

# “I Want to Speak to a White Person”: Daily Microaggressions and Resilient Leadership

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## Abstract

This case study blends the accounts of 10 Black women who engaged in a research study on their experiences of microaggressions when serving as school leaders, to tell the story of one Black female principal in a mostly White suburban district. We describe the ways the environment enabled and perpetuated gendered racist incidents at multiple levels and detail some of the microaggressions affecting her career path, leadership, and community interactions, as well as the ways she overcomes these obstacles and persists. We contextualize this narrative in the literature around gender, race, and school leadership, in studies of gendered racism, and finally in White allyship scholarship. We conclude by posing questions around whose responsibility it is to address these issues, and the structural changes necessary to do so.

## Keywords

microaggressions, gendered racism, White allyship

This case highlights the need to challenge dominant discourses around leadership, race, and gender and for educators to engage in antiracist and feminist discourses. We do this by first describing the specific ways environment both enabled and perpetuated gendered racist incidents at multiple levels and detailing some of the microaggressions affecting Principal Sutton’s career path, leadership, and community interactions as well as the ways she overcomes these obstacles and persists. We then contextualize this narrative in the literature around gender, race, and school leadership, in studies of

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gendered racism, and finally in White allyship scholarship. We conclude by posing questions around whose responsibility it is to address these issues, and the structural changes necessary to do so. We also provide additional readings that may help prepare and guide discussion and learning related to this case.

## Case Background

### Setting

Jefferson Middle School is located in New Jersey, in a town about 20 miles outside a metropolitan area, largely populated by White middle- to upper-middle-class families where one or both parents commute to the city for work. The regional district serves approximately 3,000 students and includes six schools. Jefferson Middle School is one of two middle schools, serving 760 students in Grades 7–8 while the other serves students in Grades 5–6. The student population is about 80% White, 20% Black and 10% Hispanic, and the district has few people of color working in the school or system.

In 2014, the district issued a diversity statement, claiming the desire to recruit more teachers and administrators of color, but the principal in this case is the first and only person of color in a school leadership role, and is one of only three women in such roles. The other two women are White and serve as the principals of two of the district's elementary schools. The few other people of color working in the district are employed in the janitorial staff or in the foreign language department at the high school. With the diversity initiative came a "diversity week" in all the district's schools in mid-Fall. Intended to celebrate the heritage of students and teachers, the week inevitably has celebrated mostly White-European heritages via traditional foods, clothing, and holiday traditions from dominant cultures such as those from Irish, German, Scandinavian, Italian, or French descent. In recent years, some parents advocated for the inclusion of diverse books, and a few by authors of color or about characters of color were added to the curriculum. There was also a push to add "alternative perspectives" in the social studies and history curricula, namely, around the Native American experience, with some mention of the rights missing from the founding documents of the United States. This push also resulted in the inclusion of some traditional folktales and fairytale adaptations from other cultures and as well as the renaming of Columbus Day on the school calendar to Indigenous People's Day.

These changes were a point of pride for the town as was the lack of recognized hate crimes or open displays of racism. When asked, most individuals would describe their town as fairly "open-minded" and "safe," or perhaps, "a good community." Recently, however, some neighborhood beautification committees and involved community members pushed back on plans to build more modestly priced rental apartments on the business end of town. The committee claimed the plans didn't "fit with the feel" of the town. They also rejected the proposal of adding a bus stop for ease of commuting into the city, claiming it would cause unnecessary congestion. The front lawns in town during the Fall of 2016 had an almost even mix of Clinton and Trump signs, with some Sanders supporters as well.

## Leadership Transitions

*Former Principal Smith.* In early August, Jefferson's beloved principal of 18 years, Mr. Smith, decided to retire. Mr. Smith was a well-known and loved homegrown administrator who grew up in the town and worked in business for a couple years before a career change led him to teach for a few years. He was then fast-tracked into leadership. He served on more than one community organization, and rumor had it he intended to run for school board after retiring from his role as principal. In his absence, Mrs. Traci Sutton was appointed to be the interim principal having served as Jefferson's assistant principal for the 3 years prior. Before that, she was a teacher for 10 years in another school and an instructional coach in the district for 5 years. She also served as a principal intern at Jefferson, receiving her principal certification under the mentorship of Principal Smith.

*Principal Sutton.* Given her long history at Jefferson, Principal Sutton felt stung that she wasn't immediately hired to be the principal and that the district had, when giving her the role, announced their plan to post the position and interview while she filled in. She and Principal Smith had a very successful working relationship, and she was deeply familiar with the school and its community. Though early in their relationship, Principal Smith had seemed hesitant to delegate responsibilities, this eventually dissipated, and by the time he left, they were real partners in leadership. She also believed Principal Smith had advocated for her to be the principal. She had earned his trust and was surprised his political and social capital had not transferred to her getting the position.

*Principal Sutton's first year.* One evening at school in August, shortly after accepting the interim position, Principal Sutton was walking to her car, and there were some middle school-aged kids playing on the school basketball courts near the parking lot. As she unlocked her car, she overheard them talking about her, calling her, among other things, a "bitch" who was "out to get students." Caught off guard by these comments, she was further shocked when she heard one yell the n-word as she hurried to get inside her vehicle.

Afraid and hurt, she didn't know what to do. She didn't know these boys, and alone, still a few miles from home, she was worried about escalating the situation. Ultimately, she chose to just drive off. She didn't react fully until long after her son was in bed and she recounted the incident with her husband. Her fiercest supporter, he reminded her they were "just kids" and she, by being an excellent principal, had a chance to change their worldview. While his comments helped her feel less alone, she was worried. How many people felt this way? What would this mean for her ability to succeed in the role? Over the next few days, she called trusted colleagues and friends asking for advice and went to church and prayed for guidance. By the time the first week of school rolled around, she was feeling stronger and more determined.

Principal Sutton faced difficulty negotiating her new role, a number of teachers were having a hard time with Principal Smith's departure. Many had never worked

with a different administrator and cried when Principal Smith came to say goodbye during the first teacher professional development day of the year. Teachers held a farewell party to honor him, a party that took more than half of the 6 hr Principal Sutton had to share her vision and engage with teachers around their collective goals. Having lost that time, she worried about whether her vision would be fully accepted and appreciated by the faculty.

Her concerns felt well warranted as in the first few weeks of school, in response to her questions or modifications to policy, several teachers made comments like, “Well we used to do it this way” or “But, Mr. Smith, he always did it this way.” In one instance, a teacher stood up during a faculty meeting and demanded Principal Sutton to show them the research on which she had based a curricular decision (such a challenge had never occurred under Principal Smith). While Principal Sutton respected Mr. Smith, she felt she couldn’t make the space her own with these constant comparisons and challenges. She also felt that despite the district naming her as acting principal, her leadership and legitimacy was often questioned by both her teachers and by other administrators in Central Office and wondered if whether this was related to her race, gender, or perceived lack of experience.

Indeed, further complicating Principal Sutton’s feelings of acceptance was her race. As the aforementioned numbers suggest, families and students of color were somewhat isolated in the district. It was not uncommon for there to be only a handful of Black and Brown faces in a school and sometimes only one in a class. This was true for Principal Sutton’s teenage son, who attended the district high school. As one of the only Black boys in mostly Advanced Placement classes, he often complained about his classmates and teachers treating him either as an “exception” or asking him to speak as an expert on Blackness. Recently, he was pulled over by the police while driving home from football practice and the experience left the whole family fearful. These fears kept Principal Sutton awake at night, wondering whether her son was safe in this district.

Such fears were nothing new to Principal Sutton. She was the only Black teacher in her prior school, one of only two students of color in her administration preparation program and the only Black instructional coach in the district. Though deeply disappointing, such experiences had simply confirmed for her what her teaching experience had already suggested, that teaching, and education more broadly, was generally White profession, and that most educators of color were concentrated in the nearest urban district, about 20 miles away. What she wasn’t sure of, was whether this was their choice or if they were forced into those positions by a lack of job offers elsewhere. She felt lucky her internship at Jefferson Middle School had coincided with an opening for a new assistant principal and that she had a strong relationship with Principal Smith at the time. She wondered whether she would have been given the same opportunity without this “leg up.”

Regardless, here she was principal for the first time, and the first 2½ months of school proved exhausting but also successful and rewarding. The staff slowly began to accept her changes to expectations; together they created norms, and she delegated some responsibilities to create a more shared leadership approach and to give her teachers ownership over what they hoped to accomplish together. She also purchased

a socio-emotional curriculum to add to their advisory period, calling attention to the need for emotional regulation and mental health support for their students as they navigated the start to their teen years. She developed relationships with a few students who she knew had the potential to stir up angst and chaos and intervened by giving them opportunities to be student leaders when visitors came. She was finding her footing, and for the most part enjoyed her work, though she sometimes missed the classroom and the protection it had given her.

*Change in the weather.* Principal Sutton paused before opening the door in the dusky early morning. She took a deep breath and centered herself, quieting her racing mind and spirit, before walking in. She had arrived early, leaving her own teenage children during their breakfast, hoping to tackle her massive inbox before teachers, staff, and students started their day, before there were fires to put out and a ringing phone. It was the first week of November 2016 and Principal Sutton was nervous and grateful the presidential election cycle was ending. On this morning in November, Principal Sutton scanned her emails and came across one from the PTA vice president, Ms. Ross. In it, Ms. Ross expressed concern about some new students who seemed, to the PTA, to struggle with the “Jefferson Way,” and required some additional onboarding. Ms. Ross wrote that the PTA had brainstormed and decided perhaps a “special class” during recess to go over expectations and behavioral norms would help these students “fit in better.” Though she was vague about who these students were, Principal Sutton knew the PTA, composed primarily of White parents, born and raised in the area and who had attended Jefferson, were referring to the handful of Black students who had recently entered the middle school via an inter-district open choice bussing program. Irritated, Principal Sutton flagged the email to respond to later, she needed time to process how to respond.

She then picked up her phone to check voicemails, after two sick calls from staff members, and a call from central office regarding an update to her budget concerns, she was confronted by the voice of an irate parent who stated they would come see her in that morning to address something she had apparently mishandled with their son. Before she even had time to consider which student this was regarding, the front doorbell rang and a glance at the security camera indicated who the irate parent had been.

Yesterday, Colin Freeman arrived at school wearing a “Make America Great Again” t-shirt which, due to the written slogan, was against school dress-code. However, the issue Principal Sutton had addressed with Colin was not his shirt, but his school-issued laptop on which he had stuck a large sticker of the Confederate flag. Upset by this, his teacher came to Principal Sutton’s office during lunch to say that she was sorry to have to bring it up and couldn’t “Imagine how it makes *you* feel, if I’m upset about it.” Choosing to ignore the teacher’s failure to speak with the student as well as her off-hand remark, Principal Sutton had simply asked Colin to remove the sticker. He claimed other students had stickers on their laptops and that he had a First Amendment right to express himself. When he continued to refuse to remove the sticker, Principal Sutton issued Colin an after-school detention for the next 2 days. This would cause him to miss football practice, and therefore bench him for the first half of the next

game. She also took away the laptop, letting him know he had broken his usage agreement and she would need to remove the sticker before it was returned to him.

Now his parents were standing impatiently at the front door waiting for her, with Colin, hood up and headphones on standing sheepishly behind them. Traci slipped her feet into the heels she kept under her desk for meetings, smoothed her skirt, and walked out to greet them. "Good morning Mr. and Mrs. Freeman, Colin, I just heard your voicemail, would you like to come meet in my office? It sounds like we have some things to clear up together." Mrs. Freeman started to smile and return the greeting, but Mr. Freeman interjected, "No Miss Sutton we don't, we want to talk to a white person, I mean we don't mean anything by it, you understand right? Is Mr. Cole here?" Taken aback, she said she was not aware of whether Mr. Cole, her assistant principal, was there. At exactly the same instant, a teacher walked around them, head down, Traci was certain the teacher had overheard the encounter, but tried to keep her face expressionless, stuffing anger and hurt deep within her:

I'm sorry Mr. Freeman, I'm afraid I don't understand, I am the principal, and the person most familiar with the situation, but you're welcome to come take a seat in the office and wait for Mr. Cole if you choose.

Mr. Freeman sucked his teeth and glanced at his wife, "Yes, that's what we choose."

Principal Sutton seated the Freemans and retreated to her office to call Mr. Cole. She paused for a moment, head in her hands and prayed silently for strength, "Mr. Cole, I just wanted to give you a heads up about the situation waiting for you here . . ." He listened and interjected:

Ms. Sutton, we don't need to let parents make that choice. I'm happy to speak to them *with* you, but we aren't going to let them decide to not have a conversation with you, I'm almost to school we can handle it together.

Grateful for his support, she thought back to when they hired him despite her having recommended someone else. The superintendent had said, "We think this will be a better balance for the school, he brings things to the table that you don't, and vice versa." Was this what he had meant? Was he speaking about leadership skills or was he saying that she wasn't enough? Did he know this type of issue would arise?

Glancing at the clock, she realized it was time to greet the students, and, exiting the building, she let the Freemans know they would meet shortly with Mr. Cole. Outside, she greeted students by name as they entered, and felt the unease and anger leave her temporarily. This was a favorite part of her job, as it provided the possibility to help change the course of the day for even just one student who needed to be acknowledged and greeted.

Remembering what waited for her in the office she tried not to grimace. A nudge at her elbow and she turned to see the teacher who had overheard her conversation with the Freemans. "Hey," she whispered, "I heard what they said to you this morning. I'm sorry that happened, I just wanted you to know." She barely nodded before the teacher hurried away.

She turned to head back to the office, wary about how she would address either Colin's family or Ms. Ross, as she did so, she remembered what her colleague in another district had told her: "Resilience is not getting over it. Resilience is coming through it and still living it." She hoped she could come through successfully.

## **Teaching Notes**

### *Multiple Conversations*

The snapshot of systemic racism depicted in this case is grounded in the everyday, multiple incidents Principal Sutton faces within and outside the school. It does not have a single clear incident or solution, and it would be appropriate to begin discussion with any of the incidents detailed here. Educators should expect varied conversations that are messy and difficult because there is no single perpetrator or incident which defines gendered racism. Bear in mind that in discussing and developing a deeper understanding of something as large and as deep-rooted as systemic racism, there will likely be uncomfortable issues raised, emotional responses, and personal struggles. It would behoove educators and students alike to approach this discussion with open minds, willingness to listen, and a commitment to embrace rather than avoid hard conversations. Reading some of the suggested readings beforehand may help establish a shared understanding for all participants in the discussion.

While some of what happened to Principal Sutton may feel extreme or perhaps unique to those who have not faced such discrimination firsthand, her experiences are grounded in the experiences of many Black, female school leaders. Her narrative highlights the deep-seated racism and sexism that she, and so many female school leaders of color confront daily. Specifically, for this case, it is critical to look at Principal Sutton's day in the context of research around Black women in leadership, gendered racism, principal preparation, and White allyship more broadly.

### *Black Women in School Leadership*

School leadership is a White and male-dominated space (Boris-Schacter & Langer, 2006), despite research indicating the unique effectiveness of the leadership styles of females and more specifically, Black females, especially in areas of political activism, social justice, cultural competence, and shared leadership (Alston, 2005; Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Jean-Marie, 2013; Jean-Marie et al., 2016; Newcomb & Niemeyer, 2015). And yet, Black Women continue to face discrimination as they attempt to access and thrive in the role of school leaders. While the number of female administrators is growing (up to 10 percentage-points in 2015–2016 from 1999 to 2000), administrator preparation programs remain predominantly White spaces, in fact, the percentage of Black principals remained stagnant at 11% from 1999 to 2016 (Weiner et al., 2019; Davis & Darling-Hammond, 2012; NCES, 2016). Furthermore, the average Black woman teaches 7 to 15 years longer than their White, male counterparts before taking on administrator roles (Peters, 2012) and is related to both discourse around leadership

continuing to highlight and value stereotypically masculine (and White) qualities and practices that act on these values (Muñoz et al., 2014; Reed, 2012).

Women of color are more likely to be hired into the most segregated, under resourced, and underperforming school communities, a phenomenon known as the “Glass Cliff” (Cook & Glass, 2014; McCray et al., 2007). Once hired, Black female leaders are more likely to experience discrimination related to the intersection of their gender and race (Reed & Evans, 2008; Thomas et al., 2008), and less likely to receive support and recognition (Cognard-Black, 2004; Muñoz et al., 2014; Myung et al., 2011; Peters, 2010) than their White and/or male colleagues. Placed in struggling schools without substantial support to accomplish the changes necessary for success, Black female leaders may confirm biases around who leads well or whose leadership styles drive success (Cook & Glass, 2014). Taken together, these factors of isolation, additional expectations related to identity, lack of support, and work environment can create feelings of marginalization and loss of efficacy, and cause many women to speak up less, worried about how their advocacy or leadership might be perceived or attributed to their identity, gender, and/or race (Jean-Marie, 2013; Reed & Evans, 2008).

### *Microaggressions and Gendered Racism*

While experiences of overt racism, discrimination, and bigotry persists in contemporary society, researchers highlight how racism is more often experienced through subtle exchanges known as microaggressions (Lewis et al., 2013, 2016; Sue et al., 2007). Microaggressions are the “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, which lie beneath visibility or consciousness and which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults” (Nadal et al., 2015, p. 147). Sue et al. (2007) detail three broad types of microaggressions, including microinsults which convey rudeness based on demeaning a heritage or identity, microassaults which are verbal or nonverbal attacks via name calling or avoidant behavior, and microinvalidations which negate the experiences, realities, or feelings of a person of color. These everyday racist events also occur at the macro (environmental) level, where societal or political climate bears impact on the frequency of the micro or every day, aggressions (Potok, 2017; Sue et al., 2019). Research on microaggressions traditionally focused on race, but these exchanges also impact women, members of the LGBTQ community, and others of minoritized identities, and in unique and intersecting ways (Nadal et al., 2015).

In this case study, microaggressions perpetrated on Principal Sutton simultaneously targeted her gender and race: the “interlocking identities that simultaneously influence a person’s life experiences” (Lewis & Neville, 2015, p. 290). Researchers call attention to the fact the women of color experience microaggressions based on their unique position as members of two minoritized identities, and these women often feel they are called upon to represent both their race and gender when in the company of predominantly White males (Weiner et al., 2019; Lewis et al., 2013; Lewis & Neville, 2015). Essed (1991) highlights this phenomenon as gendered racism, and uses the



term, “everyday racism” to explain how these occurrences stem from macro and micro sociological structures, including, for example, the media (e.g., the framing of stories) and political institutions (e.g., who is in positions of power). In this way, racism becomes part of the “normal” or mundane ways our society functions and thus can go unnoticed or dismissed by witnesses or bystanders. However, these recurring experiences have implications for the emotional, mental, and physical well-being for those being attached and specifically, Black women, with some labeling this chronic stress, as “racial battle fatigue” (Lewis et al., 2017; Sue et al., 2019).

Daily discrimination requires these women and other individuals of color to continually decide how to cope. Research on coping and resilience suggests that targets of microaggressions may seek social support, rely on spirituality, armor themselves, reinterpret events, withdraw, self-affirm, or confront the perpetrator (Lewis et al., 2013, 2016; Sue et al., 2019). Sue (2010), Sue et al. (2007, 2019) expand on their earlier microaggression framework by providing potential microinterventions or microaffirmations, including communicating validation, value, support, and reassurance to targets of microaggressions. While Sue et al. (2019) highlight the need to provide individuals of color potential responses to microaggressions the authors, importantly, suggest that the burden cannot fall entirely on targets of discrimination but rather on their colleagues—allies—in dominant social groups (i.e., Whites, males).

### *White Allyship and Administration Preparation*

Brown and Ostrove (2013) and Sue et al. (2019) call an “ally” an individual who seeks to express little or no prejudice and is also willing to actively promote social justice and equity. These individuals go beyond identifying their own privilege or the oppression around them, and look for opportunities to disrupt the dominant discourses, beliefs, and practices (Sue et al., 2019). Erskine and Bilimoria (2019) further suggest that White allyship requires, “a continuous, reflexive practice of proactively interrogating whiteness from an intersectionality framework, leveraging one’s position of power and privilege, and courageously interrupting the status quo,” while also “engaging in prosocial behaviors that foster growth-in-connection and have both the intention and impact of creating mutuality, solidarity, and support” (p. 2). However, Sue et al. (2019) highlight the lack of preparation and tools available to allies to effectively confront racism. The authors provide a framework for targets of microaggressions and allies to respond (p. 135), and explain the goal, when confronting discrimination, is to make it visible, nullify the microaggression, and importantly, make the perpetrator aware of their prejudices. This can be done with “comebacks” which ask for clarification, express disagreement, call attention to impact, promote empathy, or report the action (Sue et al., 2019, pp. 34–35).

Researchers continue to call for a shift in administration demographics and for teaching a social justice orientation to better address the needs of a shifting U.S. student population (Weiner et al., 2019; Castro et al., 2018; Gooden & Dantley, 2012; Theoharis, 2007; Young & Brooks, 2008). Administration preparation programs too often avoid or narrowly address identity and discrimination, frequently in a single

seminar, and largely focused on the White male perspective or on Whiteness rather than racism (Weiner et al., 2019; Carpenter & Diem, 2013; Jean-Marie et al., 2016; Leonardo, 2004; Young & Brooks, 2008).

Principal Sutton's experiences highlight the need for discussions of gendered racism to become part of administration preparation programs, not solely for Black women to prepare for the attacks on their leadership, but because the burden of addressing these microaggressions also rests on those who witness it. These discussions would require personal reflection and critique of the ways Whiteness, and with it privilege and supremacy, have constructed and perpetuate an institutional environment where these daily experiences of gendered racism occur and go unaddressed (Weiner et al., 2019). Furthermore, preparation programs might provide sample responses, such as those presented in Sue et al. (2019). In this way, openly discussing the structures which allow discriminatory incidents to persist and ways to confront them, can lay the foundation for White administrators to bear responsibility and provide solidarity.

## Conclusion

The narrative of Principal Traci Sutton's day is based on many women's accounts. There are multiple levels of gendered racism occurring throughout this case, which require a careful consideration of the circumstances leading to this point in her career as well as the environment in which she was hired into. Some of the women whose stories are included in this narrative have since left the profession, others sought employment where they would not be the only person of color, and some remained but felt they had become either numb to the constant barrage against their identity or embittered by it (Burton et al., 2020).

Research around Black women in school leadership roles sheds light on the expectations and pushback Principal Sutton faced in her role and her unique leadership qualities. Meanwhile, a framework of microaggressions and gendered racism highlights the frequent derogatory slights she encountered. This case highlights the need to challenge dominant discourses around leadership, race, and gender and to engage in these new antiracist and feminist discourses while preparing to become school leaders.

## Suggested Readings

It may be worthwhile to have students to engage with the following texts before moving on to the discussion questions:

- Burton, L. J., & Weiner, J. M. (2016). "They were really looking for a male leader for the building": Gender, identity and leadership development in a principal preparation program. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 7, Article 141.
- DiAngelo, R. (2012). Nothing to add: A challenge to white silence in racial discussions. *Understanding and Dismantling Privilege*, 2(1), 1–17.
- Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., Torino, G. C., Bucceri, J. M., Holder, A., Nadal, K. L., & Esquilin, M. (2007). Racial microaggressions in everyday life: Implications for clinical practice. *American Psychologist*, 62(4), 271–286.

- Sue, D. W., Alsaidi, S., Awad, M. N., Glaeser, E., Calle, C. Z., & Mendez, N. (2019). Disarming racial microaggressions: Microintervention strategies for targets, white allies, and bystanders. *American Psychologist, 74*(1), 128–142.
- Weiner, J. M., Cyr, D., & Burton, L. J. (2019). Microaggressions in administrator preparation programs: How black female participants experienced discussions of identity, discrimination, and leadership. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education, 16*(1), 3–29.

## Activities/Discussion Questions

1. What are some of the specific instances of microaggressions that you feel were perpetrated on Principal Sutton? As a group list as many as you can and discuss why they are discriminatory. Sort the experiences by where in the organizational structure these experiences were situated (e.g., levels might include society, local community, central office, faculty, student, etc.). Where appropriate, follow the incident out to the root cause or trigger, considering political climate, history, job market, hiring practices, and so on.
2. There were a few times when White colleagues bore witness or directly responded to incidents of direct discrimination. Did they behave as allies? Why or why not?
  - How might you have responded differently?
3. Who bears responsibility in addressing the discrimination experienced? Consider in your discussion, the levels of racism she experienced, and where in the organization the witnesses or perpetrators of these experiences might be.
4. Principal Sutton is about to meet with Mr. Cole, Colin, and his family, make a plan for how you would handle this situation, including mapping out some of the conversation and consequences as they relate to the desired outcome.
5. Principal Sutton also needs to respond to the PTA president's email regarding an "onboarding program" for the new (mostly Black) students in Jefferson School. How should Principal Sutton respond? As a group, compose an email that addresses this issue (include specifics regarding the steps you plan to take).
6. After addressing these immediate issues, what would your next steps be if you were Principal Sutton? These incidents point to larger cultural issues beneath the surface at the school among the professional staff and likely the students. She mentions wanting to make the school more inclusive and her students and staff more aware of their own prejudices. Should she take on this work? When? How? Why?
7. Reflect on and critique the ways in which your current preparation program addresses or fails to address identity and leadership. Have you had discussions of privilege, Whiteness, or racism up to this point?
  - If so, what perspectives were used to facilitate those discussions? If not, why do you think that is and what could you do about it?

8. As a future leader, do you feel prepared to confront the ways your identity informs your leadership and the ways others perceive your leadership? Why or Why not?
  - Have you either experienced or witnessed microaggressions? If so, how did you respond? If not, how might you prepare to respond if and when you do?
9. How can you act as a daily support—be it as an ally or advocate on behalf of those who experience discrimination? Or from whom will you seek support and allyship if you experience discrimination? What can be done structurally to disrupt larger systems of discrimination in schools and school systems?

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