STETSON UNIVERSITY

***Voices of Reform: Educational Research to
Inform and Reform***

Volume 3 • Issue 1 • Editor Statement

May 2020

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Recommended Citation

Sabina, L. L. (2020). Voices of reform: Editor statement. *Voices of Reform*, 3(1), 2-4. Retrieved from <https://www.voicesofreform.com/article/12769-editor-statement-volume-3-issue-1> doi:10.32623/3.00002
<http://dx.doi.org/10.32623/3.00002>

Revisions

Publication date: May 1st, 2020

Voices of Reform: Editor Statement

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As our third issue of *Voices of Reform: Educational Research to Inform and Reform* goes to press, education across all sectors, P-12, higher education, undergraduate, graduate, doctoral, public, private, for-profit, even corporate training, is facing a never before seen crisis in response to COVID-19. Education in each of these sectors have been forced to augment traditional face-to-face classroom interactions with online synchronous and asynchronous programs in an attempt to provide normalcy in student learning. Regardless of when things return to “normal” (however one defines normal), we know that both the delivery of education and educational research has possibly changed forever. Future issues of our journal will inevitably address both our currently known, and unknown challenges in education.

Our first article is a collaboration between a professor and current school principal, addressing the relationship between church and school. In “Black Church/School Partnerships: The role of Fictive Kin Relationships,” Drs. Katherine Curry and Reubin McIntosh discuss a partnership between a black church and a high school in Midwestern Oklahoma. Curry and McIntosh discuss the importance of building strength and equality through relationships, which is discussed in depth in this article.

Next, four stakeholders from the University of Central Oklahoma discuss similarities between Educational Leadership and Higher Education programs. At smaller institutions like the University of Central Oklahoma which do not have the funding, number of faculty members, or student populations that larger, public institutions have, creativity in both course offerings and faculty assignments are critical to ensure enrollment and program success. This article provides insights into how that relationship can be strengthened through examination and practice of popular leadership theories.

Our next article from Dr. Jennifer Karnopp, an assistant professor at Indiana University addresses regional professional learning networks, which serve as a conduit for principals, superintendents, and other executive-level leaders to connect with others in similar roles to theirs. The majority of the United States operates under a districted system, meaning that district leaders do not normally have the chance within districts to connect with other individuals in similar positions. Regional learning networks allow for these leaders to connect outside of their districts to build capacity to be more effective in their roles.

Dr. Holly Larson, a professor of English at Seminole State College of Florida, offers a critique of Senate Bill 1720, which permits students to opt out of developmental education courses even if they are recommended by their advisors. Dr. Larson assesses the rhetoric associated with this bill, critiquing a report that declared Senate Bill 1720 a success.

Finally, we close our traditional article section with “Swamping Errors: A Florida Postmortem for High School Graduation Rate Proxies” from Drs. David G. Martinez and Sherman Dorn. In their article, Martinez and Dorn critique how graduation rates are calculated and reported, with a call for equity audits and consideration to localized information to better serve school districts. They argue that metrics like graduation rate reporting should not be done to place blame or to “fail” schools, but to help equitably distribute resources to high-need areas within schools.

The contribution of practitioner-scholars to our journal is critical for its ongoing success. Ms. Anna L. Peters, a former community director at Arizona State University and now, a Ph.D. student in Higher Education and Educational Leadership Finance and Law, offers our submission for *Voices from the Field* for this issue. In her submission, Ms. Peters discusses strategic partnerships that Arizona State University has made in order to create one of the most innovative housing and residence life experiences for their undergraduate students.

Starting with Issue #2, we began including a book review in our journal, which was met with great success. We continue this as a regular part of *Voices of Reform: Educational Research to Inform and Reform* with a book review from Dr. Joyce Mundy, former Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership at Stetson University and current Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Planning at the Delaware County Intermediate Unit in Pennsylvania. In her review, Mundy critiques McCart and Miller’s “Leading Equity-Based MTSS for All Students,” a new publication addressing multi-tiered systems of support. The accountability era has led to increased responsibilities for schools to report data and provide instructional support, which must serve all students.

Finally, we close our issue with a discussion of a recent recipient of the Nina B. Hollis Research Impact Award. In this invited report, Drs. Sarah Cramer and Mercedes Tichenor discuss the impact of their recent project involving garden-based learning.

We believe that of our first three issues, Issue #3 of *Voices of Reform: Educational Research to Inform and Reform* is our most diverse issue yet in terms of the topics covered and broad-based issues in educational reform. We welcome your submissions for upcoming issues, and welcome any questions for our editorial board or for our authors.

Dr. Lou L. Sabina

Editor-in-Chief

Voices of Reform