

International Journal of Student Voice

Special Issue: Centering Girls' Voices in Education Policy, Practice, and Activism

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Preface to the Special Issue

The aim of this special issue of the *International Journal of Student Voice* is to interrogate girls' engagement with education research and as actors in school reform. For the purpose of this special issue, "girl voice" is conceptualized as girls' unique and distinct experiences in and engagement with education policy and practice. Drawing from girlhood studies and student voice literatures, this special issue examines the ways in which girls engage in school and system-level policy change in global, national, local, and comparative perspectives. Articles selected for inclusion highlight the complexities of decolonizing and/or re-envisioning researcher-subject positions when working and researching with girls, while centering the experiences of girls of color, immigrant, refugee and asylee girls, indigenous girls, and transgirls in shaping formal and non-formal education policy and practices.

The focus on girls as a unique and distinct population in education policy and reform has gained momentum over the last few years. This issue joins the girls' education, education policy, and comparative and international education literatures to highlight the policies, practices, and impacts of girl voice in these areas. Both original research proposals and practitioner reflections were solicited for this issue. The articles selected for inclusion reflect both practitioner and scholarly perspectives on girls' voice within internationally comparative education policy and practice.

Drawing from the articles' areas of inquiry, this special issue is thematically organized into three sections: *Girls' Education Policy Discourses*, *Claiming Space for Girls in School Reform*, and *Girl-Centered Partnerships*. In the first article, I explore girls' education policy discourses and uncover how girls became a population of interest to achieve international development goals. I also aim to illustrate the dynamic construction of girls' education policy discourses and highlight the complexities for both policy and practice.

The next two articles explore girl voice within school-based policy and pedagogies. LaRhondolyn Mathies, Cherie Dawson-Edwards, and Bradley Carpenter examine Black girls' experiences with school discipline policy in the United States. In the article that follows, Kayla Johnson and Joseph Levitan show how using photovoice methods with girls can inform pedagogical and policy change in rural Peruvian schools. The two articles in the last section of this issue focus on *Girl-Centered Partnerships*. Kelly Grace and Salav Ouv examine feminist action research partnerships in Cambodia. Their study highlights the importance of intergenerational and intersectional approaches to girl-focused research. The concluding article in this special issue, by Norin Taj, centers the experiences of South Asian migrant girls in Canadian public schools. Together, the

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articles in this section demonstrate how partnerships between scholars and girl collaborators can lead to gender transformation in schools.

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