the access they can provide to learning opportunities.
 - (Re)producing intersectional differences of gender, social class, ethnicization & racialisation.

LEADERSHIP FOCUS | APRIL 2022

PAUL WHITEMAN: NAHT general secretary

Covid-19 challenges continue

I sincerely hope that one day I'll be able to write an update without mentioning covid-19. Sadly, that day is not today. It would be remiss not to acknowledge the exceptionally difficult time many of you have had over the winter. I've heard it described as the worst period of the entire pandemic.

The figures for the number of children who have had covid-19 over the last few months are extraordinary. And staff members' absence has been an enormous challenge. You've constantly been juggling, covering for lessons, break times and lunchtimes. It's not

the Department for Education is proposing more real-term cuts and differential pay awards, further eroding school leaders' pay. We're working hard to put forward the case for a full restoration of school leaders' salaries, repairing the damage done over the last decade.

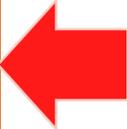
Looking forward in the year, there are a few key moments we're already preparing for. By the time you read this, the government will likely have published its highly anticipated White Paper. My fear at the time of writing, pre-announcement, is that the White Paper will end up being a missed opportunity. Established systems



NOINICIO

Talk covers

Multiple issues for school leaders in the pandemic.



Models of leadership on which school leaders draw.



Commonplace agreements about elements of leadership that work during Covid.



Recognition of inequities, but limited attention to intersectional inequalities

Unaccustomed pace of change for school leaders

“Throughout the lockdown, school leaders were on the frontline: suddenly interpreting large volumes of evolving national guidance, supporting staff in adapting to new ways of working, reassuring pupils and families through uncharted, stressful and sometimes distressing times. As schools re-open, those same leaders have been helping their school communities to adapt once again.” UCL Institute of Education, VIRTUAL EVENT: School leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic, 23 November 2020

Wednesday, 20 Apr 2022

Also see FEWEEK

SCHOOLS WEEK

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Teachers ‘unsupported’ as Covid outbreaks continue to blight schools

Freddie Whittaker
© 17 Apr 2022, 10:49
[More from this author](#)

Almost half of teachers report testing positive last term, according to union survey

See discussion



Multiple sites of school leadership

The screenshot shows the website of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of Greece. The header includes the ministry's name in Greek and English, and the website address www.moe.gov.cy. The main content area is titled 'We are informed about the Coronavirus (Covid-19)' and features a section for 'Audiovisual material' with four video thumbnails. Below this is a table of documents related to COVID-19 management in schools, including a list of subjects and protocols.

Subject	File	Date
Informative - Educational Online Meetings for the implementation of Health Protocols and for the Management of COVID-19 cases in schools by Dr. Zoe Dorothea Pana		
Secondary Schools		13/10/2021
Primary Schools		13/10/2021
Kindergartens		13/10/2021
Special Schools - Children with self-care difficulties		19/10/2021

Protocols	File	Date
Safety and Health Protocol for the Pancrepan Examinations 2021		19/05/2021
Safety and Health Protocol for the Special Examination Centres of the Pancrepan Examinations 2021		19/05/2021

Schools COVID-19 operational guidance

February 2022

- School leaders face more government intervention than usual – with mixed results

“Almost every country has undertaken some form of school system reform during the past two decades, but very few have succeeded in improving their systems from poor to fair to good to great to excellent.”

Mourshed, Mona, Chinezi Chijjoke, and Michael Barber. "How the worlds most improved school systems keep getting better." *Educational Studies* 1 (2011): 7-25.

- Lines of responsibility not clear, change difficult to lead & scientific evidence changes

“There is some excellent work underway from local authorities, dioceses, professional associations and MATs to ensure that school leaders are supported. However, the lived experience of heads is that it is, so far, inconsistent and patchy.”

Colin Diamond (2021) 'School Leadership and Covid-19: a chance to create a better education system in England for the long-term'.

Multiple concerns of pandemic leadership

- Online teaching for most children with in-person teaching for the children of key workers and those at risk
- Organise and enforce mask wearing, and organise socially distanced moving around the school
- Manage quarantines (including of teachers)
- New assessment systems for children who had missed a great deal of teaching.
- Support and contain children who had been bereaved or were frightened of possible bereavement and some teacher deaths.

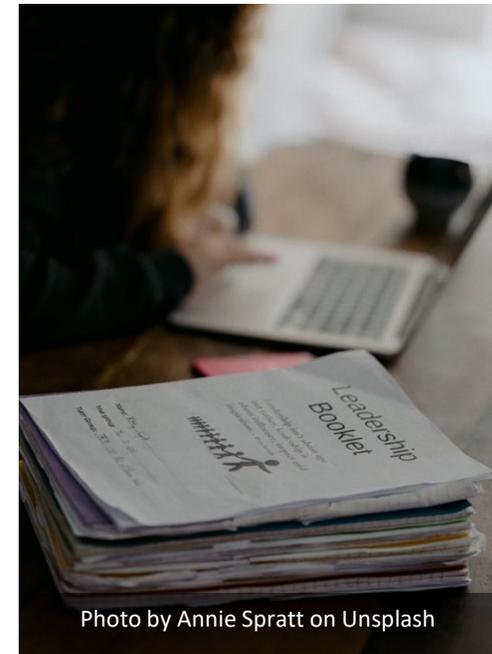


Photo by Annie Spratt on Unsplash

Digital divide: The kids struggling without tech at home

13 Jul 2020



Six children were sharing one phone to help them do their school homework

Six children from a family in Swindon were recently all trying to share one phone to do all of their homework, during lockdown.

Their mum had to split the phone between them all using one hour time slots.

One of the children said it was stressful, and was worried she was "falling behind" her classmates.

In a different house, 14-year-old Charlie, has been doing all of his studying for his GCSE exams, which will happen next year, using a phone.

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So what is leadership?

Process designed to achieve goals/aims—can be multiple leaders – pragmatic, gets things done

- Requires followers, so is relational
- Experiential learning of skills and practices
- Community service experience (Wagner & Pigza, 2016)
- Arises in different ways— employed; elected; spontaneous; peer
- Transaction between leader, situation, followers--flexibility

Different models of leadership co-exist

1. **Functional-'objective' model** (from leadership training in the military-industrial complex)

- Power applied top-down in a 'leader-centric' way.

2. **Postindustrial/Relational leadership model**

- Knowledge is socially constructed in processes of shared meaning making & social change occurs through networks (Wheatley 2006).
- 'Distributed leadership' (Alma Harris, 2003).

3. **Critical perspectives**

- Commitment to social justice & recognition of unconscious biases that maintain the privilege of dominant groups –masculinity, heteronormativity, and White supremacy (Agosto & Roland, 2018).
- Transformative leadership 'to transform education into a more equitable and just system' (Agosto & Roland 2018: 257).
- Requires moral courage to intervene in inequities.
- Servant leadership?

COVID-19 leadership drew on earlier leadership practices

- Different models of leadership employed in different schools
- Intersectionally differentiated levels of trust – within & between schools
- Government funding & regulatory frameworks

Petros Pashiardis and Antonios Kafa (2021) , “successful school leaders exhibit the following characteristics: (1) Networked Leadership – Developing external relations, (2) People-centered leadership – Shared ownership and collaborative commitment and (3) Clear vision and values. Additionally, based on this study, we argue that school leadership is also highly contextualized and we support the notion that school leaders’ preparation programs should be context-based and context-specific.”



Leadership for reimagining school futures requires

- Flexibility, clear vision, speed of organisation and careful delegation became more important than usual, but so too did engagement with local communities and recognition of anxiety and pain.
- Opportunities for rethinking leadership and addressing the inequalities made painfully evident in the pandemic.
- Understanding of how to ‘build back better’
- School leadership will have to be able to deliver a ‘pedagogy for precarity’ that is also a ‘pedagogy for **justice**’. Papastephanou, M., Zembylas, M., Bostad, I., et al., (2020). ‘Philosophy of education in a new key: Education for justice now’. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 1-16.



Photo by Giovanni Gagliardi on Unsplash

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Leadership experiences during Covid-19

A 'leader-centric' approach is not sufficient.

Requires collaborating in 'distributed leadership'.

Achieving transformation requires participation with other leaders who want to change – shared meaning making.

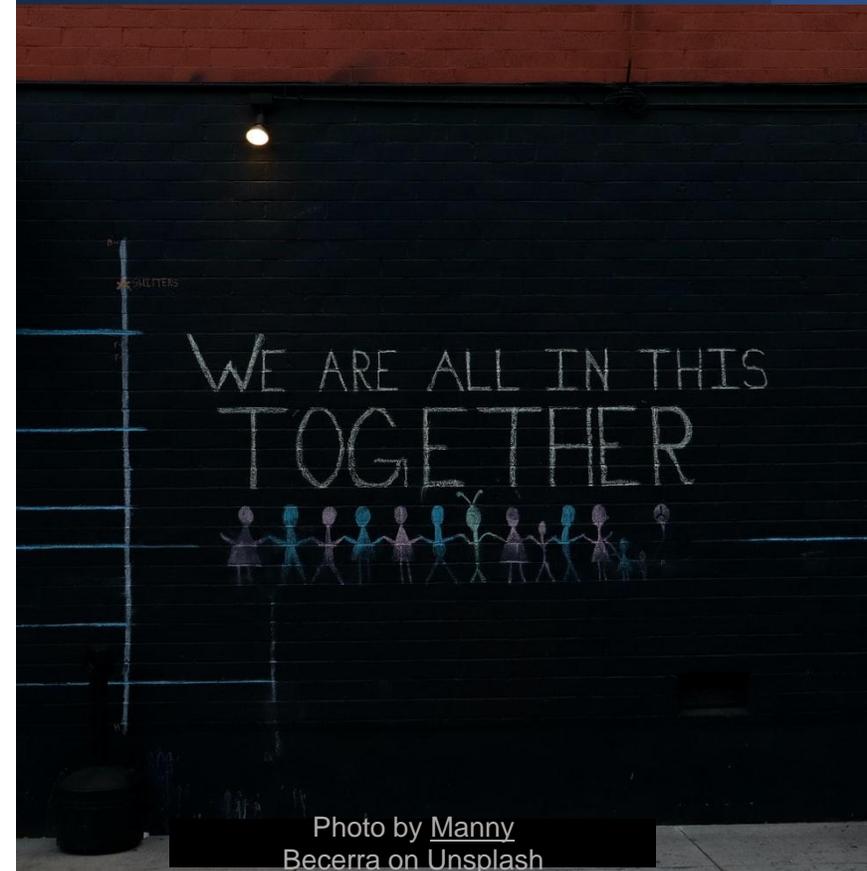
Promotion of social justice requires recognition of difference and inclusion of diverse groups.

Crisis leadership – command and control for each school (Roger Pope)

- Relentless focus on what really matters.
- More directive **command** style – e.g., online learning has to happen quickly.
- Retreat from strategic (planning for the future) to complex operational mode in a rapidly changing situation.
- Managing the technology and teaching it.
- Managing online pedagogy – learning together as professionals – creating the curriculum.
- Leadership through the unknown.

Collaboration and trust central to good leadership practices (and all good pandemic practices)

- Good communication flow and shared vision to foster trust in leadership.
- Team working – collaboration, strong team.
- Shared values of duty of care for children.
- Mutual respect of leaders, teachers and parents.
- Collaboration across schools.
- Working with communities and addressing societal issues.



Critical perspectives on school leadership

- Value-centred leadership– empathetic, affiliative, listening, show responsive– frequent communications for collegiality – we’re all in this together.
- Raising funds to provide support for children, families and communities as well as for teachers.
- Enabling young people to lead and be part of the solution.
- Addressing intersectional inequities
- Culturally responsive/inclusive perspectives (Khalifa, M.A., Gooden, M.A. and Davis, J.E., 2018. *Culturally responsive school leadership framework*).

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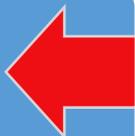


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Much attention to inequalities of food and internet access (463 million children no computers for home schooling –OECD)

- Less attention to other inequities.
- Ample, longstanding evidence that educational attainment at all levels, in many countries is patterned by racialisation, social class, gender, school and neighbourhood (Crawford et al., 2017; Hutchings, 2021; Ross, 2021; Strand, 2021).
- Inequalities in how children are treated, by teachers and peers.

Commonplace that schools reproduce and amplify existing inequalities

- David Gillborn (2008) 'concerted practices' within the English education system work to maintain the status quo in order to reinforce white privilege and legitimate racist policies and practices towards black children (cf. Annette Lareau).
- Focus on the *"education gap" is misplaced. Instead, we need to look at the "education debt" that has accumulated over time. This debt comprises historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral components... a lack of investment in schooling resources for low-income children leads to a variety of social problems that require continued public investment"*. In the US, this disproportionately affects African American, Latino, Asian, and other minoritised ethnic students.
- We need new ways of understanding the multifaceted processes that reproduce educational inequities; long-term impact of such inequities on children and young people; commitment to change for social justice.

‘Understanding intersectionality to promote social justice in educational leadership’

‘It is critical for educators/administrators to understand intersectionality as a tool to uncover social inequality within the education system. This approach allows educational leaders with a social justice orientation to be critical of social divisions. Without an understanding of how social inequities work together to create unjust structures, education will continue to be a site for the production and reproduction of social injustices’ (Ericka Roland, 2018: 16)

Lack of attention to racialised inequities

“For more than 50 years, Black Caribbean children have under-attained in British schools and, despite a lot of research, politicians offer deficit depictions of Black Caribbean pupils with little attention to institutional practices or discriminatory dynamics” (Wallace & Joseph-Salisbury, 2021, ‘How, still, is the Black Caribbean child made educationally subnormal in the English school system?’).

“School-based policies, such as zero tolerance approaches to discipline, which claim to operate in ‘colour-blind’ fashion but actually discriminate in systematic ways: it is common to hear the argument that race inequity can best be addressed by ‘colour-blind’ approaches which focus on an individual rather than their ethnicity. Unfortunately, decades of research have demonstrated that the reality is not so simple. Although teachers may claim (and sincerely believe) that zero tolerance policies are applied without fear or favour, in reality they tend to lead to more frequent and harsher sanctions against minoritized students.”

Gillborn et al., (2021) *Evidence for the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities*. Working Paper. University of Birmingham.

Child Q: Strip-search
schoolgirl head
teacher steps down
By Celestina Olulode
BBC News 20/04/2022

Zero tolerance of
drugs in school
applied in racist
ways to high-
achieving black
London 15-year-old
girl



Protests have been held in east London over the student's treatment

The head teacher of an east London school where a black pupil was strip-searched has stood down due to health issues.

A **safeguarding report** found the search of the 15-year-old girl, known as Child Q, was unjustified and racism was "likely" to have been a factor.

Child Q is suing the Met Police and the school in Hackney over the incident.

In a letter to parents, the school said "an outstanding head teacher" is already in place to take over the role.

- **School apologises for strip-search of schoolgirl**

During the incident, the girl was taken out of an exam to the school's medical room and strip-searched by two female Met Police officers who were looking for cannabis, while teachers remained outside.

No other adult was present, her parents were not contacted, and no drugs were found.

The girl's intimate body parts were exposed and she was made to take off her sanitary towel, according to the review.

The Met has admitted the actions of the two officers were "regrettable" and it "should never have happened"

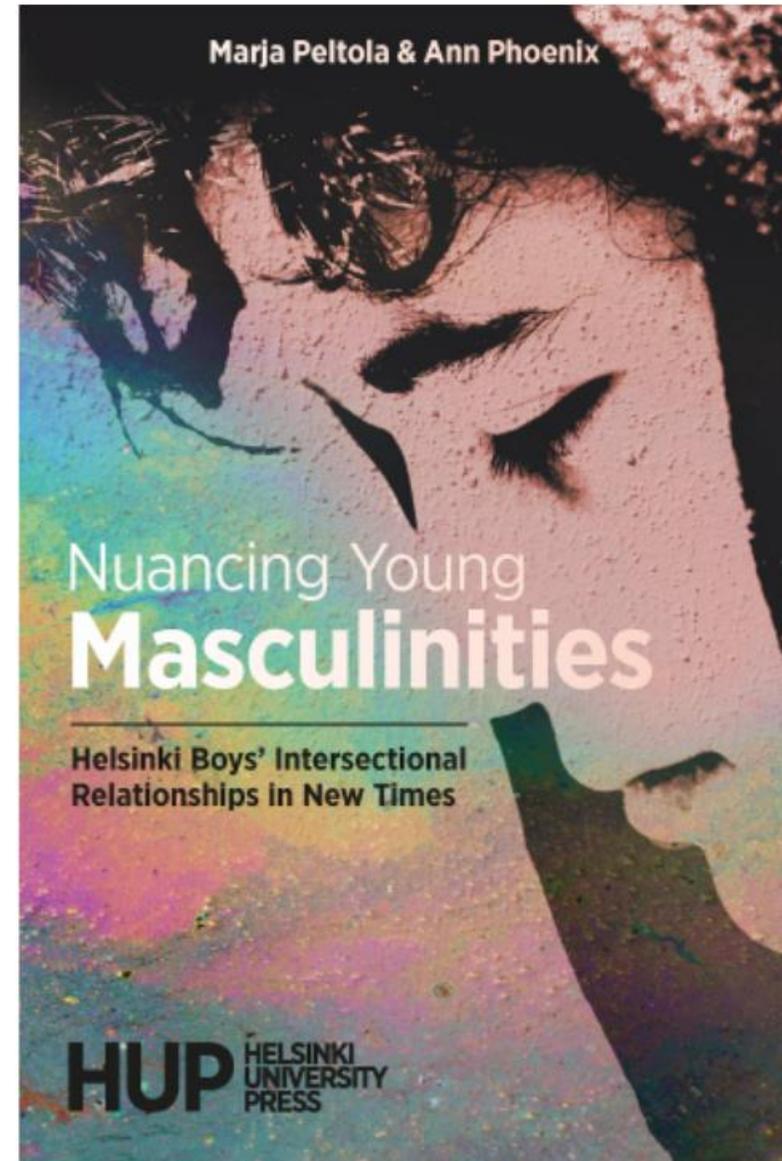


14-year-old Muslim schoolboy Ahmed Mohamed arrested after taking homemade clock to school in USA. He was questioned by five police officers

...Zuckerberg invited Mohamed to Facebook headquarters. ... On October 19, 2015, Mohamed attended White House Astronomy Night ...and met with President Obama... and (was) placed on a call with the crew of the International Space Station...Google invited Mohamed to attend its science fair, urging him to bring the clock along; when he arrived he "received a warm welcome, touring the booths and taking pictures with finalists." Twitter offered him a chance to intern with them. Retired Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield invited Mohamed to his science show in Toronto...the family was invited to the headquarters of the United Nations ...On September 25, 2015, Ahmed met with Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu...He was also invited to the Social Good Summit in New York City and during his visit, he met with Mayor Bill de Blasio...and members of New York City Council. (He is continuing his education on scholarship in Qatar) **Source: Wikipedia**

Without sustained leadership on racialised/gendered to institutional practices, racism and sexism flourish

- Elmeri: Well because we have one like a dark-skinned forward. He is really good at running so they always shout at him everything like, go steal bikes and then, everything else a bit racist like this. /.../ Opponents and then some parents shout.
- Q: Parents, for real?
- Elmeri : Yeah and sometimes in school they throw bananas at him and [laughs] other stuff like that.
- Q: Yeah right. Has your, coach or someone said something about it?
- Elmeri: Yes but it doesn't help at all when, they just don't listen.
- Q: Well what do you think about it?
- Elmeri: I think it's a bit dumb but, not everyone needs to be (friends with everyone).



van Doodewaard & Knoppers (2018) Perceived differences and preferred norms: Dutch physical educators constructing gendered ethnicity

“(L)ack of attention meant that immigrant girls did not always acquire the necessary skills. They were constructed as ‘less sporty’ by almost all of the teachers. During an observation, we saw this explicitly being managed in the PE class. A group of girls was divided into two groups: able or less able to jump into a somersault. Implicitly, all immigrant girls were assigned to the less able group. Teacher 5 realised this while we watched the video. The teacher was shocked at the implicit use of stereotypes...

My assumption seems to be that if you wear a headscarf then you cannot be good at sports. But that is crazy. We have many, many kids here who are Muslim or have a different history and who are good at sport.”

- Most of the efforts and energy of teachers focused on a group of “non-Western immigrant boys who were described as rambunctious as they dominated the class with their energy, noise and skill”.

Need for critical pedagogies of discomfort & empathy in decolonising multicultural schools

- **Discomfort needs to be combined with empathy**

“An important implication for multicultural teacher education, then, is to create safe spaces that do not dismiss discomfort, but rather encourage a way of thinking, feeling and acting that fosters teachers’ critical rigour and empathetic understanding ...

All in all, what we suggest here is that discomfort has more chances to be dealt with pedagogically and productively, if it is combined with a pedagogy of strategic empathy.” Michalinos Zembylas & Elena Papamichael (2017) Pedagogies of discomfort and empathy in multicultural teacher education, *Intercultural Education*, 28:1, 1-19, (p.15)

- **Affective solidarity for dealing with difficult knowledge**

“[B]y foregrounding white discomfort as a social and political affect that is part of the production and maintenance of white colonial structures and practices, my aim is to provide ...an account which opens up a realm that situates the pedagogisation of white discomfort within the broader decolonising project of disrupting white colonial structures and practices.

Michalinos Zembylas (2018) Affect, race, and white discomfort in schooling: decolonial strategies for ‘pedagogies of discomfort’, *Ethics and Education*, 13:1, 86-104.

- **Gail Lewis (2013)** Institutions produce ‘zones of discomfort’ that structure the relational field in which people interact.

Longstanding discrimination/burgeoning attention (UK, October 2020)

Rules Against Racist Hair Discrimination 'Must'

Arj Singh 6 hrs ago



© Kate Williams Ruby's hair the first time she was sent home from school, aged 14 in 2016

Ministers have been urged to toughen rules around racist hair discrimination which causes "ridiculous stress and anxiety and can harm Black people's educational and work outcomes.

Equalities minister Liz Truss was urged to toughen guidance for schools and workplaces to stop "any more cases of Black people being sent home from school because of their afros, or turned down for jobs because they have braids or cornrows.

The Liberal Democrats also urged Truss to launch

Hair discrimination is intertwined with racism. Let's follow California, and ban it
Micha Frazer-Carroll The Guardian 8.7.2019

At school and at work, black people are routinely castigated for their hairstyles. The US state is showing the UK the way to go

£17,640-a-year private girls school becomes first in Britain to allow black hairstyles like afros and cornrows as part of new uniform policy

- Sutton High School in South London will adapt the Halo Code on black hairstyles
- It's been developed by activists to stop black students being punished for hair
- Teachers will speak to suppliers about hats for pupils who want to push back hair
- Code 'champions the right of staff and students to embrace all Afro-hairstyles'

By MARK DUELL FOR MAILONLINE

PUBLISHED: 15:06, 18 December 2020 | UPDATED: 15:07, 18 December 2020

▲ 'Styles such as dreadlocks, braids, cornrows, and of course afros, can't be disentangled from black culture.' A hair salon in Sacramento, California. Photograph: Kathleen Ronayne/AP

School policies can make some children feel that they are “Bodies out of place” (Sara Ahmed,)

“...when I was in school I was told by my maths teacher that my braids were disgusting and not school policy. That was enough to emotionally scar me not to get braids for at least another 12 years. My mum had to complain to the school but that wasn't enough, the psychological damage was done and it had left me feeling ashamed of a style that is known to protect my natural Afro. As a result, I continued to chemically straighten my hair.”

I teamed up with Chessie King to show you what is accepted and discriminated



Zina Alfa

London, ENG, United Kingdom



9 NOV 2020 —

Chessie King has been a massive supporter in trying to end hair discrimination and she reached out to me to do a post to educate people on the differences in school and work.

Contemporary response to epistemically violent educational injustice

21 May 2021



The **Division of Educational and Child Psychology** responds to the BBC documentary 'Subnormal: A British Scandal'.

"The documentary is profoundly moving and distressing. As a profession we must accept our role in the devastating practice of misclassifying children as 'educationally subnormal' and the racist practice that resulted in disproportionate numbers of black pupils being sent to ESN schools. We acknowledge and recognise the distress this documentary and this historical practice will have caused to those involved, their families and Educational Psychologists, in particular black and ethnic minority Educational Psychologists.

"We are proud of the work the profession does do to improve the education and lives of children, and the strides we have made to ensure children are at the heart of what we do. However we are not blind to the fact that past practices and the classification of children by various testing methods have contributed to structural and systemic inequalities. In order for us to make progress we must hear and address uncomfortable truths, reflect and take meaningful action."

- **All the examples illustrate school leadership that does not attend to inequities and so reproduces them.**
- **Future vision:** Reimagining challenges and opportunities in critical perspective (Leithwood, 2021).
- Digital pedagogic leadership (Kafa, 2021): staff development; weekly meetings of school heads.
- Addressing contradictions between government, local authority, school leadership.
- Care and compassion in the learning process and addressing burnout.
- Flexibility in leading /managing change for sustained future improvement.
- Relationality, collaboration & trust – children, community, families, teachers, other schools.
- **Values:** Intersectional equity-oriented leadership

**Refreshing school leadership beyond Covid-19
[Resilience, reorientation & reinvention, McLeod & Dulsky,
2021]**

Rethinking possibilities for transformation

‘People keep saying, “We just need to get back to normal.” Going back to normal for the kids who are most vulnerable is not a solution, because normal was where the problem was. I’ve been interested in looking at, how do nations come back when they go through something catastrophic? I’ve looked at a major disruption in schooling, which is World War II for places like Japan and Italy. Japan...totally redid their school system when they came back. Totally.

Gloria Ladson-Billings August 7, 2020 <[Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings - Instruction Partners](#)>



Leadership for speedy re-imagining of equalities and welcome: 'pedagogy for precarity and social justice' (Papastephanou et al., 2021)

Measures in support of pupils and educational staff fleeing Ukraine following the Russian invasion

The European Commission is determined to support Ukrainian pupils and teachers in these extremely challenging times.

European Education Area
Quality education and training for all

17 Mar
2022



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