

Chapter 6

K–12 Educational Leadership and Autism

Judy Ruth Williamson
Texas Christian University, USA

Jillian Yarbrough
West Texas A&M University, USA

ABSTRACT

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that about 1 in 54 children have been identified with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Autism occurs among all ethnic, socioeconomic, and racial groups. With this nationwide prevalence, educational leadership, Principals, Vice Principals, and parents must be in a continuous state of learning about autism and the unique needs of their autistic learners. The chapter is dedicated to helping parents and educational leadership to understand each other's roles and responsibilities in regard to serving children and youth on the autism spectrum. First, the chapter will explore literature regarding unique leadership characteristics needed to support youth on the autism spectrum. Next, an overview of literature available regarding educational leaders' perspectives and strategies in supporting youth on the spectrum. Finally, suggestions and strategies for developing educational leaders that understand and cherish youth on the autism spectrum are given.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-7732-5.ch006

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever been asked to identify a great leader? When this question is posed, people often identify renowned people like George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Marie Currie, etc. But we often forget to realize there are great leaders quietly working in our communities. Some of these leaders are in our school systems working to guide our children through their learning journeys. The following chapter will discuss the unique and critical leadership role that K-12 administrator, principals and vice principals must fill to support youth on the autism spectrum in being successful in the formal school setting.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that about 1 in 54 children have been identified with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) (2020). The CDC developed these estimates from data collected from health and special education records of children living in 11 communities across the United States. Interestingly the data shows 1 in 76 children in Colorado and 1 in 32 children in New Jersey to be diagnosed on the spectrum (CDC, 2020). So, this is an estimated number, but even as an estimate, the number is significant for educational systems. Autism occurs among all ethnic, socioeconomic and racial groups. With this nationwide prevalence, educational leadership, Principals, Vice Principals, Superintendents, etc. and parents of children on the autism spectrum, must be in a continuous state of learning about autism and the unique needs of their autistic learners. The following chapter is dedicated to helping parents and educational leadership to understand each other's roles and responsibilities regarding serving children and youth on the autism spectrum. First, the chapter will explore literature regarding unique leadership characteristics needed to support youth on the autism spectrum. Next, an overview of literature available regarding educational leaders' perspectives and strategies in support youth on the spectrum. Finally, chapter author suggestions and strategies for developing educational leaders that understand and cherish youth on the autism spectrum.

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP LITERATURE

Martin Luther King Jr said, "The function of education, therefore is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character- that is the goal of true education." Dr. King is one of the greatest leaders, activists and educators of all time. When we engage with Dr. King's words, we experience inclusive ideas that paint a picture of a world we all hope is possible. In this quote, Dr. King is describing educational ideals. Education should have the function of teaching each

14 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/k-12-educational-leadership-and-autism/294641

Related Content

Learning the Parallelogram Area With Technology Supported by Formative Assessment

Elvira Lázaro Santos and Leonor Santos (2020). *Handbook of Research on Formative Assessment in Pre-K Through Elementary Classrooms* (pp. 206-225).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/learning-the-parallelogram-area-with-technology-supported-by-formative-assessment/240568

Project Engage: Solutions for Recruiting, Retaining, and Reinforcing STEM Majors From Rural Areas

(2019). *Engaging STEM Students From Rural Areas: Emerging Research and Opportunities* (pp. 21-38).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/project-engage/211502

Aligning Information Systems Programs With the New ABET-CAC Criteria: The Case of the American University of Kuwait

Ahmad A. Rabaa'i and Aaron Rasheed Rababaah (2020). *International Journal of Curriculum Development and Learning Measurement* (pp. 79-107).

www.irma-international.org/article/aligning-information-systems-programs-with-the-new-abet-cac-criteria/260749

From Student to Author: Engaging Gifted Learners in the National Novel Writing Month Young Writers Program

Nancy Blair Black (2015). *Cases on Instructional Technology in Gifted and Talented Education* (pp. 195-220).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/from-student-to-author/118324

Quantitative Analysis of Online Teaching and Learning Techniques and the 2019 English Language Proficiency Assessment Levels in a Tri-State Region

Theresa A. Paterra (2023). *International Journal of Curriculum Development and Learning Measurement* (pp. 1-15).

www.irma-international.org/article/quantitative-analysis-of-online-teaching-and-learning-techniques-and-the-2019-english-language-proficiency-assessment-levels-in-a-tri-state-region/320655