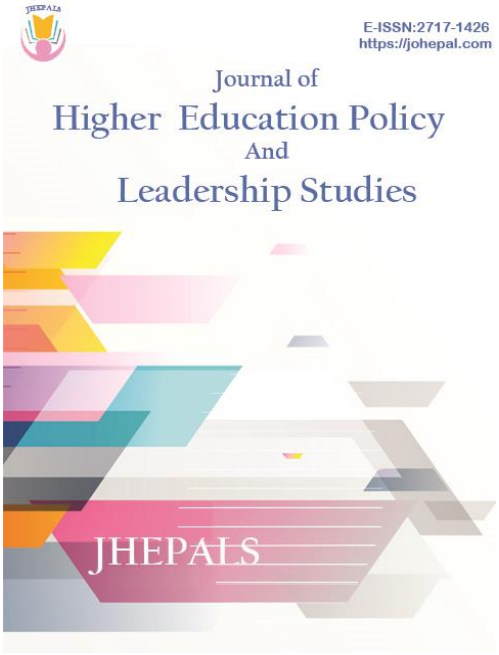
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Race(ing) to the Top: Interrogating the Underrepresentation of BIPOC Education Leaders in Ontario Public Schools

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Abstract

Although there have been many calls to diversify the Ontario teacher workforce there has not been the same attention toward troubling the administrator diversity gap within publicly-funded education and its impacts on teacher hiring. Extant literature suggests that those responsible for making hiring decisions often hire candidates that resemble their own positionality. This conceptual paper is concerned with interrogating the administrator diversity gap and its impact on hiring within Ontario's publicly-funded education system through an Applied Critical Leadership (ACL) theoretical lens. The paper will explore the current context of administrative demographics in Ontario, hiring policies that have contributed to the lack of BIPOC (Black Indigenous People of Colour) educators in permanent teaching and leadership positions, and gatekeeping mechanisms that hinder BIPOC candidates from accessing permanent teaching and leadership positions. This paper further contends that equitable hiring practices and representation cannot materialize without administrators engaging in transformative, critical self-reflective practice.

Keywords: Applied Critical Leadership; Administrators; Hiring; BIPOC; Critical Self-reflective Practice

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Introduction

With increasingly diverse demographics, Ontario, Canada's largest province is often touted as the most ethno-racially diverse region in the world (UN, 2019). Canada often prides itself in on its demographic diversity and portrays itself to the world as a champion of human rights. However, as this conceptual paper will demonstrate, Canada is a racially stratified society that privileges Whiteness pertaining to access to resources, in this case, education and employment. It should be noted here that Canada, unlike its OECD peers, does not have a national education department or framework, thus educational policies and regulations are provincial and territorial responsibilities. Canada thus lacks a comprehensive and cohesive educational strategy, meaning that elementary, secondary and higher education differ quite substantially from region to region. Each province or territory therefore sets its own policies, requirements and mandates for teacher education, hiring and administrator qualifications.

Although Ontario is often praised for its public education system and multicultural social cohesion, extant research suggests that BIPOC educators are underrepresented in permanent and leadership positions (Abawi, 2021; Abawi & Eizadirad, 2020; Abawi, 2018; Turner, 2015). When referring to BIPOC people, I am referring to persons who identify as Black, Indigenous (Indigenous peoples of Canada), and other racialized communities, which are of non-European heritage. The 'teacher diversity gap' was coined by Turner (2014/2015) to describe the relationship between overwhelmingly White teachers and predominantly racialized children in Ontario and specifically the Greater Toronto Area, Canada's largest metropolitan region with a population of 6,255,000 people as of 2021 (Macrotrends, 2021). Ontario's lack of teacher diversity has come under renewed scrutiny following the Ministry of Education's Review of the Peel District School Board (PDSB), which documented staff, students, and families' discriminatory encounters with the Board, including: rampant anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism, Islamophobia and epidemic levels of White supremacist practices. The PDSB is Canada's second largest school board and one of the most diverse boards of education in the country and the findings echo the oppressive experiences of many BIPOC staff, students, families and communities. The ongoing racialized violence of school board employees toward Black students and families in particular has led to a surge of parent and community activism intent on holding school boards accountable. This activism has been highly effective due to the prevalence of social media and solidarity between Black parents, students and communities and other communities that have been marginalized by the school system.

Calls to increase teacher diversity came to the forefront of the educational-political nexus in light of a 2007 lawsuit launched against the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), which is the largest school board in Canada and the fourth largest in North America, and the Ministry of Education by the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC). The lawsuit concerned the overrepresentation of racialized students, in particular Black male students, pushed out of schools through policing, disproportionate suspensions and expulsions. Much of these incidents occurred in light of the Ontario Safe Schools Act (2002) that allocated sweeping powers to teachers to make disciplinary decisions (Winton, 2012). The OHRC cited a lack of teacher representation that equitably reflects student and community demographics as a significant barrier to accessing equitable and inclusive education (Mindzak, 2016; OHRC, 2007). While the call for increased teacher diversity was acknowledged by the Ministry of Education, equity and inclusive educational policies have focused on bias-free and objective hiring measures as best practice to close the teacher diversity gap (Abawi, 2021; Abawi & Eizadirad, 2020 & Abawi, 2018). Moreover, the policy document stopped short of

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requiring publicly-funded school boards to release demographic data on educator composition, to understand the relationship between race and access to teacher and administrator employment.

Over 90 per cent of school administrators in Ontario are White and middle-class, in contrast to over 29 per cent of Ontarians who self-identify as BIPOC, specifically. Black, Indigenous and People of Colour. Thus, the teacher workforce does not represent the demographics of Ontario, or Canada (Abawi, 2021; Pollock, et al., 2014; Turner, 2015; Statistics Canada, 2016). In the GTA, the proportion of the population that identifies as non-White far exceeds the teacher workforce (Statistics Canada, 2016). Policy agendas concerning equity, inclusion and diversity continue to be constructed through neoliberal conceptions of diversity, whereby diversity is commodified and packaged as a component of Ontario's educational success, while omitting pervasive inequities and oppressive practices against racialized and Indigenous educators and students (James & Turner, 2017; Tuters & Portelli, 2017). As such, school administrators (principals and vice principals), who are overwhelmingly White, are responsible for hiring of teachers into permanent positions, as well the promotion of permanent teachers into leadership roles.

While extant literature centres on the importance of teachers to engage in self-reflective practice to understand how their positionality impacts their pedagogical and epistemic practices, the same must be required of school administrators in considering how their respective social locations factor into their hiring decisions. The underrepresentation of BIPOC permanent teachers and school administrators points to significant discriminatory policies and practices that operate to inform racist conceptions of whose bodies are suited to hold authoritative positions and whose bodies are marginalized from accessing such positions. Thus, the teacher diversity gap cannot be closed without disrupting the administrator diversity gap and its perpetuation of the status quo of White teachers and educational leaders.

Conceptual Framework: Applied Critical Leadership

In order to conceptualize the relationship between administrator social location and hiring practices, this argument is framed through an Applied Critical Leadership (ACL) framework (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2012). Applied Critical Leadership is rooted in a Critical Race Theoretical (CRT) perspective, which effectively names Whiteness and White privilege as a self-perpetuating system that enforces barriers against BIPOC people's access to opportunities and resources (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1992/1998; Leonardo & Zembylas, 2013; Matias & Mackey, 2016; Sleeter, 2016). Critical Race Theory thus problematizes the narrative of race neutrality and colour-blindness (Bonilla-Silva, 2006) that permeate settler-colonial societies such as Canada and the United States. Settler-colonialism according to Tuck and Yang (2012) is distinguished from other types of colonialism, as the authors posit: "settlers come with the intention of making a new home on the land, a homemaking that insists on settler sovereignty over all things in their new domain" (p. 5). Applied Critical Leadership draws on CRT's counter-stories as an avenue for engaging in critical dialogue, for example, for administrators to learn about BIPOC teachers' and leaders' experiences seeking permanent employment or promotion. Applied Critical Leadership calls for the collaboration between racialized communities and White educational leaders through processes such as counter-narratives as a mechanism of social transformation in educational leadership (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2012). The Ontario Leadership Framework (OLF), which is the provincial document that guides leadership responsibilities and capacities for principals and vice-principals, highlights the

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purpose of leadership. The document conceptualizes leadership as one entailing change, the disruption of status quo, and touches on long-term directives in tandem with the following key concepts: goals, principles and values, constraints, solution processes and mood (OLF, 2012, p. 46).

The OLF aligns with ACL as the leadership narratives conveyed by the OLF speak to the transformative leadership lens advocated by the ACL approach (Santamaria et al., 2014; Santamaria & Santamaria, 2012). The purposes of ACL is illustrated as:

> A model of leadership practice where educational leaders consider the social context of their educational communities and empower individual members of these communities based on the educational leaders' identities (i.e. subjectivity, biases, assumptions, race, class, gender and traditions) as perceived through a CRT lens." (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2012, p. 5)

In keeping with the central theme of this conceptual piece, that majority White administrators must be charged with unpacking their respective social locations, positionality and privilege in order to determine how such conscious and unconscious biases contribute to hiring decisions. Applied Critical Leadership encourages two critical action-based strategies: the first being taking part in self-transformative practice to unpack identity and the second being critical dialogue and allyship with BIPOC educators and leaders. Santamaria & Santamaria (2012) refer to critical transformative reflective practice through questioning of one's identity, biases, subjectivity, preconceived notions and intersectionalities. In addition to critical transformative practice, critical leaders further engage in critical dialogue with BIPOC educators and leaders in order to provide voice and agency to educators and leaders who are often marginalized by the status quo of White privilege in educational institutions.

Findings

Barriers to Representation

Racial inequities in accessing teacher education significantly contribute to the overrepresentation of White teachers in Ontario and Canadian publicly-funded school boards. The Ontario Ministry of Education suggested that faculties of education incorporate self-identification options in teacher education applications to be considered as a part of the admissions portfolio. While many faculties provided an option for self-identification, the initiative is undermined by the lack of data concerning the ethno-racial demographics of students admitted into teacher education programs (Childs et al., 2011). The prevalence of Whiteness as a social and cultural norm is permeated from teacher education programs into school boards and informs gatekeeping mechanisms, specifically, access to permanent teaching employment and leadership positions. Whiteness is normalized throughout educational institutions and informs the culture and norms of the teaching profession and thus informs what discursively constitutes a 'good' teacher (Morris, 2016; Solomon & Daniel, 2015; Pinto et al., 2012; Solomon et al, 2005). Moreover, Whiteness plays into how teacher identity itself is formulated; the teaching profession has long been conceptualized through a settler-colonial identity: as a White, feminine and middle-class profession that again contribute to the socially constructed norms of belonging in educational spaces. Teachers, especially those who were trained abroad, also known as Internationally Educated Teachers (IETs), face increased barriers in obtaining credential recognition and must often take further courses at their own expense to receive OCT (Ontario College of Teachers) accreditation (Pollock, 2010). Settler-colonialism as Tuck and Wang (2012) posit,

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differs from other mechanisms of colonialism by which, "settlers come with the intention of making a new home on the land, a homemaking that insists on settler sovereignty over all things in their new domain" (p. 5). Canada, as well as the United States, Australia and New Zealand are quintessential settler-colonial societies, as the existence of such nation states is premised upon the erasure of Indigenous peoples and complicity in the ongoing dispossession, oppression and appropriation of Indigenous lands, peoples and ways of life.

Another gatekeeping mechanism that contributes to the status quo and normalization of Whiteness in the teaching profession is the NTIP (New Teacher Induction Program). The NTIP provides mandatory mentorship for newly hired permanent teachers, including the passing of two TPAs (Teacher Performance Appraisals). NTIP has been criticized for its operation and reinforcement of the socialization of Whiteness through racialized constructions of 'competency' employed by boards for TPAs. Further, the NTIP program and TPAs demand conformity to a transmission model of teaching and thus serve to standardize the teaching profession, while down playing the importance of equity, inclusion and social justice pedagogical approaches (Barrett et al, 2009; Pinto et al, 2012). Moreover, school administrators are responsible for assigning mentors for the NTIP program, who are often overwhelmingly White and middle class and hold considerable power over whether or not the mentee will pass the program and the TPAs, which serves to marginalize certain bodies from accessing permanent employment (Barrett et al, 2009). The power and autonomy that mentors have over the careers of new teachers is rooted the salience of White performativity embedded in profession through constructions of normative teacher identities that are both socialized and institutionalized.

Representation of BIPOC communities in permanent teaching and educational administrative positions cannot be breached from the wider, social and political forces that marginalize BIPOC workers. According to a 2019 United Way Report entitled Rebalancing the Opportunity Equation BIPOC Ontarians are disproportionately affected by precarious labour, unsafe work and earning disparities. When discussing barriers to accessing employment and income it is crucial to acknowledge the intersectionalities of gender, race, religion, sexual orientation and so on and how such intersections of oppression further marginalize certain bodies from accessing resources. According to recent statistics released by the 2019 Colour of Poverty Report, 20.8 per cent of racialized households live in poverty in the Canada in comparison to only 12 per cent of White households. The proportion of families residing in poverty peaks for Indigenous families at 80 per cent of households. Further, BIPOC Canadians earn about 81.4 cents for every dollar earned by White Canadians. The correlation between race, employment, income and access to opportunity cannot be overlooked or downplayed. As education is a microcosm of the wider settler-colonial society, it is imperative to explore how educational hiring practices mirror wider inequitable social and economic trends across Ontario and Canada as an entity.

Deconstructing Teacher Hiring Policies in Ontario

The degree to which BIPOC teachers and school administrators are represented or underrepresented sends critical messages to students concerning who can occupy positions of power and authority and who cannot. Furthermore, this representation impacts pedagogical approaches, curriculum and the school culture overall (Ryan et al, 2009). Ontario teacher hiring has been subject to Regulation 274/12, which is responsible for overseeing teacher hiring practices across publicly-funded school boards. The Regulation was enacted in 2012 by the Liberal government

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under Wynne due to widespread allegations of nepotism and favouritism that skewed teacher hiring and detrimentally impacted racialized and Indigenous educators (Abawi, 2018; ETFO, 2012). The Regulation stipulates that boards must maintain two lists, one Occasional Teacher (OT) list and one Long Term Occasional (LTO) list. From these respective lists permanent and long-term hires would be based on both seniority and qualifications (ETFO, 2012). In October 2020, it was announced by Conservative Minister of Education Stephen Lecce that the Regulation is to be revoked in favour of merit-based hiring (Roberts, 2020). Although the Regulation is not flawless, it carved out a path, albeit a long path, for accessing permanent employment for all Ontario Certified Teachers employed in publicly-funded school boards. Further, the Regulation provided candidates the opportunity of accessing an interview and the chance to network with administrators in different schools. While the Ontario government, under the Ford administration claims that the scrapping of the Regulation will allow for administrators to hire for diversity, there are no details provided as to how the removal of the regulation will ensure more equitable hiring and BIPOC representation across Ontario classrooms. The Ford government's call for merit-based hiring fails to interrogate the racialized discourses that inform merit and constructions of the 'best fit' for the classroom. These narratives cannot be divorced from the racialized power relations that situate them. Further, discretionary authority to determine constructions of merit and fit allocate increasing autonomy to administrators to hire the candidates they choose.

Equity and inclusive education policies have flooded both the Ontario and Canadian educational and political landscape, each acknowledging the importance and urgency for the province to hire a more demographically diverse educational workforce that matches the province's population. The first Ontario Ministry of Education policy initiative toward equity and inclusion in education was the 1993 Policy Program Memorandum (PPM) 119. It was updated in 2009 with the Report Realizing the Promise of Diversity first detailed its strategy to increase teacher diversity by implementing bias-free or objective and neutral hiring practices (Ministry of Education, 2009). The Report cited no evidence that supported the utilization of such bias-free hiring as a best mechanism for closing the teacher diversity gap. Moreover, by resorting to "bias-free" practices, boards effectively take on a colour-blind approach to recruitment practices by willingly ignoring larger social, structural and political factors and power relations that inform earnings and opportunity gaps between BIPOC and White Ontarians (Abawi & Eizadirad, 2020; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; United Way, 2019). Subsequent educational policy documents including the 2014 Realizing the Promise of Diversity Guidelines for Implementation 2017 Equity Action Plan again fail to acknowledge and address systemic, structural and institutional biases that prevent racialized and Indigenous teachers from accessing employment as teachers and promotion to leadership roles. The aforementioned documents, rather, allude to racialization from a deficit perspective, as a "crisis of difference" (Abawi, 2018, p. 73). The policies therefore provide commitments to diversity in a manner through which they are never materialized and thus the failure of BIPOC bodies to secure employment becomes deemed as individual deficits rather than due to systemic and institutional factors, thus Whiteness maintains its innocence (Abawi, 2018; Ahmed, 2012). Such race-less discursive constructions underline neoliberal ideologies in hiring practices, such as: merit, ability and teacher quality as the key criteria administrator's ought to utilize in selection processes. In this vein, school administrators are meant to push aside all biases and preconceived notions that contribute to discriminatory practices objectively select the best candidate. As such, the aforementioned policies mentioned are surface-level and tokenized celebratory approaches to diversity and equity (Coulthard, 2014). Educational policies pertaining to diversity continue to be based on altruistic

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constructs that on the one hand acknowledge the lack of teacher diversity, while on the other hand; the education system absolves itself of any onus of critically interrogating how the system itself is situated as an institution of ongoing and past racial injustices and settler-colonialism.

Accessing Mentorship and Leadership Roles

As the majority of permanent teachers in Ontario are White, BIPOC teachers are often impeded from accessing mentorship programs and access to the Principal's Qualification Program (PQP), often reserved solely for permanent teachers. Furthermore, unlike other regions, Ontario does not offer alternative pathways for underrepresented communities to become teachers. Abawi and Eizadirad's (2020) study indicated that BIPOC teachers have significantly different experiences in accessing permanent teaching employment than their White colleagues. While racialized candidates were often subjected to discriminatory practices and microaggressions, such as being asked to produce proof of teaching credentials, questioning candidates' ability to speak English and assuming they were members of the janitorial staff. Moreover, participants did not believe that bias-free hiring was sufficient and racialized candidates cited unfair recruitment practices. Similarly, Turner's (2015) Report highlighted the experiences of Black educators in Ontario, finding that 68 per cent of respondents believed that hiring in their boards to be largely based on personal connections. Similarly, more than half of the participants felt that promotion processes were based on nepotism and favouritism and that personal biases played an instrumental role in whether or not Black teachers were hired.

The 2020 Review of the Peel District School Board, Canada's second largest board, pointed to a culture of fear throughout the Board and discussed widespread inappropriate hiring and promotion practices at all levels. The Review cited pervasive nepotism and favouritism at all levels of hiring as well as inconsistencies in hiring, such as panels, questions and documentation. Additionally, it was noted that racialized candidates were passed over for positions or promotions or not invited to interviews despite being qualified for the position for which they had applied. The Review found that hiring was significantly dependent on who principals knew in the school community, with some job openings not being posted as they were being held for friends and connections. In 2017 the Review of the York Region District School Board was also carried out. The York Region District School Board (YRDBS) is, like Peel, located in the GTA and is a large and demographically diverse Board. Further, the YRDSB Report conveyed that teachers committed to equity work were often ostracized and their career aspirations limited for such work. Although the Report is much shorter than the Peel review, it was revealed that racism; in particular, Islamophobia was prevalent among senior leaders and called for extensive equity and diversity training for all staff, especially leaders. However, limited accountability measures have been woven into place to ensure such discriminatory practices are dismantled. Prevalent discriminatory practices and attitudes prevent BIPOC teachers from accessing permanent teaching employment as well as mentorship and leadership opportunities. Many school boards continue to hold mentorship in high regard for building capacity among leaders and aspiring leaders; however, racialized aspiring leaders are excluded from many of these opportunities (Jack & Lobovsky, 2016). While some school boards in Ontario have created specialized mentorship programs for equity seeking groups, those with the authority to make hiring and promotion decisions often hire those that look like them (Rivera, 2012). Therefore, as school administrators and permanent teachers in Ontario are predominantly White the correlation between the positionality of applicants and those making hiring decisions cannot be dismissed. A mere 2 per cent of principals

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and 5 per cent of vice principals self-identify as racialized and 10 per cent and 9 per cent of secondary and elementary teachers respectively self-identify as racialized (Turner, 2015). The unwillingness of boards to adopt mandated race-based data collection pertaining to hiring and promotion continues to render any commitments to closing the teacher diversity gap insufficient.

School Administrators as Self-Reflective Practitioners

School administrators play a central role in hiring teachers to staff their schools. The revocation of Regulation 274/12 will serve to solidify this role as well as increase administrator autonomy over hiring decisions with fewer checks and balances. An area of hiring and promotion that is often uncontested is within applications. Teachers and aspiring leaders are often marginalized through seemingly neutral questions and requirements listed in these applications. However, teacher applications are far from objective and highly racialized. For example, discrimination exists on the basis of where education, credentials and teaching experience were obtained. This employment or educational experience can be deemed as 'foreign', as a certain postal code or name can be. For example, it was found that applicants to positions in Canada with English-sounding names received call-backs forty per cent more than those with foreign-sounding names (Oreopolous & Dechief, 2012). Equity and inclusive education policies that call for diversifying the teaching and administrative workforce without critical anti-racist transformation only serve to mobilize racial stratification and disparities in the education system (Abawi, 2021; Abawi2018).

While it is crucial that teachers engaging in self-reflective practice and critical consciousness of how their positionalities of privilege and oppression impact pedagogical programming, the same is true for school administrators in relation to how their positionality impacts their teacher hiring decisions. By drawing on an ACL framework, self-reflective, critical, transformative practice for administrators must be framed in relation to the implications of White privilege in selecting candidates for hire, as well as the discursive practices informing merit and fit (Lopez, 2015; Santamaria et al, 2014; Santamaria & Santamaria, 2012). Facilitating an awareness of the inequitable playing field that BIPOC applicants encounter while attempting to access these positions is essential for administrators who have minimal experience interacting with BIPOC communities, to embark on the journey of social transformation and self-reflective practice. The purpose of self-reflective practice is for educators to gauge an awareness of how Whiteness operates through colour-blind notions of objective hiring and how to facilitate a critical awareness of such processes. The following concluding paragraph will detail specific strategies for school administrators to engage in transformative, critical reflective practice as well as other suggestions that can contribute to increasing teacher diversity.

Discussion and Conclusion

While continued attention to teacher diversity continues to envelope Canada's and especially Ontario's publicly-funded education system, not only through policy initiatives but also community activism, the discussion cannot occur without drawing attention to the dynamics and relationship between administrator demographics and teacher hiring practices. Teacher diversity cannot be isolated from the racialized power relations that encompass hiring practices, conscious and subconscious biases and social location that solidify the correlation between predominantly White administrators hiring predominantly White teachers into permanent teaching positions. Although some have praised the Ford administration's repeal of Regulation 274/12, citing more freedom for administrators to hire diverse teachers, this argument lacks substance. Prior to the Regulation, White

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educators were overrepresented in permanent teaching and leadership positions (Turner, 2015), the Regulation placed checks and balances on the widespread discretionary power of administrators to make hiring decisions based on subjective discourses of merit and fit. The Regulation was enacted in order to curb widespread bias and nepotism that shall only resurface without critical anti-racist transformative practice, policy and critical dialogue with BIPOC students, families, communities, activists, educators and leaders as emphasized by the ACL framework.

Although the career and promotional trajectory of BIPOC candidates differs substantially from their White counterparts, there are tangible steps that can be undertaken to increase BIPOC representation in school leadership. Increasing the applicant pool of BIPOC candidates for leadership positions is multilayered and requires a concerted approach between stakeholders, including: faculties of education, the Ministry of Education, and the Ontario College of Teachers which serves as the regulatory body of the profession in the province. Increasing teacher and administrative diversity cannot be a top-down approach and must not be limited to traditional teacher education programs that dominate teacher certification in Ontario. As previously noted, Ontario does not offer alternate pathway programs for teacher accreditation that target underrepresented groups. In the United States, various alternative pathways exist, including, but not limited to: Teach for America, the Urban Education Enrichment Program, the New York Teaching Fellow and the Boston Teacher Residing Program. Many US states also offer "Grow Your Own Programs" that are partnership initiatives between school districts and universities. Early outreach programs that aim to recruit BIPOC high school students into the profession are also commonplace throughout various states (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Bristol, 2015). These varied pathways to teacher certification offered in the US context would work well in Ontario, given the province's demographic diversity. This pathway would also allow for more culturally responsive approaches to teacher education and serve to dismantle prevalent White socialization and performativity permeated in traditional teacher education programs. Currently few faculties, Niagara University's College of Education being one of them, offer flexible options for teacher education. Niagara University offers the paraprofessional program cohort allowing candidates already working in education, such as Teaching Assistants and Early Childhood Educators to pursue their teaching degree during evenings and weekends, allowing students to remain in full-time work. As noted earlier, BIPOC Ontarians are disproportionately more likely to be engaged in precarious labour and earn significantly less than their White counterparts, this option allows many BIPOC students to become accredited teachers without suffering steep financial strain.

Additionally, targeted mentorship programs, such as the pilot project in the Peel District School Board called: Aspiring Racialized Leaders Mentoring Project must be implemented across Ontario publicly-funded boards. Enacting targeted mentorship opportunities for the NTIP program will allow for more BIPOC educators interested in school administration to have required leadership experience at the school level. The establishment of partnerships between school boards and faculties of education that provide resources, professional development, materials and supports to BIPOC teachers interested in leadership roles, most notably. the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE)/University of Toronto's Centre for Leadership and Diversity must be adopted in other faculties for BIPOC aspiring leaders outside of the Toronto region. The Principal's Qualification Program (PQP Parts 1 and 2) curriculum and Ontario Leadership Framework must be updated to challenge practices and processes that sustain the status quo of Whiteness in leadership positions. For example, curricular components, activities, and case studies that are informed by hiring for diversity, such as stimulating mock recruitment and interview sessions that encourage candidates to

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reflect on their preconceived notions and positionalities as action-based transformative pedagogy. The province, more specifically the Ontario College of Teachers and the Ontario Ministry of Education must implement accountability processes, such as requiring faculties and school boards to release data, as well as to provide yearly updates of the data in order to determine the diversity gaps in correlation to leadership. Moreover, to improve access to leadership roles, multi-year promotion opportunities should be available among school boards, allowing for more candidates to be placed in the principal and vice-principal applicant pools.

Finally, in order for administrators to engage in critical self-transformative practice and community engagement to enhance teacher diversity, I outline the following guidelines. First, ongoing, anti-racist professional development for school administrators concerning self-transformative practice that centres on the critical unpacking of positionality. Second, increasing mentorship programs for BIPOC aspiring and in-service leaders by other BIPOC leaders. Third, establishing critical and collaborative dialogue with students, parents, educators, and stakeholders that extend beyond apologies and oppressive, exclusionary practices that have been exuded by several Ontario school boards. It is important to note here that it cannot be assumed that all BIPOC educators and leaders will be anti-racist due to social location, therefore it is suggested that all educational leaders and teachers alike engage in such critical work. Mandatory data collection must also be administered across publicly-funded school boards, not only on parent and student demographics, but also on teacher and administrator populations. The Census data provided by boards and Ministry of Education Reviews, including the Review of the Peel District School Board denote teacher demographics, but fail to indicate the employment status of teachers. For example, as mentioned earlier, BIPOC communities are overrepresented in precarious work; therefore, what is needed is more specific demographic information of composition of permanent teaching and leadership positions. The findings of this paper coalesce with the overarching themes of higher education, policy and leadership. By implementing changes to administrative qualifications and professional development initiatives at higher education institutions that offer school leadership preparation programs, equity and inclusive educational policies can be both be more responsive to hiring more BIPOC leaders that reflect the diversity of Ontario's demographics. Further, the suggestion for more detailed data collection will convey convergences and divergences of hiring trends, as well as identify policy gaps that need to be addressed from data-informed targeted hiring of educational leaders. Through this comprehensive data, policy decisions can be mobilized to inform the Principal' Qualification Program, such as revisions to the Ontario Leadership Framework.

Institutions of higher education that offer teacher education programs must also be responsive to the needs of BIPOC educators and potential teacher candidates, by implementing more partnership programs and pathways to teacher certification beyond the traditional two-year full-time programs that account for the majority of teacher certification programs. These policy changes are reflective of the lived realities of many communities across the province, and will lead to the diversification of not only the teacher workforce, but also educational leader demographics.

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