

Colleagues and readers! Welcome to the second issue of Volume 16 of *Excelsior: Leadership in Teaching and Learning*, the professional journal of the New York Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (NYACTE). The articles of this issue contribute to the broader body of research and advocacy for school leader and teacher effectiveness. The authors address both educator preparation and in-service praxis. Though their methodologies and theoretical frameworks vary, they collectively shine a light on the need for greater attention to the psychosocial and social-emotional factors of education. This issue reports on research from varied educational contexts with implications for improving outcomes in teaching and learning.

Assessment and evaluation are key tools for monitoring and improving teacher performance. Yet, while the assessment of dispositions can help to strengthen teachers' knowledge of self and pedagogical effectiveness, there is no single set of dispositions agreed upon by educators as most effective. Individual education preparation programs and school districts address this issue as they see fit, if at all. Author David K. Griffin examines various approaches for evaluating classroom teachers' dispositions using as survey sampling 150 classroom teachers.

While some states have taken policy and economic approaches to dismantle diversity, equity, and inclusion, New York State has bolstered its efforts to support all learners and promotes its recently developed Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Framework for education at all levels, with guidelines for parents, teachers, educator preparation programs, and policy makers. Authors Sharde Theodore, Lindsay Romano, Fanica Young, Danica Moise, and Tahnee Wilder examine how the pervasive inequities within special education praxis can be mediated through culturally responsive-sustaining social emotional learning (SEL) practices. Their work seeks to dismantle inequities for the advancement of educational equity for racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students (RELD) with and placed-at-risk for emotional and behavioral dis/abilities. The authors provide evidence-based recommendations for school leaders and practitioners to embed culturally responsive-sustaining pedagogy within SEL instruction.

Many school districts across the nation employ the Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework, an outgrowth of Response to Intervention (RtI). New York State stands as an example with its CEEDAR (Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform) partnership. The partnership consisting of state education, school districts, and select education preparation programs aims to improve teacher and school leader preparation in support of students of diverse abilities. Authors Susan Polirstok and Joseph A. Hogan discuss the underlying principles, challenges to effective implementation, expertise and training of teachers, and usage for classification for special education services.

Authors Christina Koehne, WenYen Huang, and Nataly Chesky seek to help increase the content and pedagogical knowledge of mathematics education among teacher candidates, as outlined in STEM policies. Specifically, they use mixed-methods research to examine the factors that influence pre-service teachers' math anxiety. The authors describe their findings across five major themes with rich, descriptive illustrations from interview data.

The final article continues a central focus on educator effectiveness. Authors Deborah Tamakloe, Elizabeth Powers, Alisa Landis, and Lori McCracken examine teachers' pedagogical efficacy in developing children's emotional regulation, socio-emotional learning, and wellbeing. Their three-years study sought to gain in-depth insights into preschool teachers' efficacy when using play and puppetry. Findings reveal two strategies effective for improving teachers' sense of inadequacy. The authors also make implications for students' learning.

We welcome the new editors of *Excelsior* Drs. Joelle Fingerhut, Jesslyn Hollar, and Stephanie Purington of Marist College. Their editorship occurs in a collaboration between Marist College and Syracuse University. Let's cheer them on as they lead the journal forward.

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