

Culturally Inclusive Practices: Implementation guidance for local educational agencies

Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction
Diane M. Douglas





Culturally Inclusive Practices Committee Membership

Raquel Alvara

Arizona Department of Education
Education Program Specialist
Effective Teachers and Leaders

Amy Bowen

Tolleson Elementary School District
Curriculum Support Specialist

Dr. Lenay Dunn

Senior Research Associate
WestEd

Nadine Groenig

Arizona Department of Education
Director of Indian Education

Gisselle Herrera

Tolleson Elementary School District
Executive Director of Curriculum &
Instruction

Joseph Martin

Northern Arizona University
Professor, College of Education

Cheryl Pete

Dysart Unified School District
Assistant Principal, Willow Canyon High
School

Tammy Waller

Arizona Department of Education
Director, K12 Social Studies and World
Languages

Judy Basham

Phoenix Union High School District
Teacher on Assignment
Coordinator Native American Education

Dr. Cynthia Clary

Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian
Community Schools
Assistant Superintendent

Maria C. Federico Brummer

Tucson Unified School District
Director
Mexican American Student Services
Dept.

Mary Frances Haluska

Arizona Department of Education
State Director for Migrant Education

Dr. Daniel D. Liou

Arizona State University
Assistant Professor, Mary Lou Fulton
Teachers College

Frank Migali

Arizona Department of Education
State Director for Homeless Education

Nora G. Ramirez

Arizona Association of Teachers of
Mathematics
President

M. Cheak Yee

Phoenix Chinese School
Community Member

Dr. Cynthia Benally, NBCT, Ed.D

Navajo Nation
Center for DINÉ Teacher Education,
DINÉ College

James Collins

Arizona Department of Education
21st Century Community Learning
Centers

Dr. Marjaneh Gilpatrick

Executive Director of Educational
Outreach
College of Education
Grand Canyon University

David Hernandez

Cartwright Elementary School District
Special Education Data Coach

Carol Lippert

Arizona Department of Education
Associate Superintendent
High Academic Standards for Students
Division

Dr. Rose Owens-West

Director
Region IX Equity Assistance Center at
WestEd

Dr. Adama Sallu

Kyrene School District
Assistant Director of Equity

For additional information about this publication, please contact Carol Lippert, Associate Superintendent High Academic Standards for Students Division; 602-364-1985; 1535 W. Jefferson St. Bin #05 Phoenix, AZ 85007

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Charge to the Culturally Inclusive Practices Committee

In 2015, Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction, Diane Douglas, formed the Culturally Inclusive Practices Committee because she recognized that our students did not have equitable access to rich educational opportunities. In such matters, the role of the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) is to provide general guidance and technical assistance for local educational agencies (LEAs) and students. Specifically, ADE sets parameters and establishes a direction so that all students have equitable access to and are able to succeed in a rigorous educational experience. With this in mind, at the committee's inaugural meeting, Superintendent Douglas addressed the committee and issued the following charge: *Develop culturally inclusive guidelines which are subsequently adopted by each local educational agency.* This dedicated committee, comprised of educators and community members, carried out this charge to develop the guidance recommended in this document.

“Develop culturally inclusive guidelines which are subsequently adopted by each local educational agency.”

Overview

Culturally inclusive practices are key to ensuring success for all students. These practices explicitly *focus upon the achievement of academic equity for our students by recognizing, appreciating, embracing, and ultimately integrating all of the various cultures, experiences, and backgrounds of the people of Arizona as a driving force in curriculum, instruction, and educational environments.* While food and holidays are important parts of culture, to go beyond a surface level, educators must connect to attitudes, customs, beliefs and values, language, rituals, institutions, and art. As such, culturally inclusive education must become a silver thread interwoven into our actions as educators and communities in order to provide Arizona's students with intentionally equitable educational experiences.

Building Cultural Inclusiveness

As a first step towards cultural inclusivity, educators must recognize the importance of building equity on school campuses and within classrooms. The guidelines outlined later in this report provide assistance with achieving more equitable classrooms. Note, however, that equity does not equal equality. Rather, an equitable educational system provides resources and supports at the level needed by each individual student and recognizes that all students do not need the same supports. An important result of cultural inclusiveness and equity is equitable achievement. Some barriers to equitable achievement can be overcome by acknowledging and addressing people's beliefs and attitudes. This was illustrated quite clearly in the Rosenthal and Jacobson study, "Pygmalion in the Classroom," completed in 1968. This study is based on an experiment within a public elementary setting, where teachers were told that certain children were intellectually more capable than other children based on a false diagnostic. The experiment was aimed at determining the degree of changes within teachers' expectations of children and student achievement. The results showed that the students who were placed as the high achievers or "spurters" made significant academic gains. This experiment also demonstrated how "the expectations in teachers' minds were the determining factor in the success of the identified children" (Yatvin, 2009). This research brings to light the power of equitable access to opportunity. Students in the study who received advanced opportunity excelled, even when their true diagnostic data did not indicate that they would be successful in these situations. Although diagnostic data and student placements often lead to this inequity, sometimes it is perceived deficits held by adults that result in students having reduced access to opportunity. Through introspection and effective professional development, educators can begin to recognize their deeply held beliefs and understand how these

beliefs both positively and negatively impact the success of our children. Until educators bravely face their own

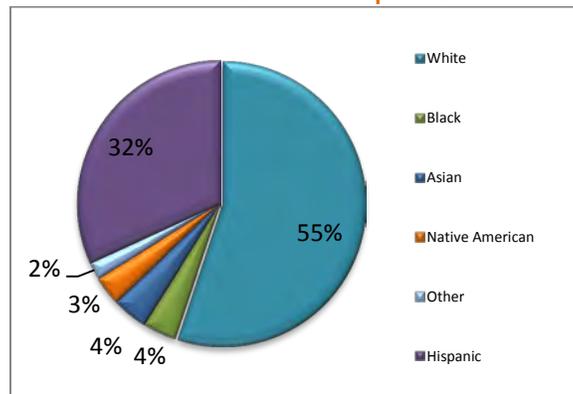
“Equity does not equal equality.”

preconceptions and understand how their beliefs impact the classroom, inequality will persist.

Why Does Arizona Need Culturally Inclusive Practices?

Arizona boasts rich culture and diversity. The educational system must address the diverse needs of our population in a manner which respects cultural traditions, raises achievement of all students, and builds future citizens prepared to positively participate in our society. The time has come for schools and communities to boldly engage in transforming policies and practices in order to improve learning opportunities and outcomes for all students in Arizona.

2016 Arizona Total Population

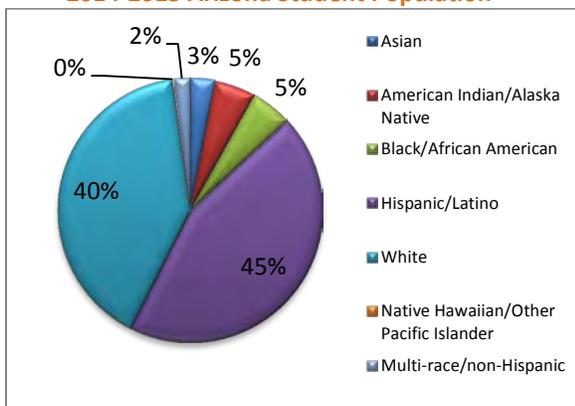


Source: <https://population.az.gov/population-projections>

A look at our Arizona demographic picture shows the diversity found within the whole state. The two charts below present a picture of the makeup of our teaching cadre along with a picture of our student population demographics. Note the mismatch. It is evident that we, as educators, must fully embrace culturally inclusive practices to ensure the success of all students.

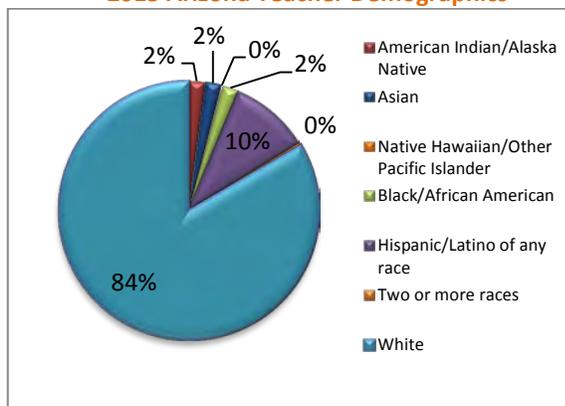
Arizona Student and Teacher Demographics

2014-2015 Arizona Student Population



Source: Arizona Department of Education; Oct. 1, 2014 Enrollment

2015 Arizona Teacher Demographics



Source: Arizona Department of Education SDER Report, 2015

Adding to demographic diversity are the geographic realities of our state. Arizona is home to 22 tribal nations, each with distinct beliefs, languages, and traditions. Many of these nations are in remote locations with less reliable access to technology, increased distances between school and home, and cultural values and norms which are poorly understood by many outside of the Nations. Yet, rural settings are not unique to Native American students. Many non-Native students also reside in geographic isolation, experiencing similar difficulties as our Native children. It is also important to recognize that approximately 5 percent of our metropolitan student

population is Native children (ADE, 2012). Of our 15 Arizona counties, Maricopa County has the largest number of Native American children (Arizona 2015 Indian Education Annual Report). Our state serves students from many diverse backgrounds, communities, and cultures. Therefore, our teaching cadre must have the resources they need to meet the disparate needs of these students.

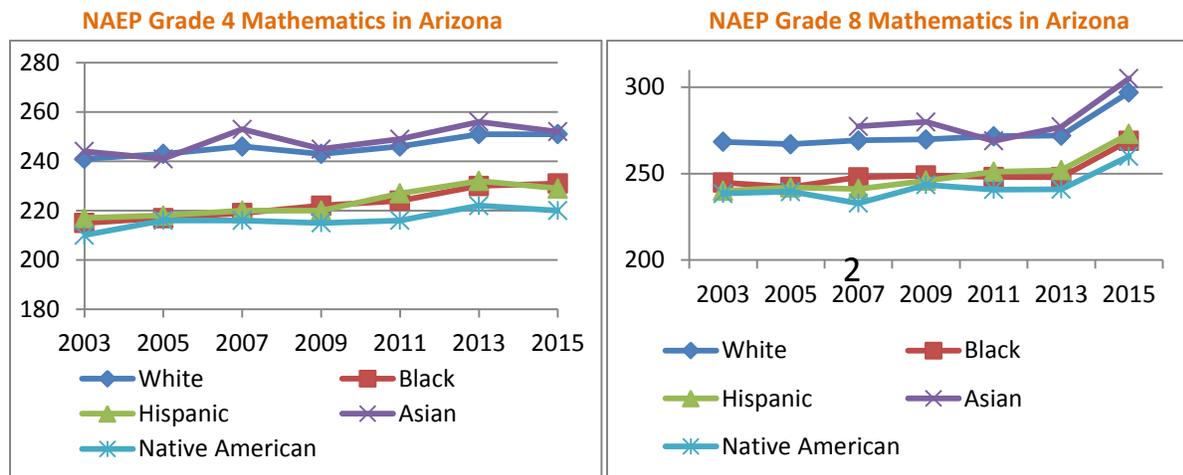
Arizona Teacher Workforce

As discussed above, although our populace is highly diverse, our current teaching force does not reflect this level of diversity. To combat this disconnect, national movements support the inclusion of culturally responsive techniques in educator preparation programs. For example, the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), one of the more commonly utilized accreditation agencies in Arizona, now requires cultural responsiveness to be interwoven throughout the program of study. By further interweaving culturally inclusive practices into our daily work, we will begin to change the culture of our campuses and impact student achievement. One study conducted by Garcia and Chun (2016) determined that culturally inclusive practices such as those outlined in this report increased achievement of Latino students but, maybe more importantly, showed that these practices increased the students' likelihood to see themselves as capable learners. It is still important to note that a culturally diverse teaching force or mindset is necessary. Our students need to experience a variety of cultures in action and be exposed to the positive environment that is developed when diverse populations work effectively together.

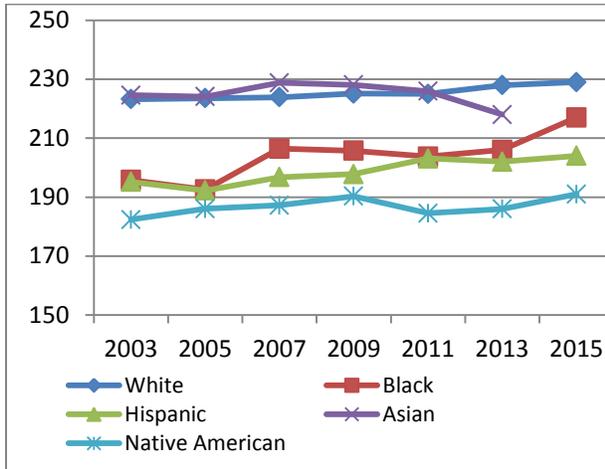
Arizona's Current Reality

No discussion of culturally inclusive practices is complete without a review of disparities which exist in our different populations. Current data reveals that many groups are overrepresented in some categories, e.g., special education, and underrepresented in others, e.g., advanced coursework. Students of color are far more likely than their white counterparts to drop out of school. All strands of achievement data and learning outcomes for African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans are, on average, much lower than white and some Asian counterparts. This is the trend in schools across the country regardless of the socio-economic status of students of color. This is certainly the trend in Arizona. The persistent pattern in disparate educational outcomes is called the achievement gap, often the result of lack of access to equitable learning opportunities. Our job, as educators, is to mitigate this trend. Culturally inclusive practices when interwoven fully into our actions can begin to erase these gaps.

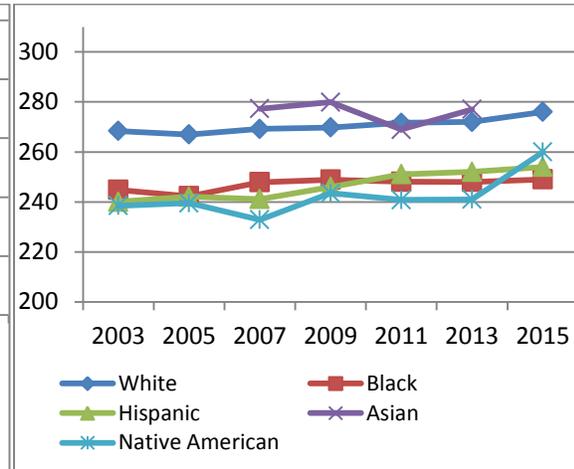
The results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) are commonly referred to as the Nation's Report Card. The NAEP measures student performance over time and allows comparisons between states. Through this report, the opportunity gap which exists in Arizona becomes blatantly evident as seen in the 2003-2015 trend data for NAEP Grades 4 and 8 Mathematics and Reading.



NAEP Grade 4 Reading in Arizona

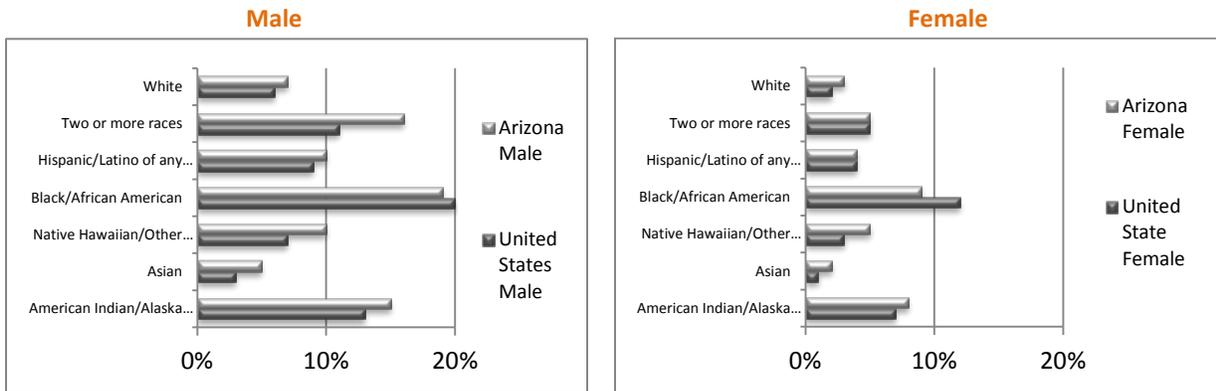


NAEP Grade 8 Reading in Arizona



Further contributing to the achievement gap, school suspension data in the graphs below indicate students of color, especially black males, are suspended far more frequently than other children. The time that they spend out of school on suspension is lost instructional time and is associated with negative consequences such as lower academic performance and higher dropout rates (Arcia, 2006; Mac Iver & Messel, 2012).

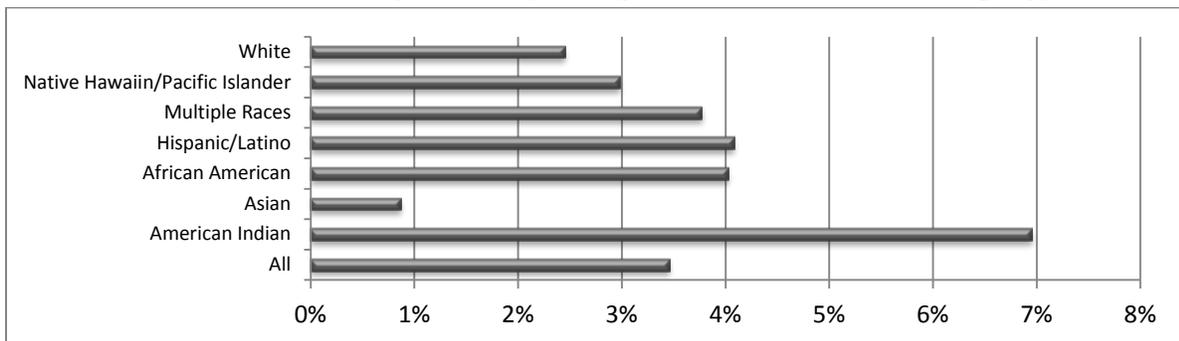
Out-of-School Suspensions 2011-2012



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Civil Rights Data Collection, 2011-12

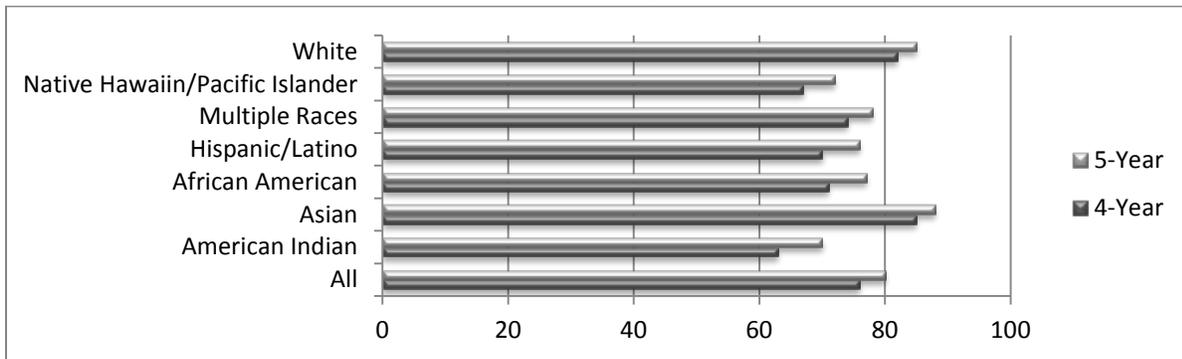
Student dropout rates for minority students range from 3 to 7 percent as compared to the 2.45 percent of white students. The disparities in the graduation rates for Arizona students are similar. A goal of culturally inclusive practices is to significantly decrease our dropout rate and improve our graduation rate. Unfortunately, the data shows that we are quite far from those goals.

2015 Arizona Drop-out Rates (# of drop-outs/total # of students in subgroup)



Source: azed.gov/research-evaluation

2014 Arizona Four- and Five-year Graduation Rate (%)



Source: azed.gov/research-evaluation

Although the above information begins to create an image, the data is incomplete. With a richer data set, practitioners and policy makers will improve their ability to make decisions which have a positive impact upon all of our Arizona children.

A Moral/Ethical and Legal Imperative

It is the moral/ethical responsibility of all educators to establish culturally inclusive practices on school campuses. Schools are institutions that socialize students through content and extracurricular activities, teacher-student relationships, and values of society, which are taught through environments conducive to rigor and citizenship (Goodlad, 1992). School culture encompasses the processes and procedures that support collective norms and beliefs. These norms and beliefs define acceptable

achievement outcomes and educators' sense of responsibilities to student learning—they must counter false generalizations and implicit biases about groups and populations. The integration of culturally inclusive practices will contribute to the elimination of the use of race, class, gender, language, immigration status, and sexuality as proxy

“People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

Maya Angelou

for intellectual superiority and inferiority. In the words of the poet Maya Angelou, “People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” To this effect, instructional goals should be delivered in ways that are relevant to and attainable for students. The curriculum should reinforce the collective values of inclusion, students' prior knowledge, and academic excellence. Through the intentional building of relationships, schools will form systems of support for all students resulting in a strong academic environment. Disciplinary policies must contribute to improving students' academic outcomes instead of reducing their instructional time. School leaders are expected to work collaboratively with teachers and staff to address each student's unique needs and aspirations, identify patterns of educational inequities, and improve the achievement of all students.

Associated with the ethical responsibility is the clear legal imperative that exists in bringing cultural inclusivity to schools. Appendix A details the rich, legal history of education beginning in 1955. This represents a progression in thought and policies from the segregated schools of *Brown v. the Board of Education* to the diversity of our schools today. The purpose of including these acts and cases is to inform educators' perceptions on access, schooling, and public education so that all students receive the equitable, high-quality educational experiences to which they are entitled.

Culturally Inclusive Practices Implementation Guidelines

Cultural diversity is clearly evident within our school environments and is compounded by an ever-changing student population. As populations change, so too does the identity of the school and community. Educational environments must adjust nimbly to the needs of students, thus, culturally inclusive practices are critical. These practices can be intentionally delivered through pre-service programs, educator preparation programs, and locally developed professional development.

Professional Development: To build the cultural competence of educators, professional development must address evidence-based practices related to instruction, curriculum, and school climate/environment. Educators and communities must openly dialogue to identify opportunities to implement culturally responsive practices and strategies. Specific components of professional development must include:

- Effective instructional strategies to meet the needs of all students regardless of background.
- Differentiated and customized job-embedded professional learning.
- On-going support to address the needs of teachers in their professional practice.
- Opportunities for personal reflection on beliefs and prejudices.
- Specific attention to the cultures/languages of the student populations being served.
- Professional development related to Native history as required by A.R.S. §15-341 (34) and A.R.S. §15-710.

The sections that follow are designed to stimulate thinking and examine the state of culturally inclusive practices in a classroom, a school, or LEA. In a series of questions, educators will be able to assess their cultural inclusivity related to instruction, curriculum, and school climate/environment. As answers are developed to the questions, educators can determine areas of strength as well as areas of need, allowing them to develop an action plan focused on the achievement of all students.

Instruction: While planning lessons across all subjects, integrate culturally inclusive instruction that takes into account the unique stories, accomplishments, and struggles of all of the people of Arizona.

- How well does the teacher:
 - Recognize their own culture and how it influences and impacts their instructional practices?
 - Eliminate teacher actions and preconceptions that can have a negative impact upon student success?
 - Know their students?
 - Use their knowledge of the students to support and engage students?
 - Use their knowledge of the students to differentiate and personalize instruction?
 - Build upon the cultures and experiences of students and their families from an asset perspective?
 - Link instructional purpose to student interests?
 - Seize the opportunity to enhance learning by building on student interests or by adjusting instruction?
 - Reflect upon how instructional practices ensure equitable access to a rigorous curriculum for all students?
 - Discuss and promote the unique stories, accomplishments, and struggles of all of the people of Arizona?

Curriculum: Every local educational agency (LEA) must teach a balanced curriculum adhering to State adopted standards and mandates for the content areas, using complementary materials that address the contributions of diverse cultures.

- To what extent does the curriculum:
 - Reflect students' experiences and the communities in which they live?
 - Include multiple voices and perspectives:
 - i. What they have been,
 - ii. What they are, and
 - iii. What they could be?
 - Address the contributions of diverse cultures?
 - Prepare students for success in college, career, and community?

School Climate/Environment: Schools must consciously build educational environments which value the rich heritage of Arizona's communities and cultures, fostering appreciation for all, so that all students and their families are treated equitably and with respect.

Classroom: To what extent do teachers:

- Reflect upon their own beliefs, practices, and policies, taking into account other points of view?
- Recognize their culture, possible implicit biases, and its influence on a culturally inclusive environment?
- Build and maintain appropriate, authentic relationships with students while inside and outside the classroom?
- Establish an environment where all students are expected to achieve at high levels?
- Create an environment which builds mutual respect between the community, the teacher-student, the teacher-family, and student-student?
- Create a student-centered environment where students take ownership of their learning to foster appreciation, respect, and acceptance for all?
- Build awareness amongst their students of the rich heritage of Arizona's communities and cultures?

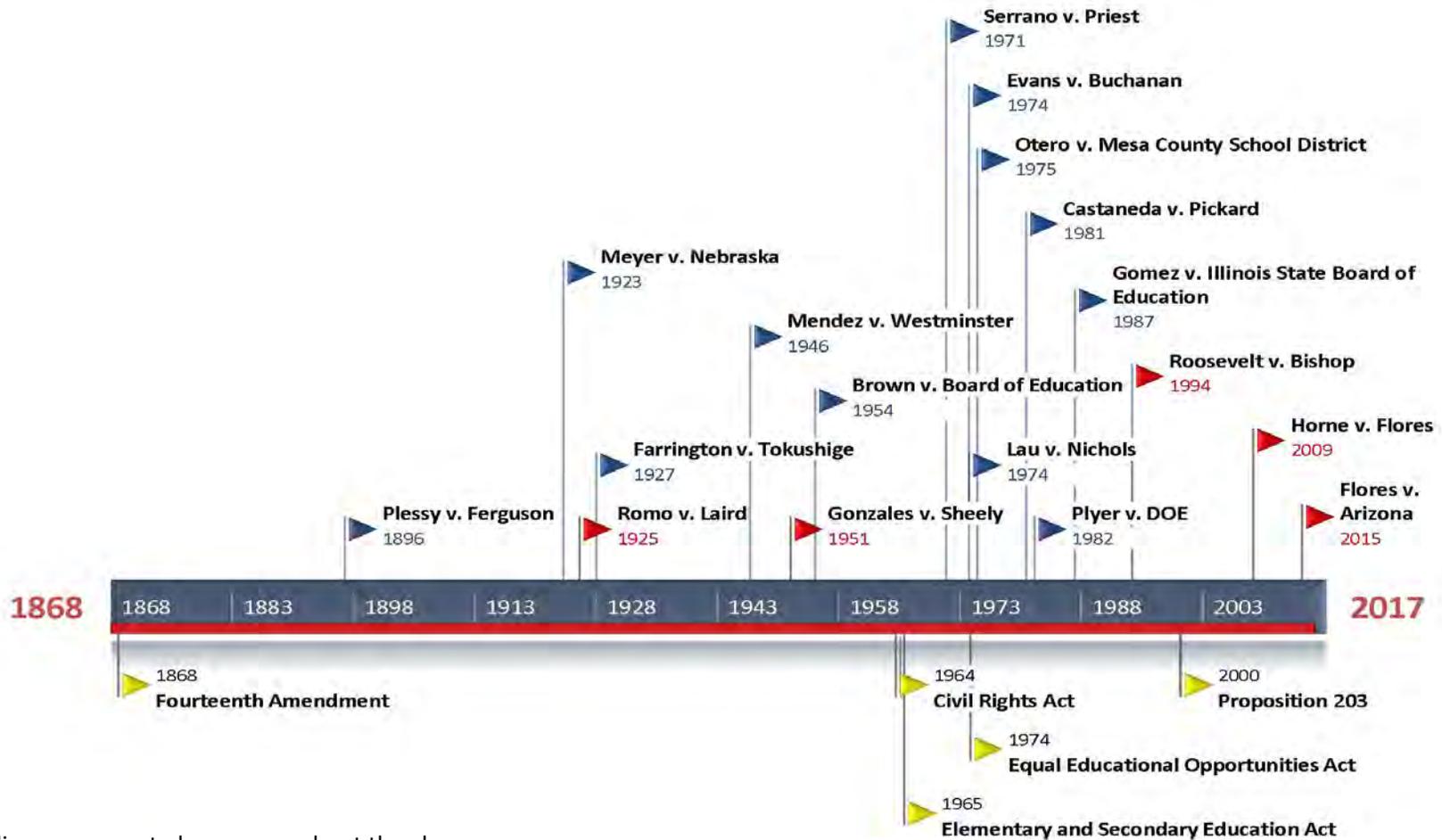
School: To what extent do school leaders:

- Demonstrate the equitable behaviors expected of teachers?
- Analyze the current capacities of their staff, identify and scale effective practices, and celebrate areas of success?
- Provide professional development for all school personnel to address beliefs and implicit biases?
- Ensure diverse membership on school committees?
- Know and care about the families in the community?
- Actively build relationships with the community?
- Implement strategies to enhance family involvement, engagement, and voice?
- Identify and confront deficit language, implicit bias, and discrimination in their schools: discipline policies, school art/mascots/celebrations, school calendars, equitable identification of gifted/talented and/or special education students, local and broad perspectives of culture?
- Create a climate that encourages open discussion of controversial issues?
- Build opportunities for students to have a voice (e.g., student council, town-hall, open-door policy)?
- Support all school personnel to assist in the elimination of barriers to student learning?

Local Educational Agencies: To what extent do district leaders/charter holders and governing board members:

- Demonstrate the equitable behaviors expected of teachers and school leaders?
- Model culturally inclusive practices?
- Provide culturally inclusive professional development opportunities for all staff?
- Commit to systemic transformation which supports culturally inclusive practices in the schools and classrooms?
- Recruit and retain a cadre of teachers and leaders who represent student diversity?
- Support teachers and leaders on school campuses to assist in the elimination of barriers to student learning?
- Equitably allocate resources?

Appendix A: Case Law. This graphic is not meant to be inclusive of all case law related to culturally inclusive practices; rather, it is an illustration of important cases and policies which have shaped today's schools. Red flags represent Arizona-specific cases.



On-line resources to learn more about the above cases:

Landmark Court Rulings Regarding English Language Learners: <http://www.ldonline.org/article/49704/> and <http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/landmark-court-rulings-regarding-english-language-learners>

All Cases: <https://www.oyez.org/#!>

Appendix B: Evidence-Based Practices

In the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) the term evidence-based is utilized numerous times and is intended to guide the selection of instructional strategies, curricular choices, and interventions (referred to below as activities) throughout all education decisions. The United States Department of Education (ED) issued non-regulatory guidance in September 2016 which describes the four levels of evidence outlined by ESSA.

Level 1: Strong evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental study that the activity has a statistically significant positive effect on student outcomes or other relevant outcomes.

Level 2: Moderate evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study that the activity has a statistically significant positive effect on student outcomes or other relevant outcomes.

Level 3: Promising evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias that the activity has a statistically significant positive effect on student outcomes or other relevant outcomes.

Level 4: Demonstrates a rationale from a logic model based on high-quality research findings or positive evaluation findings that the activity is likely to improve student outcomes or other relevant outcomes, and includes ongoing efforts to examine the effects of the activity.

Some federally funded programs allow the use of all four levels of evidence when selecting an activity; others do not allow the use of Level 4 evidence. The evidence-based provisions under ESSA are part of the law's broad focus on using continuous improvement to examine the effectiveness of activities.

Resources:

U.S. Department of Education. (2016, September). *Non-regulatory guidance: Using evidence to strengthen education investments*. Washington, D.C. Available online at:

<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/guidanceusesinvestment.pdf>

Hale, S., Dunn, L., Filby, N., Rice, J., & Van Houten, L. (2017). *Evidence-based improvement: A guide for states to strengthen their frameworks and supports aligned to the evidence requirements of ESSA*. San Francisco:

WestEd. Available online at: <https://www.wested.org/resources/evidence-based-improvement-essa-guide-for-states/>

Appendix C: Accepted Definitions of Culturally Responsive Teaching

- Geneva Gay defines culturally responsive teaching as “using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them” (Gay, 2010, p.31).
- Culturally Responsive Teaching is a pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning (Ladson-Billings, 1994).
- We are all born, raised and enveloped in culture, and it is central to learning. It informs how we communicate with each other, the way we receive information and helps shape the thinking process of groups and individuals. Culturally responsive teaching recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning, enriching classroom experiences, and keeping students engaged (<http://www.tolerance.org/supplement/being-culturally-responsive>).

Appendix D: Resources for Culturally Responsive Teaching

Books and Journal Articles

- Arredondo, P., Toporek, R., Brown, S. P., Sanchez, J. Locke, D. C., Sanchez, J., Stadler, H. (1996). Operationalization of the multicultural counseling competencies. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling & Development*, 24(1), 42-78.
- Barnhardt, R. (2014). Creating a place for Indigenous knowledge in education. In D. Gruenwald & G. Smith (Eds.), *Place-based education in the global age. Local diversity* (pp 113-134). New York, NY: Psychology Press.
- Bartolome, L. (1994) Beyond the method fetish: Toward a humanizing pedagogy. *Harvard Educational Review*, 64(2), 173-195.
- Beaulieu, D. & Figueria, A. (2006). *The power of Native teachers - language and culture in the classroom*. Tempe, AZ: The Center for Indian Education Arizona State University.
- Boyer, P. (2006). *Building community: Reforming math and science education in rural schools: A report on the National Science Foundation's Rural Systemic Initiative*. Alaska Native Knowledge Network, Center for Cross-Cultural Studies, University of Alaska Fairbanks.
- Boykin, A. W., & Noguera, P. (2011). *Creating the opportunity to learn: Moving from research to practice to close the achievement gap*. Alexandria, US: ASCD.
- Center on Standards and Assessment Implementation (2016). *Improving educational outcomes of American Indian/ Alaska Native students*. San Francisco, CA: West Ed.
- Faircloth, S. C., & Tippeconnic, III, J. W. (2010). *The dropout/graduation rate crisis among American Indian and Alaska Native students: Failure to respond places the future of Native peoples at risk*. Los Angeles, CA: The Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles at UCLA.
- Gordon, D. (2013). The joys and sorrows of diversity: Changes in the historical profession in the last half century. *Springer Science & Business Media*: New York. DOI 10.1007/s12115-013-9632-6
- Holm, W. (2006). The “goodness” of bilingual education for Native American children. In T.L.McCarty and O. Zepeda (Eds.), *One voice, many voices; Recreating Indigenous language communities* (pp 1-46). Arizona State University Center for Indian Education: Tempe, AZ.
- Kisker, E.E., Lipka, J., Adams, B.L., Rickard, A., Andrew-Ihrke, D., Yanez, E.E., & Millard, A. (2012). The potential of a culturally based supplemental mathematics curriculum to improve the mathematics performance of Alaska Native and other students. *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education*, 43(1), 75–113.
- McKenzie, K.B. & Scheurich, J.J. (2004). Equity traps: A useful construct for preparing leaders in schools that are successful with racially diverse students. *Education Administration Quarterly* 40(5), 601-632.
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2012). *National Indian Education Study 2011* (NCES 2012–466). Washington, DC: Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.
- Pang, V. O., Stein, R., Gomez, M., Matas, A., & Shimogori, Y. (2011). Cultural competencies: Essential elements of caring-centered multicultural education. *Action in Teacher Education*, 33(5-6), 560-574. DOI: 10.1080/01626620.2011.627050

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- Powers, K.M. (2006). An exploratory study of cultural identity and culture-based educational programs for urban American Indian students. *Urban Education*, 41(1), 20–49.
 - Quijada Cerecer, P.D. (2013). The policing of native bodies and minds: Perspectives on schooling from American Indian youth. *American Journal of Education*, 119, 591–616.
 - Rickard, A. (2005). Constant perimeter, varying area: A case study of teaching and learning mathematics to design a fish rack. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 44(3), 80–100.
 - Singleton, G., & Linton, C. (2006). *Courageous conversations about race: A field guide for achieving equity in schools*. Thousand Oaks, Calif. : Corwin Press
 - Yazzie, T. (1999). Culturally appropriate curriculum: A research-based rationale. In K.C. Swisher & J.W. Tippeconnic III (Eds.), *Next Steps, Research and Practice to Advance Indian Education* (pp. 85–106). Charleston, WV: ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools.

On-Line Resources

- Alaska Native Knowledge Network. (n.d.). Culturally Responsive Science Curriculum. Retrieved from <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/publications/handbook/front.html>
- *Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves* by Louise Derman-Sparks, Julie Olsen Edwards Retrieved from <http://www.teachingforchange.org/teacher-resources/anti-bias-education>
- Anti-Defamation League access at <http://arizona.adl.org/>
- Assimilation and Pluralism from Immigrants to White Ethnics from *An Introduction to the Study of Minority Groups in the United States*. Sage Publications. Retrieved from http://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/43865_2.pdf
- Brown University Teaching Diverse Learners access at <https://www.brown.edu/academics/education-alliance/teaching-diverse-learners/>
- Center on Standards and Assessment Implementation. (2016). School climate and stakeholder engagement measures in states. Retrieved from <https://www.wested.org/resources/school-climate-stakeholder-engagement-measures-in-states/>
- Creating Classrooms for Social Justice, Tabitha Dell'Angelo. Retrieved from <http://www.edutopia.org/blog/creating-classrooms-for-social-justice-tabitha-dellangelo>
- Education Alliance- Brown University: Teaching Diverse Learners. Access at <https://www.brown.edu/academics/education-alliance/teaching-diverse-learners/>
- Equity Alliance access at <http://equityallianceatasu.org/>
- Exploring Emigration: Cultural Identity. Retrieved from <https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/teaching-cultural-identity>
- First Nations Education Steering Committee. (2012). In Our Own Words: Bringing Authentic First Peoples Content to the K–3 Classroom. Retrieved from <http://www.csai-online.org/resource/547>
- Hanover Research-Cultural Responsiveness: From Theory to Practice. Retrieved from <http://www.hanoverresearch.com/impact-case-studies/>
- Indian Education Division of the Montana Office of Public Instruction. (2015). Evaluating American Indian Materials and Resources for the Classroom. Retrieved from <http://www.opi.mt.gov/PDF/IndianEd/Resources/EvalAmIndianMaterials.pdf>
- Intercultural Development Research Association access at <http://www.idra.org/>
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(Note: at the time of printing, all links were active; however, on-line links change frequently.)

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