

Principal Leadership and Community Equity Literacy

How do principals develop equity-centered partnerships with families and community members?

Understanding community history

Principals noticed the damaging effects of segregation and poverty on children’s development and how local communities lacked safe housing, stores with affordable goods, health care, and other social services.

“You’re putting all the minority kids and poverty in one school. Is that really equitable? Neighborhood schools, the way we have them set up here, is a form of segregation.” ~Principal~



Leveraging community assets

“People love to help in a school, especially a school that has high needs. They want to be a part of it. But we invite them back for everything, just so they feel like they’re a part of the community. We want them to not just give us things, we want them to actually be a part of the school”. ~Principal~



Advocating for school and community equity

“Our community school coordinator gathers information and data about what students need, about what families need. Then they look within their organization and within the community to see if they can provide some resources to meet the needs of our students and families.” ~Principal~



Navigating community power structures

“I went to a local school here. I live in the community, so I do a lot of taking that information back to [my principal] so that we can figure out what’s best for not just our teachers, our instruction but also with the community and what the community really is saying.” ~Coordinator~



Brokering the school context

“Clearing the brush so that people can do their jobs.... Like what do I have to get out of the way? Is it a policy? Is it, I’ve got to ruffle some feathers somewhere? Okay, let’s do it.” ~Principal~



Based on interviews with 13 principals and 18 community school coordinators from 6 districts in PA, NJ, NY

¹ Green, T.L. (2018). Enriching educational leadership through Community Equity Literacy: A conceptual foundation. Leadership and Policy in Schools, 17(4), 487-515.