Patricia A. Jennings: *The Mindful School: Transforming School Culture Through Mindfulness and Compassion* Guilford Press, New York, NY, 2019, 271 pp.

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Today's youth face well-documented challenges. There has been an increase in mental health concerns among K-12 students in recent years, including increased rates of depression and self-harm, and declines in measures of happiness and life satisfaction (Keyes et al. 2019; Twenge and Campbell 2018; Twenge et al. 2018). These mental health challenges have been exacerbated by the additional stress that has resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic. These troubling mental health trends in youth have prompted school personnel to seek strategies to meet the needs of today's struggling youth. One such categorical approach has included the integration of mindfulness-based practices into school settings to help students and school personnel manage stress and cultivate prosocial qualities to support mental health (Meiklejohn et al. 2012). The emerging evidence in support of the utility of mindfulness-based programming for youth (Felver et al. 2016; Klingbeil et al. 2017) has elicited a surge of interest in deploying these practices more widely and systematically in school settings.

Jennings' edited volume, *The Mindful School: Transforming School Culture through Mindfulness and Compassion*, provides the reader with a compendium of research, strategies, case studies, and practical insights to guide schools in the implementation of mindfulness-based programming. This collection of chapters does not focus solely on how mindfulness may be directly taught to students; rather, it includes a diverse array of contributions highlighting multiple different service providers (e.g., administrators and school counselors) and school systems that may be directly affected by mindfulness programming to indirectly benefit students. The book introduces the reader to the idea that mindfulness may be a catalyst through which the skills and

perception built by mindfulness practice may be applied to systemic transformations in the entire educational system.

The first section of the book provides an accessible introduction that frames the rest of the book's content. Chapter 1 highlights the call for an educational transformation of schools that includes mindfulness programming and offers an overview of each section and chapter's content in order to orient the reader to the material. Chapter 2 summarizes the current research on mindfulness-based programming for youth to support well-being. The authors provide an overview of many of the evidence-based programs currently being implemented and summarize the existing literature on the impact these programs have on student's mental health, self-regulation, physical health, and academic functioning. This chapter closes with a case study that describes the experience of integrating mindfulness into a secondary school, the perception of students receiving the programming, and the required skills necessary to obtain benefits from the program.

The second section of the book, which comprises the majority of the content, focuses on the roles and responsibilities of individuals in school transformation. This section considers a myriad of perspectives and voices concerning distinct ways that mindfulness, both conceptually and programmatically, can transform schools. Chapter 3 focuses on examining how mindfulness and compassion practices geared for adults in the schools can create a culture of trust, positive relationships, reflection, resilience, and renewal that allow all individuals to thrive. Chapter 4 details the key role school principals can play in supporting mindfulness, and it includes a relevant case study detailing how one principal spearheaded an initiative to implement programming schoolwide in an urban charter school. In Chapter 5, the authors delve into research examining unnamed domains of teacher competency (e.g., teacher presence, social-emotional competencies) and how these qualities are important to embody as an effective teacher. The authors propose a calm, clear, kind framework for the mindful

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teacher and explain how these qualities can develop from contemplative practices. In Chapter 6, the authors provide three elementary school teacher case studies examining the role of passion for mindfulness practice in implementing a mindfulness-based social-emotional curriculum. They discuss the mechanisms (e.g., personal commitment, personal value of the activity) and circumstances (e.g., teacher training) that may foster teacher buy-in and the development of passion that arises from independent choice instead of social pressure. Chapter 7 approaches how school counselors can function as key agents of change within schools, including multiple case examples of a school counselor's use of mindfulness interventions to assist students in handling stress, exposure to trauma, and regulating attention and hyperactivity. Chapter 8 examines the role of parents as partners in developing mindful schools and transforming the school culture via school-family partnerships.

The third section of the book provides a prospective outlook on the future of mindfulness in school systems. In Chapter 9, the authors discuss how teachers and students can find peace amidst the chaos of the modern school system. They go on to describe the rationale and process of setting up a contemplative teacher licensure program by mixing contemplative studies with pedagogy skills that fit within state standards. In Chapter 10, the author explores the historical background to illuminate the current state of education and how harm has occurred over time among the most vulnerable students, families, and communities as a result of educational policies. Given the educational context shared, mindfulness is proposed as a tool that may meet the needs of students from an equitable lens.

The Mindful School: Transforming School Culture through Mindfulness and Compassion is an excellent resource for teachers, parents, administrators, policymakers, and any stakeholder invested in education. This book provides a multifaceted view of how the many hands involved in education can collaborate to create a school transformation by employing mindfulness and compassion-based perspectives and tools. This book marries current, evidence-based content and models with highly practical information and case studies that render this compendium useful for a variety of professionals and laypeople. The description of the various roles that different professions (e.g., school counselors) may hold while integrating mindfulness into school systems provides a compelling vision for a school environment characterized by

compassion, support, and mindfulness. The book is filled with strategies, wisdom, and knowledge to allow individuals to apply the models and programs that are desperately needed in today's schools. Here, school-based professionals will benefit from the decades of research and clinical experience from leading scholars and professionals in the field. Further, readers will emerge with a comprehensive understanding of the proposed transformation while receiving concrete information about the next steps he or she can take regardless of their role within the school system. This authentic collection of chapters from leading educational mindfulness scholars should be considered required reading for any school-based personnel seeking to implement mindfulness-based practices effectively into the contemporary school system.

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