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Give Us a Chance: The Experiential Knowledge of Educators of Color Pursuing an Administration License

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Administration License**

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF
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Abstract

An educational workforce which is representative of the student population it seeks to serve is critical to creating equitable learning opportunities in the increasingly diverse United States. Both students of color and White students must *see* themselves represented by their educators, and research suggests all students benefit from having teachers of color. Furthermore, it is important for students to see educators of color leading in positions of power. Unfortunately, the current proportion of administrators of color in the field of education in Minnesota, like many states, does not come close to the proportion of students of color in the state's public schools (36% students of color, 6.7% administrators of color, Minnesota Department of Education, 2021). Therefore, it is an urgent need to increase administrators of color. While many studies propose increasing teachers of color as a key solution to addressing the opportunity deficit, this dissertation, instead, focuses on hiring more administrators of color. By drawing from the narratives of ten educators of color pursuing administrative licenses, this research identifies supports to counter the barriers which contribute to the problem of inequitable representation in school administration. Participants in this study, all of whom were enrolled in an online Ed.S. program, spoke specifically about the importance of positively representing their students as an important factor for their pursuance of an administration license. They further discussed the support of family, mentors, colleagues, and current administrators as being critical for their progress. They highlighted their needed support of their site-level administrators for providing opportunities for conversations about race that go beyond the surface level. Finally, they discussed differences in communication style and understanding among White colleagues and administrators as being a barrier and source of continued microaggressions. Based on these participant narratives, recommendations such as leaning into the experiential knowledge that educators of color bring, creating a supportive

environment that fosters authenticity, and giving teachers of color a chance to share leadership, among others, are all put forward for consideration. Finally, recommendations for future research to understand how educators of different races and locations are impacted by challenging racial conditions are discussed.

Keywords: Educators of Color, Administrators of Color, Race, Social Justice, Experiential Knowledge