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ABSTRACT

Ethical Decision Making and Education Policy: Leadership and Governance in Urban Communities

Urban school districts serve large numbers of children living at or below the poverty level. These schools, like many other social institutions located in urban communities are overburdened and severely under funded. Many individuals in these distressed districts, characterized by overcrowded classrooms, outdated resources, and limited funding, face day-to-day challenges that force them to develop and implement creative survival techniques. In an effort to improve student achievement, those in leadership and decision making positions must constantly address the complexities and challenges enveloping increasingly diverse and global urban communities. There are also structural features in funding systems that severely affect one's ability to meet students' needs. Policymakers and educators are confronted with financial challenges that affect measures of economic well being and limit life chances of urban children. Unfortunately, politicians, community leaders and other stakeholders are frequently engaged in political battles that give rise to disjointed decisions that do little to eradicate these structural obstacles. Those who govern financially bankrupt urban districts constantly complain about inadequate financial support (rightly so).

developing and expanding content knowledge of basic concepts of public policy and ethical decision making;

identifying the cultural forces, institutional features, policy network activities and interest groups influencing ethical decision making in governmental arenas and other organizations; and

developing an understanding of social justice as related to ethical actions and equity in policy driven decision Making.