WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

DONG JIN KIM

Will defend the dissertation

Date: May 7, 2020
Time: Noon
Location: Zoom by request

Faculty, students and the general public are encouraged to attend.

PERSONAL MINDFULNESS PRACTICES AND EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

Chair: John Lupinacci

Throughout the changing landscape of education the role of a school administrator has always carried multiple responsibilities and challenges—which are now accelerating and deepening. As a result, educators today are being regularly confronted with new situations, in their school and community, that they may feel unprepared or inadequate to handle. In this environment, many educational leaders experience increased stress levels, both psychologically and physically, that are perceptible enough to compromise their professional performance and negatively influence their daily life and work. Because of the heightened challenges and responsibilities leadership professionals confront daily, there is a need to find new ways to reduce stress and burnout for school administrators that include positive self-care and steady maintenance of personal well-being.

Exploring the benefits mindfulness offers, this dissertation presents an introductory overview of the Eastern tradition and practice of mindfulness in relationships with the thinking and actions of school administrators in modeling their personal mindfulness practices, and analyzing their effectiveness in reducing stress and enhancing self-care; by evaluating ways to overcome the challenges inherent in establishing an environment of mindfulness and stress relief—i.e., finding ways to better understand and promote mindfulness for a school principal and district leaders to reduce emotional imbalance, stress-related difficulties, and overcome potential challenges throughout a school. With what has been learned from this research, the hope is to contribute to progress in the educational field and to change a lack of interest into positive attention to the increasing problem of stress and psychic tension in the roles now required of educational leadership—specifically, how to incorporate a program of mindfulness intervention that is accountable, sustainable, supports professional development and practice and student achievement, and establishes a nurturing, responsible school environment. Such change from existing attitudes of relative indifference to this acceptance of the need to correct this situation would be a welcome and critical advance in our professional and cultural lives and deeply merits our attention.