



A PORTRAIT OF A CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE SCHOOL

THE  **LEADERSHIP
ACADEMY**

Empowering leaders. Transforming
schools for every student.



The Leadership Academy defines equity as **when every school and school system is intentionally built to ensure children of every race, ethnicity, language or other characteristics of their identity have what they need to achieve academic, social, and emotional success.**

"We are living through a very dangerous time,"

writer James Baldwin told a room full of teachers in 1963. "Everyone in this room is in one way or another aware of that. We are in a revolutionary situation, no matter how unpopular that word has become in this country... To any citizen of this country who figures himself as responsible – and particularly those of you who deal with the minds and hearts of young people – you must be prepared to 'go for broke.' You must understand that in the attempt to correct so many generations of bad faith and cruelty, when it is operating not only in the classroom but in society, you will meet the most fantastic, the most brutal, and the most determined resistance."

More than 50 years later, the United States is experiencing another revolutionary situation. As people were moved to action in response to the murder of Emmett Till generations ago, today people are speaking up after the murder of George Floyd. Today's racial reckoning shines a spotlight on the persistent inequities in minoritized communities in the areas of climate change, housing, employment, healthcare and COVID-19, and education. The shuttering of schools across the country in March 2020 showed that schools served their communities not just as institutions of learning, but as havens for safety, nutrition, stability, relationships, technology, creativity, and care. As school systems quickly pivoted how they approach school amidst a pandemic, there is a longer-term opportunity to reimagine what school can look like both in-person and remotely and to create more stabilizing forces for communities.

Based on our research and experience across the country, we have identified practices, policies and structures that can support the establishment of schools and school systems that are intentionally built to ensure children of every race, ethnicity, language or other characteristics of their identity, have what they need to achieve academic, social, and emotional success. We call these practices culturally responsive.

In these pages we present a portrait of a culturally responsive school. Organized into eight critical action areas of a culturally responsive leader, this guide is designed to support leaders and their school communities consciously disrupt systemic racism and decenter dominant culture.

In the words of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, rather than provide the traditional western "banking" education of filling up minds like piggy banks until they are full, the most effective education is "liberation," one that inspires learners to think critically and freely. Someone who is educated within an equitable, culturally responsive environment reflects on the world they live in and challenges inequitable and oppressive social structures in order to enact change. Our current educational landscape continues to broaden our definition and expectation of school. Our reimagining pushes beyond physical walls, seat time, school zones, and standardized exams. We define school as a learning environment that is both remote and in-person and so use the terms "learning environment" and "school" interchangeably.



KEY TERMS

BIAS: An implicit bias is any unconsciously-held set of associations about a social group. Implicit biases are the product of learned associations and social conditioning. They often begin at a young age, and most people are unaware that they hold them. Importantly, these biases do not necessarily align with personal identity. It's possible to unconsciously associate positive or negative traits with one's own race, gender, or background.

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PRACTICE: The use of this term is specific and deliberate and requires that education leaders understand and simultaneously attend to:

- **A strong foundation of cultural understanding.** Culturally responsive leaders understand the dimensions and impact of cultural constructs in society and continuously cultivate and revisit their own personal understanding of the impact of culture on their own identity and the ways in which it shapes their approach to their professional practice.
- **The academic success of all students.** Culturally responsive leaders center student learning and academic rigor across every school, classroom, and learning environment in their system. They cultivate and value content expertise. They understand and apply college- and career-level standards and select high quality instructional materials aligned to standards. They hold, model, and communicate consistently high and transparent expectations for all learners and develop the capacity of the system and the educators within it to know where each student is in relation to those expectations and use that knowledge to provide appropriate learning supports.
- **Cultivating and deepening the cultural competence** of themselves and the adults they lead. Culturally responsive leaders affirm the cultures of students and adults through the learning opportunities they provide, the materials they use, the environment they build, and their skill in using cultural understandings to support learning. They build authentic rapport and trust with students, staff, families, and the community, affirming the multiple identities of individuals, and support and guide others in doing the same.
- **The cultivation of sociopolitical consciousness.** Culturally responsive leaders cultivate and support students' ability to question and critique social norms, values, practices, and systems that produce and maintain inequity. They facilitate adult and student talk about culture and identity and consistently look for and utilize opportunities to generate inquiry about inequity, oppression, and change.

HYBRID LEARNING: Students are engaged in learning both inside and outside of the physical school classroom, leveraging a variety of synchronous and asynchronous experiences facilitated by one or more teachers in collaboration with the students' caregivers.



As you work through this guide, please note that this is not an exhaustive list of indicators, nor do we include reflection questions for every sample indicator. This tool is meant as a jumping off point and we encourage you to identify the indicators relevant for your context and to create new indicators and reflection questions based on your school's context that will help you engage in analysis, conversation and action. We have not seen a school that has every indicator in place and reached the point of equity but we are looking to you to "go for broke."

The purpose of this tool is to support a school leader and their team in re-envisioning their school community to be a place where learners engage in critical thinking and are encouraged to challenge the very structures that raised them. School leaders and their teams will find this guide useful at any point in their school's journey. It can be used as a baseline to create aspirational goals; an accountability tool to assess progress against goals; and as a celebration tool to show quick wins.

HYBRID TEACHERS: Teachers are teaching students in the physical school classroom at the same time they are teaching students in remote learning.

INSTITUTIONALIZED RACISM: Another expression of racism reflected in disparities regarding wealth, income, criminal justice, employment, housing, marriage, healthcare, political power, and education. It is racism that is institutionalized—that is, accepted as part of everyday life, everyday systems and structures, and our common habits, thoughts, and policies. [Dr. David Kirkland, NYU Metro Center]

INTERSECTIONALITY: "Intersectionality is simply a prism to see the interactive effects of various forms of discrimination and disempowerment. It looks at the way that racism, many times, interacts with patriarchy, heterosexism, classism, xenophobia – seeing that the overlapping vulnerabilities created by these systems actually create specific kinds of challenges." (Williams Crenshaw)

MINORITIZED: The term minoritized is used throughout the guide to emphasize what the school systems and other systems within the United States have overtly and covertly done to Asian, Black, Indigenous, Latinx and Students of Color. The term minoritized was coined by Michael Benitez, Jr. He explains, "I utilize the term 'minoritized' as opposed to 'minority' to refer to the process [action vs. noun] of student minoritization. My choice of text in this case assumes that there is a history of structural and institutional actions that have over time limited access to, and led to a lack of presence among students of color in higher education labeled as racially and ethnically different from the norm. Doing so also challenges the physical and spatial fixture often associated with how 'minority' is often employed in most literature focused on similar issues to a more critical understanding of how 'minority' came to be constructed socially over the course of history and how students continue to be minoritized in contemporary spaces of higher education."

MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCY: A process of learning about and becoming allies with people from other cultures, thereby broadening our own understanding and ability to participate in a multicultural process. The key element to becoming more culturally competent is respect for the ways that others live in and organize the world and an openness to learn from them. (Kivel)

PRIVILEGE: Unearned social power accorded by the formal and informal institutions of society to ALL members of a dominant group (e.g. white privilege, male privilege, etc.). Privilege is usually invisible to those who have it because we're taught not to see it, but nevertheless it puts them at an advantage over those who do not have it. (Colours of Resistance Archive, Privilege)

REMOTE LEARNING: Students are engaged in learning outside of the physical school classroom leveraging a variety of synchronous and asynchronous experiences facilitated by a teacher in collaboration with the students' caregivers.

WHITENESS: The way in which white people and their customs, cultures and beliefs operate as the standard of "normalcy" in society, operating as the standard by which all other groups are compared and functioning to create a culture in which all other groups are seen as inferior or abnormal.

WHITE DOMINANT CULTURE: The idea that white people and the ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions of white people are superior to People of Color and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions. White dominant culture is reproduced by all the institutions of our society. In particular the media, the education system, western science (which played a major role in reinforcing the idea of race as a biological truth with the white race as the "ideal" top of the hierarchy), and the Christian church have played central roles in reproducing the idea of white supremacy (i.e. that white is "normal," "better," "smarter," "holy" in contrast to Black and other People and Communities of Color. White dominant culture is an artificial, historically constructed culture which expresses, justifies and binds together the United States white supremacy system. It is the glue that binds together white-controlled institutions into systems and white-controlled systems into the global white supremacy system. (Sharon Martinas and the Challenging White Supremacy Workshop)



PRACTICE AREAS

AREA 1

EQUITY AND ACCESS

Culturally responsive learning environments are built by, with, and for students.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What does a culturally responsive learning environment, school and system look and sound like and how are we pushing to make sure it comes to fruition?
- How do we center students, families and community voice in decision-making about school policies and practices?
- Does every educator in the school community demonstrate warmth, compassion, and understanding for every student and family?
- What opportunities do we provide for students to authentically engage with members of the community who come from different cultures and backgrounds than themselves?
- What do we do to create a learning environment in which the adults and students are comfortable raising and engaging in conversation about cross-cultural difference, racism, and systemic oppression?
- How are students involved in determining how to use technology in support of their learning?
- How are students involved in shaping the tone/feel of the learning environment, both online and in person?
- How do we ensure that all students and families have the technological access needed to support learning outside of school?



SAMPLE INDICATORS

- A variety of stakeholders (students, staff, families and community) are central to revising, adding or changing school policies and rules
- The school community has identified and dismantled norms of dominant culture to create an inclusive environment that cultivates a sense of belonging among all members of the school community
- There are multiple different ways for families to involve themselves in the school community including outside of traditional instructional hours
- The school offers services to families to support them in areas of need (continuing education, employment, housing, family counseling, technology, etc.)
- All governing bodies (PTA, leadership team, etc.) are representative of the student demographics
- All staff members are familiar with the varied demographic groups in the school, the neighborhoods students live in, and the cultural and linguistic traditions each possesses

- All staff members take responsibility to eliminate students' social-emotional stress from stereotype threat and microaggressions
- The goals of discipline policies and practices are to support student learning and development and to repair community rather than to punish or exclude students
- All staff members use restorative practices to strategically approach discipline and learning environment management
- All staff members communicate on a regular basis with students, families and fellow staff members from other ethnic, racial, language, gender or disability groups
- Leadership and teachers greet families and welcome them by name
- The school prioritizes resources and/or seeks out public/private partnerships to ensure that all students and families have access to appropriate digital devices and high-speed internet service.
- The approach to remote learning is based on current context and community/family needs and not a replication of in-person learning
- Teachers help students set up/get acclimated to their home learning stations and technological tools. Teachers check in with students about how well their learning environments are working.

AREA

2

MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES

Culturally responsive learning environments have a shared school mission, vision, and core values for culturally responsive teaching and learning that supports all students in accessing and achieving rigorous college- and career-ready academic standards.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How are we daily showing those we work with that we are committed to equitable outcomes for all students, particularly minoritized students?
- Do our families and community know what our vision for equity is? How do we communicate it? How do we engage them in enacting it?
- Do we leverage our school mission, vision and core values when reviewing data and making decisions?
- Are our mission, vision and core values regularly reviewed and updated leveraging all members of the school community?
- How are we re-imagining ourselves as a culturally responsive community of learners that transcends the traditional borders of “school”? How does this new vision shape our mission and core values? How are we communicating about them?
- Are we using consistent language and definitions across the school community aligned to our mission and vision?





SAMPLE INDICATORS

- Mission, vision and core values were created and updated in collaboration with families, students, staff, and other members of the school community
- Mission, vision, and core values articulate the conditions and actions to which the school aspires in order to ensure equitable access to, and achievement of, rigorous college- and career-ready academic standards for all students
- School’s mission, vision, and values focus on equity, belonging, and being culturally responsive
- There is shared understanding and ownership of the mission, vision, and values among all members of the school community
- Regular systems and routines are in place for consistent disaggregated data analysis to identify areas in which the mission is and is not being realized and areas in which progress is and is not being made toward the vision
- All planning processes, including cycles of continuous improvement, grant projects, and district, state, and federal program planning are anchored to the school’s mission, vision, and values
- Decisions are made by aligning the shared decision-making structure to the school’s mission, vision, and values
- All adults share the school’s vision of being creators of a culturally-responsive school and act on their vision through their daily decision-making
- The school’s mission, vision and values are lead factors in moments of crisis
- The school’s mission, vision and values are evident in all learning environments

AREA 3

INSTRUCTION

Culturally responsive learning environments have support systems, structures, and routines that prioritize and focus the alignment and coherence of culturally responsive curriculum, high-quality instructional materials, instructional practice, and assessment to support all students in accessing and achieving rigorous college- and career-ready academic standards.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What do we think a rigorous, culturally relevant learning experience looks like in person? Remotely? In a hybrid situation?
- Are each of the students we are responsible for experiencing grade-level standards-aligned, culturally-relevant instruction on a daily basis?
- How do we define academic success for every student beyond traditional measures of standardized testing? How do we celebrate student learning and academic success throughout the school?
- Which students are currently enrolled in honors/AP/gifted and talented classes? Special education? Non-academic courses? Is the enrollment in each demographically representative of our student population?
- Do all students receive high-quality, effective tier one instruction? How do we make decisions about tiered interventions? Who receives tiered interventions?

- How are students’ identity, experiences, voice and choice integrated into every facet of the learning environment experience?
- How do we evaluate our curriculum materials for dominant cultural narrative?
- How are we providing students with opportunities to engage with standards-aligned curriculum?

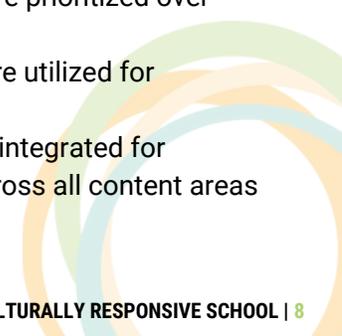
- How are we creating a community across remote and in-person learning environments?
- How do we prioritize and use diagnostic assessments to plan instruction and identify and meet individual students’ learning needs?
- How do we limit the influence and impact of standardized assessments on daily instruction?



SAMPLE INDICATORS

- Leadership and teachers know what a culturally responsive learning environment looks and sounds like in person and remotely
- Leadership and teachers have knowledge of current college- and career-ready standards as written and in practice
- Leadership and teachers identify and mitigate the presence of dominant culture within college- and career-ready content standards
- Leadership and instructional coaches ensure high-quality, culturally responsive instructional curriculum and materials are provided, adopted and supported
- The curriculum leverages project based learning (PBL) as a key component and create opportunities for every student to participate
- Leadership and teachers understand the role of aligned assessment tools to support standards and curriculum
- Student voice and choice are integral components of the learning experience
- Teachers and leadership choose timely data to disaggregate by student groups to identify disparities by race, ethnicity, language, ability and other characteristics
- There are targeted, multi-tiered systems of support to provide equitable and universal access to culturally responsive learning opportunities that support the achievement of rigorous college- and career ready academic standards for all students
- Special efforts are made to achieve learning environment integration when students self-segregate in the in-person and remote learning environment (e.g. teams for contests, groups for instruction, other forms of classroom organization)
- There is evidence of career and college-based conversations in the learning environment (e.g., lesson content, bulletin boards, college gear, etc.)

- Students have a sense of agency and optimism for the future
- Students express self-love, self-acceptance, and pride in their multiple intersectional identities
- Students have an understanding of their own and others’ cultural histories and contributions
- Students have empathy and meaningful connections with others
- The in-person and remote instructional approach nurtures student agency, self-directed learning, and sociopolitical consciousness
- Students critique every domain of knowledge including investigating who created the “knowledge” and the assumptions and potential biases held by their perspectives.
- Teachers develop and use diagnostic assessments based on college- and career-ready standards, identified gaps in instruction and the knowledge and skills foundational to students’ ability to access grade-level content in order to plan and deliver targeted instruction and interventions
- School leaders critically analyze the utility and limitations of standardized assessments and make decisions about their administration and use of instructional time for preparation based on maximizing long-term student outcomes and opportunities
- A variety of media and online platforms are leveraged to support student learning
- Student mastery of standards are prioritized over “seat time”
- Competency-based pathways are utilized for graduation requirements
- Core courses are not siloed but integrated for students to see connections across all content areas



AREA

4

ADULT LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Culturally responsive learning environments provide evidence-based professional learning and coaching as well as goals-based evaluation to teachers and school staff to ensure equity of opportunities and outcomes for all students.



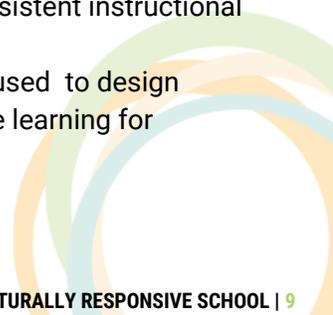
REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Are we building the capacity of those around us to be culturally responsive instructional leaders?
- Are professional learning experiences based on data and current learning needs of staff?
- Do professional learning experiences maximize opportunities to create multiple modes of learning aligned to beliefs of adult learning?
- Is there space and expectation for all staff to engage in their own self-work?
- How are teachers prepared and supported in designing and delivering culturally responsive instruction in virtual settings?



SAMPLE INDICATORS

- Professional learning is based on beliefs about adult learning: 1) Adults learn most deeply from experience and reflection; 2) Learning to be a leader must be a social process; 3) Discomfort is inherent in transformative learning; 4) Adults rely on stories to make meaning; and 5) Adults learn best in an environment of structured freedom
- All staff members individually and collaboratively examine and challenge their own assumptions and biases in light of disconfirming evidence
- Teachers engage in action research and cycles of continuous improvement to identify, test, and evaluate new culturally responsive instructional strategies
- Performance expectations for staff are aligned to the school's mission, vision, and values are consistent with culturally responsive practice, high professional standards, and educational research
- Multiple data points are used to diagnose and assess teaching effectiveness, including the ability to directly confront biases that impede students' ability to learn and achieve rigorous college- and career-ready academic standards
- An annual scope, sequence, and curricula for professional learning is focused on rigorous college- and career-ready academic standards and culturally responsive practice to support professional learning for teachers and staff
- Communities of practice explore emerging practices and research-based models to challenge the status quo and identify solutions to persistent instructional challenges and inequities
- Various learning modalities are used to design flexible, ongoing, and just-in-time learning for teachers and staff



- Instructional focused professional development builds teachers’ content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge necessary to teach the concepts of their discipline
- Teacher and student-centered professional learning promotes collective responsibility for students’ learning and cultivates a dynamic culture for adult learning
- Professional learning is anchored in the priorities of teachers’ daily work and is sustained in a coherent system of collaborative planning, learning environment practice, observation, feedback, and continuous cycles of inquiry grounded in evidence of student learning
- Adults collaborate with each other to create learning where students make meaning from a variety of materials with multiple viewpoints
- Professional learning prioritizes the skills teachers need to design and deliver culturally responsive instruction in virtual settings through the scaling up of instruction (e.g., pre-recorded lessons); facilitation of differentiated instruction (e.g., utilization of computer-adaptive learning or live one-on-one interventions); expansion of opportunities for student practice; and cultivation of student engagement (e.g., videos, interactive tools, or games)

**AREA
5**

OPERATIONS AND RESOURCES

Culturally responsive learning environments manage school operations and resources to ensure equitable access to, and achievement of, rigorous college- and career-ready academic standards for all students.



**REFLECTION
QUESTIONS**

- How will the decision we just made impact the students, families and communities that we are serving?
- Are we making fiscal decisions with the students and families that will be most impacted in mind?
- Are there multiple voices and perspectives included in the decision-making process?
- Are we respecting and leveraging the perspectives and experiences of all staff members in the school building?
- Do we hire and make teaching assignments based on the needs of students?
- How do we seek out and/or prioritize resources to ensure that all students have access to digital devices and high-speed internet service at home?
- How have we leveraged the collective wisdom and experience of our entire school community, including families, students, staff and community partners, to establish and communicate robust contingency plans for ensuring continuity of learning and student support during times of crisis and disruption to schooling?





SAMPLE INDICATORS

- All staff are part of strategic planning and decision-making processes
- Structures and processes are in place to ensure that every student has access to the learning opportunities, culturally responsive teachers, and supports required for their individual success
- Human, material, and supplementary resources are allocated to eliminate disparities in all minoritized populations
- Formal and informal leaders within the school and instructional leadership team are empowered and have the capacity to take on specific day-to-day and/or regular decision-making functions
- Composition of school staff is representative of the racial/ethnic/gender/disability composition of the student body and larger school community
- Staff members of different genders, races, ethnic backgrounds, or disabilities are distributed equitably across the various job classifications from administration to non certified positions
- Leadership uses competencies in educational equity as an integral part of how they assess staff member performance
- People at different job levels, paid or volunteer, are treated with comparable respect
- Students who struggle most are assigned to the most experienced and/or skilled teachers
- Easy availability of recent visual, print, and non-print materials which accurately provide information about males/ females/nonbinary of varied groups in traditional and non-traditional roles
- Expanded/personalized student learning opportunities are available beyond the learning environment , e.g., Internships, online learning, dual enrollment, flipped classrooms, field experiences
- Time is structured across the day, week, and year to provide different opportunities for student learning and development, e.g., intersession, block schedules, early release/late arrival
- The school-level calendar aligns with family work schedules and students' social and emotional needs
- Structures such as remote learning are leveraged so that students' school assignments are not based solely on their zip code and neighborhoods
- School-level budget is allocated to provide a safe, accessible building and classrooms for students and families of all abilities
- Students are allowed to carry and use school-owned digital devices at home
- School leaders work with the district to ensure access to high-speed internet in students' home environments through public-private partnerships and/or the provision of mobile hotspots
- School leaders work with district leaders to develop and communicate clear and specific contingency plans with the input of the entire school community to implement in times of crisis and disruption that address and prioritize the health and safety of students, families and staff; establish mechanisms for continuing teaching and learning when regular attendance in school buildings is not possible; detail the processes and procedures to continue provision of nutrition, health and counseling services for students and families; and address the social and emotional well-being of students, families and staff

AREA
6

PERSONAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Culturally responsive learning environments have staff who take personal responsibility to develop and nurture the skills and dispositions needed to support all students and families.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What personal biases are we holding to students, families and colleagues that may be getting in the way of us being able to be culturally responsive leaders?
- What biases do we hold on approaches to learning (remote and in-person) that may be getting in the way of us being able to be culturally responsive leaders?
- Are staff members active learners who seek out learning opportunities to improve on how they support students, families and communities?
- How do staff reflect on their own self-work in personal identity development and the understanding of their personal beliefs, assumptions, biases, and behaviors?
- How are staff members learning to use technological tools and a remote environment to support them in this work?



SAMPLE INDICATORS

- All staff members recognize their personal triggers around intersectional identities similar to and different from their own
- All staff members know and own their cultural lens
- All staff members recognize their position, privilege and power and their impact on their decision-making
- All staff members understand that student learning drives the system and that every action is in service of ensuring that all students have the opportunities, access, and supports necessary to meet rigorous college- and career-ready standards
- All staff members remain current and knowledgeable of research to inform instructional and organizational decisions, including those that focus on issues of equity and student academic outcomes
- All staff members work with supervisors to set personal measurable goals aligned to the mission, vision, values, and performance metrics of the school and system
- All staff members actively pursue personal professional learning opportunities directly linked to organizational needs with specific attention to the student populations served
- All staff members actively seek to understand and build competency in equitable and culturally responsive leadership practices
- All staff members pursue learning to best support students in remote learning environments



**AREA
7**

STRATEGIC CHANGE AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Culturally responsive learning environments use multiple sources of data to identify successes and challenges in working toward the school’s mission and vision and engage staff, students, and families in strategic planning and continuous improvement activities designed to mitigate those challenges.



**REFLECTION
QUESTIONS**

- Where is racism currently operating in our school community?
- What policies, structures, biases and practices do we need to dismantle in order to provide a more equitable experience for students?
- What is the story being told from the data we typically analyze? Whose story is being told? Whose isn’t?
- What process(es) are in place for evaluating existing school policies, practices, and procedures for cultural responsiveness? What prompts us to make changes? What inhibits us from making changes?
- How are we building a coalition of stakeholders to build an equitable school?
- How are we analyzing data to identify challenges and make decisions?
- How are we taking an iterative approach - utilizing short-term cycles of continuous improvement and/or design thinking - to harness the potential to learn from new and rapidly evolving challenges?



**SAMPLE
INDICATORS**

- There is an active equity-focused instructional leadership team representative of student demographics as well as the grade levels, academic content, and student support services provided in the school
- Analysis of student attendance, behavior, and achievement data is frequent with specific attention to patterns of disproportionality (i.e. an over-representation of African-American boys in special education classes) and identification of root causes
- Regular collection and use of disaggregated data on the learning environment to make culturally responsive instructional leadership decisions
- Leadership engages community to build a coalition of supporters in decision-making
- Leadership and leadership team navigate resistors and demonstrate empathy for diverse perspectives without personalizing resistance
- All teams use cycles of continuous improvement and principles of design thinking to review data and identify areas of inequity and necessary action with the instructional leadership team
- Leadership and leadership team implement strategies for the inclusion of staff, families, and other stakeholders in planning processes



- Leadership and leadership team consider each decision’s potential to create, sustain, or disrupt inequity
- Leadership teams look to innovative tools and the latest resources to co-create an equitable remote and in-person experience for students
- Leadership teams and professional learning communities address new and emerging challenges through real-time documentation, reflection, quick feedback loops and course correction
- Leadership teams recognize and analyze societal and communal data and its impact on student data

AREA

8

COMMUNITY CARE AND ENGAGEMENT

Culturally responsive learning environments have an inclusive and caring school culture that facilitates a sense of belonging among staff and students, and creates a true partnership with families and communities.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How are we ensuring families and communities are key collaborators in improving the school experience for all students remotely and in-person?
- How do we involve and engage families and community members in student learning and community events remotely and in-person ?
- Are family and community advisory groups representative of our student population?
- How do we ensure that all students and families can access school communications in their native language?
- How does the school building represent the language diversity of our students and families to create an accessible and welcoming environment? How do remote forums do this?
- What services can we make available in the online space? (Or connect to)
- How do we make the remote learning environment representative of all racial or ethnic groups, genders, etc.
- What family and community supports have we found to be effective that can and should be sustained in the future?
- How do we build relationships and equip families with the resources to be partners in supporting student learning?
- How do we center culturally-responsive social emotional learning and support mental health within our school community?



SAMPLE INDICATORS

- Students and adults work together to build an accessible learning environment for students in the school building or from a remote learning space
- The people involved in planning school events and programs are representative of the school community by race, ethnicity, language, gender, disability, and socioeconomic status

- The code of student conduct is collaboratively created and processes are in place to ensure it is applied fairly and equitably to all students
- Remote and in-person school assemblies, special programs, and speakers reflect the diverse nature of the school and larger community and/or bring a diverse set of ideas and experiences based on gender, race, ethnicity, disability and ability
- In the school building, bulletin boards, displays, hall decorations, classrooms, and offices represent all genders, members of varied racial or ethnic groups, and people with disabilities in a variety of roles
- School events including athletic, dramatic, service, PTA/PTO, etc. are scheduled to provide opportunity for families with varied work and home commitments to attend and participate in
- School emblems, mascots, team names, and other symbols are free from racial, ethnic, gender, or disability bias
- Materials, notices, and other school communication are sent using a variety of accessible technology and available in multiple languages, Braille, or audio versions as required
- Leadership and leadership team seek and utilize the expertise and resources of community groups that represent and serve students and their families
- All staff members interact with students and families on a regular basis to learn about and respond to their experience of the school, including teaching and learning, their feeling of belonging, and ideas for creating a more responsive and equitable environment
- School leaders work with district leaders to collect and analyze feedback from families, students, and staff about which practices have built stronger learning partnerships between schools and families and should be continued in the future
- Families are provided easy-to-understand information via mechanisms that adapt to their schedules and support an active and feasible role in the learning partnership
- Social emotional learning and supports for students and educators decenters norms of dominant culture and centers vulnerability, healing, joy and community
- The remote learning environment provides space for students to express themselves through the use of avatars, backgrounds, etc.



RESOURCES

- Abolitionist Teaching Network. (2020). Guide for Racial Justice & Abolitionist Social and Emotional Learning.
- Benitez, M., Jr. (2010). Resituating culture centers within a social justice framework: Is there room for examining Whiteness? In L. D. Patton (Ed.), *Culture centers in higher education: Perspectives on identity, theory, and practice* (pp. 119-134). Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Benson, T. A., & Fiarman, S. E. (2020). *Unconscious bias in schools: A developmental approach to exploring race and racism*.
- Building Equitable Learning Environment Network's framework.
- Colours of Resistance Archive, Privilege. Accessed 28 June 2013.
- Dewey, John. (1997). *Experience and Education*.
- Delpit, L. (2001). Other people's children. *Harvard Educational Review*, 56(4), 379-385.
- Dweck, C. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. New York, NY: Ballantine Books.
- Freire, Paulo. (2000). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.
- Garcia, E. and Weiss, E. (2020). COVID-19 and student performance, equity, and US education policy: Lessons from pre-pandemic research to inform relief, recovery, and rebuilding. Economic Policy Institute. <https://www.epi.org/publication/the-consequences-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-for-education-performance-and-equity-in-the-united-states-what-can-we-learn-from-pre-pandemic-research-to-inform-relief-recovery-and-rebuilding/>
- Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Gay, G. (2002) Preparing for culturally-responsive teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*. March 1, 2002.
- Gottlieb, M., Cranley, M. & Cammilleri, A. (2007) Understanding the WIDA English language proficiency standards: A resource guide. The WIDA Consortium. Retrieved at https://www.wida.us/standards/Resource_Guide_web.pdf.
- Graves, Aaliyah El-Amin, Madora Soutter, Jalene Tamerat, Pauline Jennett, Shelby Clark, Saira Malhotra & Jamie Johannsen (2018) Developing sociopolitical consciousness of race and social class inequality in adolescents attending progressive and no excuses urban secondary schools, *Applied Developmental Science*, 22:3, 169-187, DOI: 10.1080/10888691.2016.1254557
- Hammond, Zaretta. (2015). *Culturally Responsive Teaching and The Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press
- Hehir, T. & Katzman, L. (2013). *Effective inclusive schools: Designing successful schoolwide programs*. NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated.
- Howe, Florence. (1965). "Mississippi's Freedom Schools: The Politics of Education"

RESOURCES (Cont'd)

Johnson, K. & Williams, L. (2015) When treating all the kids the same is the real problem: Educational leadership and the 21st century dilemma of difference. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Publishing.

Kendi, Ibram X. (2020). How to be an Antiracist. Vintage.

Kivel, Paul. Multicultural Competence. 2007.

Ladson-Billings, Gloria. (2009). The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children (2nd Edition). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

The Leadership Academy Principal Actions.

Learned-Miller, C. (2017) How to support the social-emotional well-being of students of color. Research and best practices from inter-district integration programs. National Coalition on School Diversity. Research Brief, No. 11, July 2017. Retrieved at <http://files.constantcontact.com/fd62f02c001/65c1ca0b-ba96-425a-a2e0-ab9b91132373.pdf>.

Love, B. L. (2019). We want to do more than survive: Abolitionist teaching and the pursuit of educational freedom.

The Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium.

Milner, R. (2015) Rac(e)ing to class. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Educational Press. Novak, K. & Rose, D. (2016) UDL now! A teacher's guide to applying universal design for learning in today's classrooms. Chicago: CAST Professional Publishing.

Okun, T. and Jones, K. (2001). Characteristics of White Supremacist Culture. ChangeWork.

Paris, D., & Alim, H. S. (2017). Culturally sustaining pedagogies: Teaching and learning for justice in a changing world.

Perlstein, Daniel. "Teaching Freedom: SNCC and the Creation of the Mississippi Freedom Schools."

Quaglia, Russell and Michael Corso. (2014). Student Voice: The Instrument of Change.

Sharp, T. (2020). Promoting Digital Equity and Opportunity in the Time of COVID-19. American Institutes for Research. <https://www.air.org/resource/promoting-digital-equity-and-opportunity-time-covid-19>

Singleton, Glenn E. (2015). Courageous Conversations About Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools (Second Edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Tatum, Beverly Daniel. (2017). Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?: And Other Conversations About Race (Twentieth Anniversary Edition). New York, NY: Basic Book Group.

Vaegas, E. and Winthrop, R. (2020) Beyond reopening schools: How education can emerge stronger than before COVID-19. Brookings Institution. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/beyond-reopening-schools-how-education-can-emerge-stronger-than-before-covid-19/>

Walker, Vanessa. (2000). Their Highest Potential: An African American School Community in the Segregated South.