

New York State **DISTRICT LEADERS** can cultivate Culturally Responsive- Sustaining Education for students by:



**Creating a
welcoming
and affirming
environment**



**Fostering high
expectations
and rigorous
instruction**



**Identifying
inclusive
curriculum and
assessment**



**Engaging
in ongoing
professional
learning and
support**



Creating a welcoming and affirming environment

- Create a policy statement about your commitment to culturally responsive-sustaining education, and include staff (teachers, school safety officers, counselors, lunch and recess staff) in its creation, development, and ongoing training.
- Conduct periodic review of school policies (i.e. dress code, discipline code, conduct code), by collaborating with parents, teachers, community members and incorporating research-based best practices such as restorative justice, positive behavior interventions and supports.
- Encourage and incentivize school leaders to hold spaces (i.e. community forums, social events) that foster collaboration among teachers, families, and community members that provide insight into the assets that exist among the school community.
- Provide resources to schools (i.e. shared language, online resources, questions for discussion, etc.) for incorporating and responding to current events and events that impact the community.
- Formalize structures for school and district-wide parent collaboration, such as parent-teacher associations/ organizations (PTA/PTO) or academic parent-teacher teams (APTT).
- Assess school climate using a variety of measures (i.e. surveys, interviews, focus groups, informal gatherings) to collect diverse stakeholder impressions and experiences, using questions that consider issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Disaggregate data (i.e. discipline, attendance, enrollment in advanced coursework, special education, and gifted and talented programs) by sub-group, evaluate trends, and create a strategic plan to address disproportionality.
- Make accessible and readable information readily available to families in a variety of modes, including translations and accommodations for those with disabilities.
- Provide interpretation services at family meetings (i.e. parent organization meetings, community events, during the enrollment process, during the provision of special education services, etc.), to ensure family engagement includes meaningful two-way communication and offers families the opportunity to share (not just receive) in their home language.
- Gather family and community feedback on district-wide policies before implementation and provide transparent updates during and after implementation.
- Develop multiple means of ongoing family engagement (i.e. apps and online systems of communication, holding meetings at varied hours, possibly providing transportation and childcare, outreach at community meetings or other places the community gathers).
- Stay current on wider social and political issues that affect communities served by the district (i.e. hold regular meetings with community-based organizations and advocacy groups, create a community liaison role to gather information from the field).
- Work to improve the recruitment and retention of a diverse teacher workforce (i.e. teachers who identify as people of color, LGBTQIA+, differently-abled) by strengthening pipelines for teacher education and cultivating relationships with local and national partners (i.e. historically Black colleges and universities, Hispanic association of colleges and universities, alliance organizations).
- Identify, cultivate, and support students who are interested in joining the district in the future as a classroom teacher or school professional (school counselor, occupational and speech pathologist, etc.) by partnering with higher education and other professional organizations that could provide scholarships, internships, externships, and mentorship opportunities, as a means to strengthen teacher education pipelines.
- Work with cultural and community centers and organizations to identify needs and provide services to families by offering classes such as parenting, financial literacy, computer literacy, or English language at the school.

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Fostering high expectations and rigorous instruction

- Strategize instructional methods to disrupt any disparities in student success outcomes that exist across lines of difference, highlighting and sharing best practices from the field.
- Incorporate adaptive learning methods that encourage differentiation, exploration and curiosity as opposed to scripted, one-size-fits-all instructional programs.
- Partner with experts in the field (i.e. professional learning organizations, higher education, consultants) to identify research-based, instructional strategies that are most effective in advancing student academic success.
- Use tools to identify and recognize instructional methods that high-performing, culturally responsive-sustaining teachers are using across content areas.
- Facilitate structures for teacher collaboration across school and district teams, i.e. peer observations, school visits, purposeful partnerships, mentor teachers.



Identifying inclusive curriculum and assessment

- Adopt curriculum that includes culturally authentic learning experiences that mirror students' ways of learning, understanding, communicating, and demonstrating curiosity and knowledge.
- Adopt curriculum that highlights contributions and includes texts reflective of the diverse identities of students and reframes the monocultural framework that privileges the historically advantaged at the expense of other groups.
- Invest in research to determine assessments geared toward academic achievement for underrepresented and underserved students of diverse identities.
- Formally disseminate existing research on best practices from the field regarding culturally responsive-sustaining curriculum, instruction, and assessment to stakeholders in the district.
- Partner with higher education institutions on curriculum development, coaching, and consultation around issues of diversity, equity and inclusion (e.g., immigration, integration, diversification of curriculum).
- Create courses district-wide about the diversity of cultures representative of the state of New York (e.g., Native Americans, African Americans, Latinx Studies, Asian American Studies, Gender Studies) in a way that is comprehensive (e.g., across grade levels and not relegated to one specific month) and empowering (e.g., African American history does not begin with slavery, but with African history).



Engaging in ongoing professional learning and support

- Train and build the capacity of instructional leaders to support teachers in delivering instruction that is rigorous, student-centered, and promotes students as agents of positive social change.
- Disseminate existing, or develop new, self-assessment tools and resources for educators to assess and reflect on their implicit biases.
- Ensure schools have evidence-based trainings and planning time supportive of CR-S, including space for collaborative curriculum drafting, mapping, and aligning (Carter & Welner, 2013).
- Provide Professional Learning Communities and other professional learning structures to address bias, develop racial literacy skills, etc.
- Use data and research to identify teachers with strong CR-S practices and racial literacy skills and allow time/space for them to share their practices with other district teachers.