

**Swimming Against the Current: Resistance to a Black Superintendent's Fight to Lead
With Equity in an Urban School District**

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Abstract

This case describes how, after being hired by a large urban school district in the southern United States, a Black male superintendent's relationship with his stakeholders deteriorated due to disagreements about his equity-based leadership approach. Three incidents occurred during his tenure, which he believed to be racially motivated. Yet, the school board and the community downplayed race as the motivating factor. Ultimately, the community's racial bias led to his departure after only 3 years. This case study explores the question, "How did race affect the ability of a Black superintendent to lead with equity in an urban school district?"

Keywords

Black superintendent, Black leadership, equity leadership, urban school district, school administration

Swimming Against the Current: Resistance to a Black Superintendent's Fight to Lead With Equity in an Urban School District

The following case study examines the tenure of Superintendent Z, a Black man originating from the East Coast, from 2016 to 2019 as he led District Y, located in the southern United States. Although Superintendent Z was unanimously voted into the position and initially received with enthusiasm, after making equity-based decisions regarding allocation of the district's limited funds, key leaders in the district who were once allies became adversaries. Despite his tenuous relationship with District Y leadership, Superintendent Z remained clear about his goals to create a more diverse administrative staff who better reflected the composition of the district's student population and who would improve the academic outcomes of students of color.

District Y: A Large, Diverse, Urban District

District Y reported an enrollment of 85,000 students and had grown increasingly diverse over the previous decade, with Black and Hispanic students both outnumbering White students. However, the rates of student and administrative diversification were incongruent; the faculty and administrators were mostly White and represented 3 times the number of Black individuals in the same role. This incongruence is common nationwide; Hansen and Quintero (2018) calculated that whereas half of U.S. students are of color, only 25% of administrators and 20% of teacher are.

Several candidates were considered before Superintendent Z was hired to address the challenges of District Y. First, one interim superintendent's offer was rescinded after it was extended by the school board. Next, a White male candidate turned down the job after first

accepting it. Close behind was a promising Black female candidate who came from X Town, the city where District Y was located, and had won the hearts of its people. However, she was a second choice, and the board determined it necessary to continue the search for the ideal candidate, much to the dismay of the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

Superintendent Z

Eventually, a divided school board, widely recognized for its infighting, somehow united in choosing a Black superintendent by a unanimous vote. Superintendent Z attended a historically Black college/university as an undergraduate, Johns Hopkins University for a master's in Reading Education, and The George Washington University for a doctorate in Educational Administration and Policy Studies. Inspired to become an education administrator and make a difference among students of color after an encounter with a Black high school student who could not read, Superintendent Z had always served in environments predominantly comprised of students of color. He operated out of an ideology that education is one of the most critical factors in improving the circumstances of marginalized people.

Superintendent Z began serving as the district leader in May 2016. He immediately began leading from an equity-based standpoint to serve the needs of the historically underserved students of color in District Y to improve the district's overall academic outcomes. One of his first challenges was to help the district's stakeholders to understand the difference between equality and equity. Whereas equality involves the equal distribution of care and resources regardless of how much or how little a given individual needs to succeed, equity appeals to individual levels of need with appropriately varying levels of care and resource allocation (Dressel, 2014). Racial equity is generally understood as being more useful to expanding the

rights and privileges afforded to people of color. Superintendent Z used equity as a standard of decision-making to ensure that all students in the district were provided with the resources they needed to be successful. For example, Superintendent Z attempted to hire school administrators of color who represented the student population and to allocate Title I funds more heavily to the highest need schools. When the necessity of operating from a standpoint of equity is not understood, White community members can fall prey to the erroneous belief that they will lose some of their privileges if resources that were once used to serve them are funneled towards less-privileged communities. This fear of the potential loss of privilege can lead to protests of an equity-based leadership approach.

Understanding the value of open communication in maintaining a strong collaborative relationship with a governing board, Superintendent Z provided a weekly memo to school board members and other district stakeholders that kept them abreast of his activities. Much of his work centered on correcting the inequitable distribution of the district's resources, as he soon found that the underprivileged students in the district were not receiving sufficient resources to help them succeed academically. Additional funds needed to be rerouted to underperforming schools, which meant fewer resources for schools that were performing adequately. Although these equity-driven decisions eventually proved to be effective in realizing the district's desired outcomes, the reallocation of funds and the elimination of some programs to free up more funds were not well received by all of the community's stakeholders. These details are described in the section on Incident 2.

The Superintendent's Documentation of Double Consciousness

Black superintendents are frequently in a position where they must practice simultaneous awareness of (a) their role in administrative politics and the administration overall and (b) the

historical challenges of Black presence in leadership positions. Black individuals experience an internal conflict while functioning in an anti-Black society, which prompts them to view themselves through the eyes of an oppressive society and measure themselves and their accomplishments using the standard of rule of a world that views them with contempt. This internal conflict has been termed by noted scholar activist W. E. B. Du Bois (1903) as “double consciousness.” Rather than operating out of the freedom of self-consciousness, Blacks must be able to navigate two consciousnesses: their own and that of the larger society that is constructed to oppose them. As such, Black leaders like Superintendent Z must maintain a constant awareness of their own thoughts, values, feelings, and actions and how they influence and are influenced by the community they serve. Black leaders also must simultaneously negotiate these dynamics from the perspective of the community (Du Bois, 1903). Additionally, out of this double consciousness, they must understand inequity and threats to students that may impact their social and academic performance (Khalifa et al., 2016).

Out of a conscious awareness of the need to actively negotiate this internal conflict as a Black leader, Superintendent Z documented his experiences in a journal. The daily writings detailed each step of his journey as the district leader, his interpretations of the difficult interactions and administrative challenges he had with district stakeholders, and the impact situations in the day-to-day leadership of District Y had on him both professionally and personally. To accompany the personal observations that he detailed in his journal, Superintendent Z dedicated a portion of each day to reviewing news articles that relayed local incidents motivated by racial bias, analyzing them together across time. A theme emerged of virtue signaling, characterized by the disinclination of White individuals to get involved in racial issues and by the role of Whiteness in the reluctance to let go of historically held power in order

to benefit people of color. Ultimately, these journaled interactions and the accompanying media clippings would leave a paper trail that clearly illustrated the role that race played on Superintendent Z's ability to lead the district effectively and advance the school board's strategic goal of improving the district's outcomes. Superintendent Z pinpointed three racially charged incidents that impacted him and his leadership, as described in the following sections.

Incident 1: Gatekeeping and Virtue Signaling From Politician A

Following the model of Moody's (1983) eight ideal hiring criteria for exacting change for students and educators of color, Superintendent Z knew that networking was critical for Black superintendents. Inclined to collaborate, and acting on advice from local powerbrokers, in 2016, upon his hire, Superintendent Z approached Politician A, a White male state representative, and asked for a meeting. After discussing some of the work that Superintendent Z had done up to that point, Politician A was ready to cut to the chase. He bypassed the niceties typically offered in an introductory meeting and blurted out, "I am someone who does not sugarcoat things. Would you like me to be brutally honest, or are you someone who cannot handle direct feedback?" Superintendent Z responded, "Please, the more brutal, the better for me. I appreciate direct feedback." Politician A said,

Good. I am the same way. [X Town] is a small town. I love this city. My family has been in [state] for generations. There are lots of good people down here, but this city still has a bunch of good ole' boy Rednecks here who are uncomfortable with change. I was glad to see you appointed. We have a Black president who is doing a great job, and I think the South has a lot of work to do as it relates to diversifying leadership. Recently, I have been in meetings in rooms you may never be invited to attend. These good ol' boys, bless their hearts, are scared to death of you. They are used to seeing a Black person leading [a

local] medical school, and [the state] University. A few years back, a Black man was appointed to run [X Town] Electric Services. You will be the first “cross-over” Black leader that people in this city will really see impacting lots of White people directly. My advice to you is to go slow. I have already heard rumblings that you have hired a lot of minorities from outside of the state, and you have placed them in high-profile positions within the school district. People are not used to seeing that much change this fast. You have impressed most of the people who have interacted with you. I think you can be here for a long time, but you need to be mindful of the fact that this is the South. The good ol’ boys need to know you. It would be wise for you to identify a few of them who can vouch for you in these backroom meetings.

That Politician A considered his blunt words to be helpful, not harmful, was not lost on Superintendent Z. Still, his excusing of (a) the trenchant views of the “good ol’ boys” and (b) a general lack of advancement in racial equity in the South disturbed Superintendent Z. Politician A further advised that Superintendent Z attempt to curry favor with X Town’s most powerful White men, which Superintendent Z did with no success.

Blackness and Black leadership were still considered threats by politicians determined to preserve tradition and the socioeconomic hierarchy of X Town. Superintendent Z’s subsequent efforts to ally with White male city leaders fell flat. Politician A was gatekeeping X Town’s White privileges and rights. He made clear that a Black superintendent could not expect these privileges and rights in X Town.

Incident 2: Divergent Paths of Equity and Equality in Addressing Budgetary Concerns

Incident 2 transpired over a period of months in 2019. District Y projected a deep budget deficit resulting from the district’s projected enrollment being down 1,500 students and the

district only receiving \$5 million in new city funding for the year. Amidst this financial crisis, the administration was said to be underfunding special education by at least \$10 million, and another group of 12,000 English language learners needed aid. Staff salaries were still insufficient despite a 3% raise and salary step that district workers had received in 2016. However, pressure to divert more funds to underpaid staff conflicted with the urgency of the special education underfunding crisis.

Decreased city funding could not curb an increase in per-pupil spending at most schools in the district. Greater salary commitments, health care costs, and required charter school costs necessitated a budget 4 times the available resources. With the mayor pressuring him to target employee raises, Superintendent Z soon found himself in a careful budget balancing act. Operating from a position of equity, he proposed adjusting the federal Title I budget to fund 80 schools with poverty rates of 75% or higher with more funds, believing this would produce the best outcomes for everyone. Nothing suggested that a move to support poorer schools might put the highest performing schools at a disadvantage; in the 2 years that he had been superintendent, local funding for schools had increased by \$13 million, so while the poorer schools were at a disadvantage, the more well-off schools were not.

The affluent White community was disinclined to redistribute funds from their students' schools. Instead of operating from a position of equity, they demanded the district operate from a position of equality, demanding an even allotment of resources across the board, despite the lower performance and greater resource needs of students in poorer schools. Critics of Superintendent Z's efforts toward equity condemned him as a "Robin Hood" and charged him with "stealing from the rich to give to the poor." White critics even went so far as to blame him

for the low city funding and accuse him of financial incompetence in managing district resources.

Fearing the loss of funds to which they felt entitled, affluent White opponents complained to Parent-Teacher Association members, who in turn complained to school board members. Due to their protests, after initially agreeing to Superintendent Z's proposal, the board reversed its decision to dramatically increase funding in the districts' poorest schools. Instead, a compromise was made to provide slightly increased funding to schools with higher poverty levels, special education levels, and English language learners, based upon a defined formula. Students in the highest needs schools thus received more money than previous years, but not the amounts originally envisioned. One year later, the district had the highest growth in achievement in its poorest schools, with 12 schools becoming state reward schools for their improved growth rates in student achievement.

Incident 3: Board Member B's Appeal to Masked Protest

In 2019, a \$15 million budget deficit required swift reallocation of district funds. Superintendent Z recommended the termination of a reading program that had little impact on student outcomes. Yet, the program was popular with Board Member B, a White woman who had been a teacher for 30 years before joining the school board. Her longevity had gained her popularity in the community. On Superintendent Z's recommendation and a majority vote (7-2) of the school board, Board Member B's reading program was cut. Board Member B felt that, in terminating the reading program, Superintendent Z was personally retaliating against her for comments she had made earlier that year regarding the actions he took to diversify the administration. Superintendent Z had replaced some of the White administrators with people of

color in order to be more reflective of the district’s student demographics—largely Black, Hispanic, and poor. Board Member B wrote to Superintendent Z,

I have gotten calls from a group of concerned constituents. They are concerned with the number of “minority” principals you have placed in schools within District Y. They wanted to know how we would ever get White families back in our schools if you keep hiring “minority” principals. [Note quotation marks around the word *minority* were in the original email.]

Superintendent Z responded, “I would be happy to talk to the group to understand their issues. If principals get results, I think White families would return, because everybody wants to attend a high-performing school.” However, Board Member B told him that the group did not want to meet with him.

Tensions built over the course of the year as Superintendent Z set X Town’s southern White tradition aside and continued to operate from a standpoint of equity. One day a district ally sent Superintendent Z a notification that a troubling text message, written by Board Member B, was being circulated throughout the community. She was attempting to gather a protest. Her text read, “Can you bring 5 parents or teachers? We need at least 200 participants [to protest]. If teachers are fearful to reveal their identities, please wear masks. This will make national news! Please do not share this on social media.”

Disturbed by Board Member B’s attempts to rile up the community in such a way that the commotion would make national news, Superintendent Z publicly replied to her, “A call to wear masks in public reminds many citizens of a particularly dark time in our country’s history . . . We need to set a better example for the students, families, and staff members who are watching.”

After her attempt to incite upheaval was brought to light in the community, Board Member B suffered no reprimand, no correction, and no consequences. Appalled by this lack of accountability for such racially motivated behavior, a local city councilwoman of color demanded Board Member B make an formal apology on the docket at a city council meeting. However, backlash against the councilwoman for holding Board Member B accountable was swift; both her fellow council members and the community expressed outrage as they accused her of creating racial tension, and sympathy continued to grow for Board Member B. Disturbed by the community's unwillingness to hold the board member even marginally accountable, Superintendent Z contacted the councilwoman and asked her withdraw the demand for apology from the docket.

From this point, the discord spread. Other school board members began to actively seek out cause for Superintendent Z's termination. They would contact his staff, blatantly revealing that they were looking for information that could justify his termination. To advance their witch hunt, they ordered a costly audit of the district. When the audit failed to produce any evidence of wrongdoing by the superintendent, a minority of the school board, led by Board Member B and a White female colleague, demanded an audit of the first audit. Amidst all of this activity, racial bias was never publicly admitted as the driving issue behind Board Member B's actions. One school board member was so appalled at the way Superintendent Z was treated by these few members of the school board, he resigned his position on the board.

The Forced Resignation of an Equity Leader

In addition to the growth in student achievement in the poorest schools, the outcomes achieved by Superintendent Z's leadership from 2016 to 2019 were marked and measurable. The district saw a \$7.2 million increase in English language learner and special education spending,

suspension numbers decreased by over 2,000 students each year, reading scores grew faster than the state in Grades 3–8 as measured by state exams, ACT scores grew faster than the state average, Advanced Placement enrollment and achievement increased, and the number of students earning industry certifications increased, among other notable accomplishments. Most people in the district appreciated the work that Superintendent Z was doing to ensure the success of all students in the district, rather than only students privileged to attend magnet schools. In recognition of his work, he was named “2019 Person of the Year” by the city’s largest Black newspaper. However, over time, because of his equity-based decision-making and approaches to leading the district, some of District Y’s stakeholders protested his leadership and called for his dismissal. In April 2019, Superintendent Z, exhausted by the daily attacks from individual board members, their community allies, and conservative media outlets, requested that the board execute the clause in his contract that allowed the board to end his contract “without cause.” A week later, the board voted 5-4 in favor of ending Superintendent Z’s contract by buying out the remainder of his term.

Epilogue

In leading for equity in District Y in the South, Superintendent Z faced constant threats to his personal and professional well-being, all but forcing him to resign. A political climate mired in racially biased norms, the accepted practice of underfunding poorer schools, a lack of comprehension of equity versus equality, and a reluctance to redistribute resources in ways that would benefit students who needed resources the most created a culture that would remain resistant to a leader like Superintendent Z. Despite his efforts to network, educate stakeholders, and advocate for collective student success, the level of support that he needed to be his most

effective was not present. Based on the community's response to the race-related incidents he faced, this support would not be present in the foreseeable future.

X Town stakeholders might have thought the town prepared for equitable change but ultimately did not want to let go of an equality that failed to adjust around those who needed more (see Dressel, 2014). A reluctance to part with the status quo revealed deeply held ideals of propertied Whiteness, or the idea that certain access to funds or positions were White rights. In spite of research demonstrating students of color benefit from teachers, administrators, and role models of color (Castro et al., 2018; DeMatthews et al., 2017; Gershenson et al., 2021; Hansen & Quintero, 2018; Perry, 2019), the belief prevailed that by hiring more people of color, White rights were being taken away. These falsehoods were instrumental in stoking resistance against Superintendent Z's efforts to lead with equity. These events are not unusual—researchers have documented that Black superintendents are typically hired in districts with students of color and funding issues to improve equity in the district, yet then face resistance or dismissal when they attempt to do just that (Bojorquez & Alyberty, 2022; Dorsey & Chambers, 2014; Fusarelli et al., 2018; Guerra, 2020; Kingkade, 2021; Wilson & Kowalski, 2017).

Superintendent Z took every action the school board would allow to reverse historical inequities, remained committed to student success despite opposition, maintained focused professionalism, and attempted to work collaboratively with the school board and stakeholders in the community. He humbly sought the assistance of local White powerbrokers who appeared committed to student success and to solving the district's problems, believing that these relationships would help to offer a layer of protection for him as he led for equity in a community that was highly protective of its privilege. He was wrong; this group was unwilling to assist. Yet Superintendent Z persevered, coping with the nearly unbearable tensions by

journaling his experiences, reflecting on them, and strategizing on how to unify stakeholders around the one goal of every student's success, which could only be accomplished through an equity approach. He continued this course until it became evident that the community would not allow him to do the work he was hired to do. The point of this realization signaled the season for his departure, and it was time to transition out of the superintendency to the next phase of his career.

Teaching Notes

Synopsis

This case is about the racial bias that is present in many communities that hinders Black education professionals from being able to lead effectively and to succeed in the positions to which they are appointed. Despite being tasked with improving equity in the district and addressing budget issues, an experienced, qualified Black superintendent found his attempts to collaborate with stakeholders in the community rejected and instead faced constant criticism and opposition to his efforts to lead from a point of equity. After three incidents occurred, which he considered to be blatantly racially motivated but which the school board and community did not, the lack of collective outrage and accountability for the incidents signaled to him that he would not be able to effectively carry out his duties. Faced with this realization, he voluntarily walked away from the role.

Audience

This case was developed for graduate students enrolled in educational leadership programs. The case provides an opportunity to consider the rarely discussed differences between the experiences of educational leaders of color, particularly the psychological and professional challenges and obstacles they must overcome in order to achieve the same level of success as

their non-Black counterparts who occupy similar roles. Additionally, the case allows students who aspire to train or support superintendents in their work to consider what additional types of preparation, support mechanisms, and resources can be used to supplement the success of superintendents of color.

Learning Objectives

After careful analysis of this case and engaging in thoughtful reflection about the discussion questions, students will be able to do the following:

1. Identify the differences in the lived experiences of Black superintendents versus non-Black superintendents and the impact that overt and covert racial bias has on their ability to lead effectively.
2. Explain the difference between an equity-based versus an equality-based approach to district leadership.
3. Analyze the role that racial bias plays in the typically short tenure of Black school superintendents.
4. Define the concept of “double consciousness” and how the dynamic impacts people of color.

Equal Titles, Unequal Experiences

Superintendent Z’s relatively brief and turbulent tenure is not uncharacteristic of the experiences of other Black superintendents in the U.S., where the average tenure of a Black superintendent leading an urban district is just over 1 year (Council of the Great City Schools, 2014). Black superintendents are typically hired to serve in settings where much is asked of them (like overseeing the complete turnaround of a school system or taking schools from underperforming to high performing in record time) but where the support and cooperation that

they need to achieve their goals are not present (Bojorquez & Alyberty, 2022; Dorsey & Chambers, 2014; Fusarelli et al., 2018; Grogan & Miles Nash, 2021; Guerra, 2020; Kingkade, 2021; Wilson & Kowalski, 2017). Although trained, credentialed, and qualified for the position, long-held social prejudices regarding Blackness diminish the community's confidence in their credibility, decision-making, and leadership. Due to the endemic nature of racism and anti-Blackness in the United States, Black leaders inevitably will face bias and discrimination (Bridgeforth, 2021). Black superintendents who are equity oriented and attempt to achieve gains in the highest needs school can expect to encounter even more resistance to their leadership in district matters—even while addressing the problems they were hired to correct (Horsford et al., 2019).

Unfortunately, Black superintendents must deal with stressors, challenges, obstacles and opposition from their school boards and communities that their non-Black counterparts do not have to face (Allen-Thomas, 2021; Grogan & Miles Nash, 2021; Simmons, 2013; Wilson & Kowalski, 2017; Johnson et al., 2020). The work of serving as a superintendent is difficult in and of itself, but the extraordinary expectations, constant opposition, and racial bias and resistance that Black superintendents contend with as they strive to execute their complex roles can be unbearable long term. In light of this reality, Moody (1983) and Horsford et al. (2019) encouraged Black superintendents to be vigilant in their search for a teaching district and community that constitute the right fit, and to seek out a progressive environment where people are open to Black feedback, leadership, and perspective. Additional professional support is needed during the superintendent training process to empower Black education leaders for effectiveness and success in the role (Johnson et al., 2020).

U.S. university schools of education offer few courses that specifically discuss the unique needs of people of color in the workplace. Much research has been done on the schooling needs of students of color, but less attention has been played to the factors that contribute to people of color staying and succeeding in leadership roles. When leadership roles have been addressed, teachers have been the primary focus. With the tenure of Black superintendents being shorter than that of their White counterparts (Council of the Great City Schools, 2014), more attention must be paid to the aspects of the job that are most challenging for Black superintendents.

Bolman and Deal's (2017) framework may be a helpful analytical tool to research the experiences of Black superintendents. The framework includes the structural, human resources, political, and symbolic frames. The structural frame includes tasks and strategies. The human resources frame is based on the needs of staff. The political frame—which is clearly a delicate factor in the job of the Black superintendent—involves understanding the difficult and even hidden agendas of different stakeholder groups and compromising and coalition-building, particularly when budgets must be allocated. Finally, the symbolic frame involves the vision and meaning driving district leadership and sharing that purpose with stakeholders.

In addition, the political nature of superintendent roles and the lack of Black political power in many cities may pose a significant challenge for Black superintendents. In this case, the superintendent was advised to have a White surrogate and was encouraged to identify White supporters to gain access to rooms “he would never be invited to enter.” This has implications for thinking about unique strategies and supports for Black superintendents to build political capital across racial lines. Is the only way for a Black superintendent to gain access to political power through White surrogacy, or are there other potential paths to access? Are there ways for Black superintendents to not assimilate into the predominate White culture or cater to White

norms and still remain influential in the pursuit of equity? Critically conscious leaders analyze and attempt to improve inequitable systems (Freire, 1970; Skousen & Domangue, 2020). Are Black critically conscious leaders destined to be challenged because structures that have been normalized—like inequitable funding, racial isolation, housing segregation, and lack of employment in high-paying jobs—continue to oppress communities in a way that will continue to produce inequitable outcomes?

This case study also highlights the importance of fit and appropriately researching the culture of a city and community prior to accepting a position as a superintendent. When any person breaks a barrier, whether racial, gender, or other, one question is how fast a person should move—quickly to establish results, or slowly to avoid controversy? The need to manage the change process in a way that allows the community to wrestle with its own prejudice is something “barrier breakers” must factor into their day-to-day actions. Should barrier breakers intentionally move slowly, or should they push communities to accept their unique and distinct differences in worldviews? This question is worthy of exploration and reflection.

Superintendents in general have short tenures, especially Black superintendents. Although continuity in leadership is recognized as vital for success, communities continue to allow the churn of superintendents within a 1- to 6-year window, particularly in cities that educate millions of children of color (Rosenberg, 2022; Superville, 2018; Zippia, 2022). Deeper understanding of the toxic cultures that result in this churn is needed. More conversations are necessary about governance and what it takes to address bad players within the governance arenas. In this case, a handful of individuals led to board members resigning, the superintendent resigning, and unnecessary chaos in the community. Their actions might not have been sanctioned by the community, but they did not face accountability, either.

Additionally, in this case, the superintendent used journaling as a strategy to cope with the resistance he received. Journaling may be an underused, important resource for self-care. Leadership preparation programs might recommend the practice to superintendents, particularly as most Black superintendents lack mentors to confide in (Modan, 2021).

Questions for Discussion

From the start of his tenure in 2016 to the end in 2019, Superintendent Z faced significant resistance. Three incidents motivated by racial bias impacted his attempts to lead from a position of equity: (a) a White politician's caution of southern norms and fear of Black leadership, (b) a White community's zealous attempts to oust him over the attempted reallocation of funds to poorer schools to improve achievement as he was hired to do, and (c) a White board member's personally and racially motivated call for a masked protest against him for ending a low-traction reading program. Under pressure to adopt White interests over his lead for equity, Superintendent Z stepped down.

- Do you perceive that all or any of the incidents might not have been racially motivated? Why or why not?
- What argument would you use to convince stakeholders who oppose equity efforts to support them instead?
- Give two examples of equality and counter them with two examples of equity as they pertain to race in high positions of education leadership.
- How might a Black superintendent strengthen his position in leading with equity in an environment that is protective of its existing privilege?
- Consider the internal conflict of the double consciousness that Black superintendents must contend with as they lead. How might this concept consciously and

subconsciously affect their decisions and actions as leaders? Do you believe it helps or hinders their leadership performance overall?

- What factors do you believe remain unspoken regarding the treatment, opposition to, and discrimination against Black superintendents versus their non-Black counterparts, and why? What resources are necessary to support them to experience longer tenures as superintendents?

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