

Equity in Special Education Placement: A School Self-Assessment Guide for Culturally Responsive Practice

FORM A
(ADMINISTRATORS)

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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND With increasing numbers of students from different backgrounds, schools are finding it difficult to provide an appropriate education to all. Moreover, the school system is plagued by student underachievement, dropouts, and excessive special education referrals and placements, particularly among students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The problem of disproportionate representation of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in special education has emerged as one of the system's greatest challenges, occurring for reasons ranging from inappropriate or inadequate instruction to flawed assessment practices. Because the problem occurs for multiple reasons and exists at all levels of the educational system, remedying it requires a multifaceted approach. The National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems (NCCREST) has framed a culturally responsive model that is multi-dimensional in scope, designed to (a) increase the use of prevention and early intervention strategies, (b) create contexts conducive to educational systems improvement, and (c) enhance the teaching and learning of practitioners and students alike. With this perspective in mind, a self-assessment tool for practitioners has been created. The tool is based on instruments developed at preeminent research centers and professional groups and associations.¹

PURPOSE The self-assessment instrument is designed to assist elementary school practitioners (all professionals and paraprofessionals working in the schools, such as special and general education teachers, counselors and administrators) in creating schools that are culturally responsive in their programming and instruction so that optimal achievement might occur for all students including those from culturally and

linguistically diverse backgrounds. The complete assessment package includes: Form A (Administrators), Form B (Teachers and School Support Personnel). Although both forms do not have to be administered, it is highly recommended that this be done to obtain a complete assessment of the school. Greater involvement from different groups increases not only the accuracy of the assessment but also the vested interest in accomplishing the recommended goals for school improvement. Moreover, this instrument presents guidelines that will assist schools in providing better programming for students from diverse backgrounds and reducing inappropriate referrals to special education. As a data collection tool, it also becomes an important aid in gathering information to develop an effective school improvement plan required by the State Education Agency.

ASSESSMENT DOMAINS The self-assessment guide provides a framework for evaluating (a) knowledge, (b) skills, and (c) dispositions in 5 domains relevant to addressing the needs of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The 5 domains are based on instruments developed by research centers and professional groups and associations.

- 1. School Governance, Organization, Policy and Climate**—the general operation and structure of the school, including policies and reforms associated with school governance, as well as attitudes and perceptions prevalent in the school.
- 2. Family Involvement**—the extent to which families communicate with and participate in their children's school and are perceived to be valued partners by the school.
- 3. Curriculum**—the content and skills included in educational programs.
- 4. Organization of Learning**—the activities involved in the exchange of knowledge in

the classroom, including the teaching and learning process, classroom achievement and assessment, and behavior management.

- 5. Special Education Referral Process and Programs**—the delivery of services involving pre-referral and referral processes, eligibility, placement, and instructional programming.

ADMINISTERING THE ASSESSMENT

Schools may use the instrument to assist in identifying strengths and weaknesses in the educational services their schools provide. Each domain consists of evaluative items that guide in assessing the school's organization and performance. The rating scale ranges from "almost always" to "almost never." "Not applicable" is included for those items that do not apply to your school. To assess your school, think about each listed activity and select the rating that best represents its occurrence at your institution.

- *Almost Always* = occurs more than 75% of the time
- *Frequently* = occurs 50 to 75% of the time
- *Sometimes* = occurs 26 to 50% of the time
- *Almost Never* = occurs 25% or less of the time
- *Not Applicable* = does not apply to your school

The principal should act in a leadership role to facilitate the accurate evaluation of the school and its delivery of services. To make this a collective effort and in the spirit of shared governance, the principal with input from the faculty will decide who will complete the questionnaires and when. In order to obtain

¹Assembly of Native Educator Associations (1998, February 3). Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools. Retrieved June 20, 2003, from <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/currstan.html>

Banks, J.A., Cookson, P., Gay, G., Hawley, W.D., Irvine, J.J., Nieto, S., Schofield, J.W., & Stephan, W.G. (2002). Diversity within unity: Essential principles for

teaching and learning in a multicultural society. Seattle, Washington: Center for Multicultural Education, College of Education, University of Washington.

National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE). ILIAD Project (2002). Determining Appropriate Referrals of English Language Learners to Special Education: A Self-Assessment Guide for Principals. Washington, DC:

National Association for Bilingual Education.

National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE), & ILIAD Project (2002). Addressing Over-Representation of African American Students in Special Education. Arlington, VA: Council for Exceptional Children, and Washington, DC: National Alliance of Black School Educators.

multiple perspectives on the effectiveness of the school, a representative panel of 5 to 10 members, including the principal, representative teachers (possibly approved by the faculty), support personnel, and community members should be selected for the assessment team. This does not preclude input from other interested members in the school and the community.

This tool is not intended to penalize teachers or other school personnel for deficiencies and should not be used by the principal or anyone else to evaluate a teacher's or other school personnel's performance, nor should the results be placed in the teacher's or other school personnel's records. Rather, once areas are targeted for improvement, administrators, teachers, support personnel and community members should work together to address the weaknesses or areas that need improvement. The assessments should be collected and compiled by a designated assessment coordinator who will be responsible for (a) tabulating the responses, (b) convening a meeting to share the results, and (c) conducting a discussion to determine areas of agreement and disagreement for the purpose of prioritizing needs.

The results of the assessment should be used to develop a plan of intervention that will increase the school's effectiveness in the areas identified for improvement. The school may want to enlist support from outside resources such as NCCREST in developing improvement plans based on the data collected. It is advisable that a designated facilitator be given the responsibility of overseeing the implementation of each area selected for improvement, with goals and a timetable. At an assigned time, a follow-up meeting should be held to determine progress made.

DEVELOPING A CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

There are many ways in which this instrument might be used to assist you in providing the best opportunities possible for culturally and linguistically diverse students. After you have completed the rating, review each domain to determine which of the areas reflect weaknesses and strengths. By looking at your performance in each of the 5 domains, you will be able to identify where to expend energy and resources for improvement.

It may be helpful to calculate the percentage scores for each area. This would allow you to quantify your efforts in providing culturally responsive programming and instruction. For example, an analysis of the domain, Family Involvement, might reveal a percentage score of 85%. This would suggest Family Involvement as an area of strength; whereas another area such as Special Education Process and Programs might result in 25%, indicating an area of relative weakness. In general, percentage scores above 75% indicate that your school is performing at a high standard in that area. Scores below 25% suggest weak areas that require intensive intervention. These scores need to be considered in conjunction with evidence presented during the assessment panel discussions. Based on input from panel members and others with vested interests, areas of concern should be prioritized and addressed through collaborative and directed programming.

In reviewing specific items, you may discover that particular practices need to be improved. Your goal then should be to devote resources to

improving those relative weaknesses. Moreover, depending on the item of concern, financing, personnel, workshops or other resources might be required. Examining the specific problem helps to determine the type of reform needed. It should be noted that there is always room for improvement, and that it is necessary to continue to monitor programs if only to sustain their level of quality.

In planning programs of intervention, you may want to consider whether early intervention or prevention would be appropriate given the area of concern. To ensure that children are adequately prepared for the classroom or that parents are aware of the special education process, it may be necessary to develop programs that would address preschool needs or institute workshops for families. This instrument may also assist in identifying what needs to be done at all levels for educational systems improvement. Together administrators, faculty, staff, students, and the community can engage in dialogue and program building for the betterment of the school. Further, the evaluation should assist you in determining what is necessary to enhance the teaching and learning of both practitioners and students by identifying those areas for improvement. Specific curricula may be developed or appropriate workshops designed to meet those needs.

Whether or not you calculate percentages or simply look at items separately, taking the time to evaluate your program, using the listed criteria, encourages you to think about issues and services you might not have considered. This awareness would allow you to plan more effectively for your students, faculty, and support personnel.



PLANNING SHEET

Name of School:

Date:

Purpose for the Assessment:

ASSESSMENT PANEL

NOTE: A PANEL OF 5 TO 10 PEOPLE FROM DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS ARE RECOMMENDED, INCLUDING THE PRINCIPAL, REPRESENTATIVE TEACHER(S), AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS.

- | | |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6. |
| 2. | 7. |
| 3. | 8. |
| 4. | 9. |
| 5. | 10. |



SCORING

To assist in determining strengths and weaknesses, percentage scores may be calculated for each domain or sub-domain, and then plotted on the scale measuring relative strengths and weaknesses. To calculate the scores, follow the 5 steps listed below:

- Step 1: Multiply 3 (the highest possible score for an item) times the number of items answered (excluding items answered “not applicable”) to determine total possible points.
- Step 2: Add up the number of rating points received for each item in a given domain or sub-domain (almost always = 3, frequently = 2, sometimes = 1, almost never = 0; items answered “not applicable” should not be included in the count.).
- Step 3: Divide the total points received by the total possible points.
- Step 4: Multiply the answer from step 2 (a

two-place decimal) by 100 to determine the percentage score.

- Step 5: Plot the percentage score on the scale.

EXAMPLE

Let’s assume you completed the assessment in the domain of School Governance, Organization, Policy and Climate. All the items were answered with no items identified as “not applicable.” This domain has two sub-domains, namely School Governance, Organization, Policy; and Climate.

- Step 1: Total possible points for School Governance, Organization and Policy would be 39; total possible points for School Climate, 30; total possible points for entire domain, 69.
- Steps 2-4: The points received and percentages for the sub-domains are as follows (see sample score sheet below):

- » School Governance, Organization, and Policy: 33 points received (see item (a) on the sample score sheet below) out of a total possible points of 39 (see item (b) on the sample score sheet below), for a percentage score of 85% (see item (c) on the sample score sheet below).
- » School Climate: 7 points out of 30, for a percentage score of 23%.
- » The total points received for the entire domain was 40 points (see item (a) on the sample score sheet below) out of a total possible points of 69 (see item (b) on the sample score sheet below), for a percentage score of 58% for the domain (see item (c) on the sample score sheet below).
- Step 5: The relative weaknesses and strengths are plotted (\propto) on the scale to the right based on the percentage scores (see sample score sheet below).

I. SCHOOL GOVERNANCE, ORGANIZATION, POLICY AND CLIMATE (SAMPLE SCORE SHEET)

SUB-DOMAINS	% SCORE	SCALE
1. School Governance, Organization, and Policy	a 33 / b 39 = c 85%	<— weakness — 25% ————— 50% ————— 75% \propto strength —>
2. School Climate	a 7 / b 30 = c 23%	<— weakness \propto 25% ————— 50% ————— 75% — strength —>
DOMAIN TOTAL	a 40 / b 69 = c 58%	<— weakness — 25% ————— 50% — \propto ————— 75% — strength —>

NOTE: THE NUMBERS POSTED FOR **C** IN THE EXAMPLE ARE THE TOTALS IF ALL ITEMS ARE ANSWERED. IF ALL THE ITEMS IN A SUB-DOMAIN OR DOMAIN WERE NOT ANSWERED, THEN **C** BECOMES THE NUMBER OF ITEMS ANSWERED,

MULTIPLIED BY 3 (THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE SCORE FOR AN ITEM). FOR EXAMPLE, IF 8 ITEMS WERE ANSWERED, THEN **C** (THE TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS) WOULD BE CALCULATED THUS: $8 \times 3 = 24$

I. SCHOOL GOVERNANCE, ORGANIZATION, POLICY AND CLIMATE

SUB-DOMAINS	% SCORE	SCALE
1. School Governance, Organization, and Policy	___ / 39 = ___ %	<← weakness — 25% ————— 50% ————— 75% — strength →>
2. School Climate	___ / 30 = ___ %	<← weakness — 25% ————— 50% ————— 75% — strength →>
DOMAIN TOTAL	___ / 69 = ___ %	<← weakness — 25% ————— 50% ————— 75% — strength →>

II. FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

SUB-DOMAINS	% SCORE	SCALE
DOMAIN TOTAL	___ / 36 = ___ %	<← weakness — 25% ————— 50% ————— 75% — strength →>

III. CURRICULUM

SUB-DOMAINS	% SCORE	SCALE
DOMAIN TOTAL	___ / 27 = ___ %	<← weakness — 25% ————— 50% ————— 75% — strength →>

IV. ORGANIZATION OF LEARNING

SUB-DOMAINS	% SCORE	SCALE
1. Teaching and Learning	___ / 63 = ___ %	<← weakness — 25% ————— 50% ————— 75% — strength →>
2. Classroom Assessment and Achievement	___ / 24 = ___ %	<← weakness — 25% ————— 50% ————— 75% — strength →>
3. Behavior Management	___ / 21 = ___ %	<← weakness — 25% ————— 50% ————— 75% — strength →>
DOMAIN TOTAL	___ / 108 = ___ %	<← weakness — 25% ————— 50% ————— 75% — strength →>

V. SPECIAL EDUCATION PRE-REFERRAL AND REFERRAL PROCESSES AND PROGRAMS

SUB-DOMAINS	% SCORE	SCALE
1. Classroom Assessment and Achievement	___ / 33 = ___ %	<← weakness — 25% ————— 50% ————— 75% — strength →>
2. Behavior Management	___ / 36 = ___ %	<← weakness — 25% ————— 50% ————— 75% — strength →>
DOMAIN TOTAL	___ / 69 = ___ %	<← weakness — 25% ————— 50% ————— 75% — strength →>

OVERALL PROFILE OF DOMAINS

SUB-DOMAINS	% SCORE	SCALE
1. School Governance, Organization, Policy, and Climate	___ / 69 = ___ %	<← weakness — 25% ————— 50% ————— 75% — strength →>
2. Family Involvement	___ / 36 = ___ %	<← weakness — 25% ————— 50% ————— 75% — strength →>
3. Curriculum	___ / 27 = ___ %	<← weakness — 25% ————— 50% ————— 75% — strength →>
4. Organization of Learning	___ / 108 = ___ %	<← weakness — 25% ————— 50% ————— 75% — strength →>
5. Special Education Processes and Programs	___ / 69 = ___ %	<← weakness — 25% ————— 50% ————— 75% — strength →>
OVERALL SCORE	___ / 309 = ___ %	<← weakness — 25% ————— 50% ————— 75% — strength →>



PRIORITIZING ITEMS FOR INTERVENTION

Note that the calculated results (percentage scores and scaled relative weaknesses and strengths) should not be the sole determinants of areas of concern. Rather these results

should provide guidance in identifying high priority areas. Along with these scores, supportive evidence and discussion should combine to prioritize areas requiring improvement or sustained support. It is imperative that the team identifies 3-5 priorities and a plan of action for each, with specific goals

and a timetable along with a facilitator responsible for each priority. Attempting to address more than 5 priorities often overextends energy and resources. If necessary, other weak areas may be prioritized in a second phase as goals from phase one are accomplished and more resources become available.

OUR SCHOOL'S TOP 5 PRIORITIES

RANK

SPECIFIC AREA OF CONCERN

#1

#2

#3

#4

#5



GETTING STARTED: AN OVERVIEW OF PROCEDURES

The use of this assessment tool requires the implementation of three steps, namely (1) calculation of disproportionate representation, (2) assessment of 5 domains relevant to addressing the needs of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and (3) development of a school improvement plan to provide culturally responsive education.

STEP 1: DETERMINE IF A PROBLEM EXISTS: ASSESS PLACEMENT PATTERNS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

By following the steps in the following section, *Determining Disproportionate Representation*, you will be able to determine whether certain groups of students make up a disproportionate number of students in special education.

STEP 2: ASSESS SCHOOL DOMAINS RELEVANT TO CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE EDUCATION

While special education placement pattern figures provide numerical indicators of a potential problem with disproportionate representation, it is necessary to conduct a comprehensive assessment of your school's programming and practices to gain a holistic understanding of the problem. The subsequent sections will allow you to examine various aspects of your institution to ascertain where collaborative efforts might be made to improve your school.

STEP 3: DEVELOP A SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE EDUCATION

The assessment of multiple domains of your school's programming and practices will enable you to identify the school community's strengths and gauge the areas in which improvement is needed. You may use the worksheets on the preceding pages to assist you in analyzing and using the data collected in the first two steps.

STEP 1: DETERMINE IF THERE IS DISPROPORTIONATE REPRESENTATION AT YOUR SCHOOL

The table below will assist you in determining whether disproportionate representation exists for specific groups at your school. You will be able to calculate the Composition Index, the Risk Index, and the Odds Ratio for your students. The Composition Index compares the proportion of students from a group (e.g., racial or linguistic) within a disability category or special education program with the proportion of the same group of students in the general school population. The Risk Index allows you to determine the probability of a specific group of students being placed in special education. This probability can also be calculated for selected categories of special education (e.g., learning disabilities). The Odds Ratio compares the risk of one group to the risk of another. Thus, it provides an indicator of how much more likely one group is to be placed in special education compared to another (e.g., Blacks versus Whites).

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS			WHITE	BLACK	HISPANIC	ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER	AMERICAN INDIAN	OTHER	TOTAL
1		The number of children from each ethnic or racial background in my school							
2		The percentages of these children in comparison to the total school population. (Line 1/Total of line 1)	__%	__%	__%	__%	__%	__%	__%
3		Of the total number of students in my school, the number receiving special education services.							
4	COMPOSITION INDEX	Of the students receiving special education services the percent from each ethnic group. (Line 3/total line 3)							
5	RISK INDEX	Of the number of students from each ethnic or racial group, the percent receiving special education services. (Line 3/Line 1)							
6	ODDS RATIO	The risk index for one group compared to the risk index for another group. (e.g., the risk index for Blacks/the risk index for Whites)							



STEP 2: ASSESS SCHOOL DOMAINS RELEVANT TO CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE EDUCATION

I. SCHOOL GOVERNANCE, ORGANIZATION, POLICY AND CLIMATE

The overall administration and organization of the school provide the structure for delivering instruction and programming that meet the

needs of students. Effective governance requires distributed leadership (Elmore, 2000) that (a) works to improve instructional practice and performance by providing opportunities for building knowledge and skills; (b) creates conditions that value learning as both an individual and a collective good, such that continuous learning occurs; (c) models the values and behaviors that represent fairness and equity for all regardless of cultural, linguistic or

economic background; (d) acknowledges and utilizes differences in expertise at all levels so that everyone contributes to a culturally responsive environment; and (e) operates on the premise of mutual accountability for achieving goals and objectives. The items listed under School Governance, Organization, Policy and Climate are designed to assist in evaluating the extent to which these criteria for effective leadership are met.

A. SCHOOL GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATION RECOMMENDATIONS		ALMOST ALWAYS	FREQUENTLY	SOMETIMES	ALMOST NEVER	NOT APPLICABLE
1	Administration, faculty and support personnel are well informed of the influence of culture, language, and ethnicity on school achievement.	3	2	1	0	n/a
2	The administration works collaboratively with all the members of the school community to ensure equitable treatment for all students.	3	2	1	0	n/a
3	The administration provides opportunities for professional development of faculty and support personnel on issues of cultural, language, and ethnic diversity.	3	2	1	0	n/a
4	The administration ensures that the special education assessment process is conducted fairly and appropriately.	3	2	1	0	n/a
5	The administration employs faculty and support personnel who demonstrate the ability to meaningfully and respectfully interact with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.	3	2	1	0	n/a
6	The administration creates a school culture in which students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds feel they are listened to, their opinions valued, and they are involved in decision-making.	3	2	1	0	n/a
7	The administration instills an ethic of care, respect, and responsibility.	3	2	1	0	n/a
8	The administration exemplifies a positive attitude towards the school, teachers, students, and families.	3	2	1	0	n/a
9	The administration provides support and encouragement for participation in extra-curricular activities by students from diverse cultural, language, ethnic, and ability groups.	3	2	1	0	n/a

PLEASE NOTE EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THE RATING OF ANY ITEM(S) ABOVE (OPTIONAL):



**B. SCHOOL POLICIES AND REFORMS
RECOMMENDATIONS**

		ALMOST ALWAYS	FREQUENTLY	SOMETIMES	ALMOST NEVER	NOT APPLICABLE
1	Administration, faculty and support personnel remain informed about current school policies and reforms that impact the delivery of services to students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.	3	2	1	0	n/a
2	The school ensures that all policies and reforms are explained to parents in their language through written communication and various meetings held at times convenient to parents (with childcare, and translators provided, and parents involved in the planning).	3	2	1	0	n/a
3	The school involves families and the community in the formation of new school policies.	3	2	1	0	n/a
4	New reforms are implemented with sensitivity toward the diverse learning needs of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.	3	2	1	0	n/a

PLEASE NOTE EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THE RATING OF ANY ITEM(S) ABOVE (OPTIONAL):



C. SCHOOL CLIMATE RECOMMENDATIONS

		ALMOST ALWAYS	FREQUENTLY	SOMETIMES	ALMOST NEVER	NOT APPLICABLE
1	The school accepts the responsibility for the achievement of all students.	3	2	1	0	n/a
2	The school obtains membership in organizations that promote equitable education and provide instructional strategies for all students.	3	2	1	0	n/a
3	The school obtains materials from professional organizations and makes them available to faculty and support personnel.	3	2	1	0	n/a
4	The school sponsors professionally conducted workshops where faculty and support personnel can identify their cultural and/or linguistic biases and work to address them.	3	2	1	0	n/a
5	The school informs staff members that disrespectful responses to any child or family member regardless of cultural background, ethnicity, and/or socioeconomic status will not be tolerated on the school campus, including teachers' lounge, office, or other area.	3	2	1	0	n/a
6	The school establishes school and district-wide professional development training in cultural competence (i.e., the ability to interact meaningfully and respectfully with individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds).	3	2	1	0	n/a
7	The school remains knowledgeable about their students' culture and community by visiting students in their home environment.	3	2	1	0	n/a
8	The school provides professional development to employees to provide them with necessary skills to objectively and respectfully visit students' homes and communities.	3	2	1	0	n/a
9	The school collaborates with the community, universities and other relevant institutions to assist in developing standards for addressing the needs of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families.	3	2	1	0	n/a
10	The school lobbies the state licensing agency to include course requirements (e.g., diversity education, adaptive instructional methods) that will improve the educational outcome of all students, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.	3	2	1	0	n/a

PLEASE NOTE EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THE RATING OF ANY ITEM(S) ABOVE (OPTIONAL):



II. FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

The importance of family involvement for the achievement of children in the school system is well documented. Schools must actively work to ensure that parents remain informed and

involved. Additionally, schools must create a hospitable environment for parents to feel welcome when they visit school. The less parents feel threatened by the school, the more likely parents will view school as an ally in their

children’s educational experience. The Family Involvement inventory identifies areas for review that will assist the school in evaluating its effectiveness in this area.

II. FAMILY INVOLVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS		ALMOST ALWAYS	FREQUENTLY	SOMETIMES	ALMOST NEVER	NOT APPLICABLE
1	The school has developed an effective ongoing communication system with families.	3	2	1	0	n/a
2	The school provides professional development to staff and teachers on effective communication with parents from diverse cultural, language, and ethnic groups.	3	2	1	0	n/a
3	The school is a welcoming environment for families from diverse backgrounds, for example, with front office personnel who speak the same language as parents, and security and other personnel who are friendly and welcoming, greeting parents with a smile.	3	2	1	0	n/a
4	The school surveys families from diverse backgrounds to gather suggestions on ways to involve parents in their children’s education.	3	2	1	0	n/a
5	The school provides adequate information to parents about pre-referral intervention in the language of the home.	3	2	1	0	n/a
6	The school recruits and maintains a resource list of culturally competent staff and community contacts who can communicate effectively with parents from diverse cultural, ethnic, and language groups.	3	2	1	0	n/a
7	The school assists families in accessing medical and community resources as well as other support services by directing the families to the appropriate agency(ies).	3	2	1	0	n/a
8	The school involves families in the pre-referral intervention process as respected partners and ensures they are well-informed at all times.	3	2	1	0	n/a
9	The school assists families in understanding their rights and available services under IDEA by providing one-on-one counseling, as well as workshops and/or referrals to advocates.	3	2	1	0	n/a
10	The school has an established plan for following up on parent conferences regarding request for services or other parental concerns.	3	2	1	0	n/a
11	The school utilizes parent liaisons to help parents and students navigate the school system.	3	2	1	0	n/a
12	The school involves parents in the governance of the school.	3	2	1	0	n/a
13	The school provides childcare, transportation, or alternate meeting days and times if needed.	3	2	1	0	n/a

PLEASE NOTE EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THE RATING OF ANY ITEM(S) ABOVE (OPTIONAL):

III. CURRICULUM

What is taught in the school reflects the values and disposition of the school system. The curriculum may be monocultural or

multicultural in its scope, reflecting history, contributions and perspectives of one group in society or that of many. To facilitate achievement for all students, the curriculum

should be inclusive and culturally responsive. The items included in this section provide a framework for determining the cultural responsiveness of the curriculum.

III. CURRICULUM RECOMMENDATIONS		ALMOST ALWAYS	FREQUENTLY	SOMETIMES	ALMOST NEVER	NOT APPLICABLE
1	The curriculum reflects an integration of ethnic and cultural content throughout programming, rather than assigning the study of diverse cultural groups to a single unit or one month.	3	2	1	0	n/a
2	The curriculum provides opportunities for students to investigate and understand how cultural assumptions and biases influence subject areas.	3	2	1	0	n/a
3	The curriculum fosters respect and understanding for diverse cultures by providing materials that help students develop positive attitudes toward different racial, ethnic, cultural, language, and ability groups.	3	2	1	0	n/a
4	The curriculum supports and values the experiences and information students have learned within their cultural groups.	3	2	1	0	n/a
5	The curriculum helps students make connections between what they are learning in school and their personal experiences.	3	2	1	0	n/a
6	The curriculum situates specific cultural and local knowledge in a global context.	3	2	1	0	n/a
7	The curriculum is made interesting and challenging for all students (not focused on rote learning activities).	3	2	1	0	n/a
8	The curriculum explicitly teaches cultural capital (the norms, behaviors, and attitudes) that provides access to achievement.	3	2	1	0	n/a
9	The curriculum uses the local language and cultural knowledge (funds of knowledge) as a foundation for the rest of the curriculum.	3	2	1	0	n/a

PLEASE NOTE EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THE RATING OF ANY ITEM(S) ABOVE (OPTIONAL):

IV. ORGANIZATION OF LEARNING

What occurs in the classroom is crucial to the achievement of students. This includes all the activities involved in the exchange of learning in the classroom. Teachers play a major role in

establishing the classroom setting and determining what knowledge is important and how it will be taught. Criteria for achievement and methods of assessing that achievement are an integral part of this process. Finally, classroom

behavior management is key to creating an environment conducive to teaching and learning. All are part of the organization of learning and must be evaluated in order to determine the cultural responsiveness of the classroom.

A. TEACHING AND LEARNING RECOMMENDATIONS		ALMOST ALWAYS	FREQUENTLY	SOMETIMES	ALMOST NEVER	NOT APPLICABLE
1	Teachers understand the ways in which race, ethnicity, culture, language and social class interact to influence student behavior.	3	2	1	0	n/a
2	Teachers are knowledgeable about the history and cultures of diverse ethnic, racial, and cultural groups.	3	2	1	0	n/a
3	Teachers are knowledgeable about individual learning styles.	3	2	1	0	n/a
4	Teachers are knowledgeable about the second language acquisition process and how to support students who are English language learners.	3	2	1	0	n/a
5	Teachers modify their instruction so that students from diverse ethnic, racial, cultural, language, and ability groups will have an equal opportunity to learn.	3	2	1	0	n/a
6	Teachers keep accurate records of each student's progress.	3	2	1	0	n/a
7	Teachers relate content and instructional strategies to the cultural background of their students.	3	2	1	0	n/a
8	Teachers utilize instructional materials that reflect images and perspectives from diverse groups.	3	2	1	0	n/a
9	Teachers help students to appreciate current and historical events from multiple perspectives.	3	2	1	0	n/a
10	Teachers help to organize activities and projects that enable students from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and language groups work together.	3	2	1	0	n/a
11	Teachers inform students about stereotyping and other related biases that have negative effects on racial and ethnic relations.	3	2	1	0	n/a
12	Teachers have high expectations for all students regardless of their background or differences.	3	2	1	0	n/a
13	Teachers work from the premise that "all children can learn" and continue to attempt different instructional approaches until each child is reached.	3	2	1	0	n/a
14	Teachers feel a strong sense of responsibility for all students, including students referred for or already placed in special education.	3	2	1	0	n/a
15	Teachers are experts in instruction and management and know how to effectively challenge and support their students.	3	2	1	0	n/a
16	Teachers are knowledgeable about and skilled in using strategies for teaching English language learners (including sheltered English techniques).	3	2	1	0	n/a

PLEASE NOTE EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THE RATING OF ANY ITEM(S) ABOVE (OPTIONAL):



B. CLASSROOM ACHIEVEMENT AND ASSESSMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

		ALMOST ALWAYS	FREQUENTLY	SOMETIMES	ALMOST NEVER	NOT APPLICABLE
1	Classroom assessment is conducted with fairness and sensitivity towards students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.	3	2	1	0	n/a
2	Teachers use a range of assessment strategies that provide students from diverse backgrounds opportunities to demonstrate their mastery and skills, including the opportunity to share what they know in their native language if they wish.	3	2	1	0	n/a
3	Administrators and teachers use a variety of instruments and strategies to assist students from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and language groups in meeting State standards and other mandated requirements (e.g., No Child Left Behind Act).	3	2	1	0	n/a
4	Teachers utilize information from several sources, including families, in assessing students' achievement.	3	2	1	0	n/a
5	The school identifies and uses multiple assessment tools and strategies that are research-based and culturally valid.	3	2	1	0	n/a
6	The school provides school and district-wide training in the administration of assessment tools and methods that consider the student's cultural background.	3	2	1	0	n/a
7	The school knows when and how to provide accommodations to students with special needs and English language learners.	3	2	1	0	n/a
8	The school ensures that high stakes tests have been validated for the purpose for which they are used and have been standardized on populations of students similar to their students.	3	2	1	0	n/a

PLEASE NOTE EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THE RATING OF ANY ITEM(S) ABOVE (OPTIONAL):



**C. BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT
RECOMMENDATIONS**

		ALMOST ALWAYS	FREQUENTLY	SOMETIMES	ALMOST NEVER	NOT APPLICABLE
1	Administration, teachers, and support personnel are knowledgeable about differences in cultural practices that might impact on student behavior.	3	2	1	0	n/a
2	Administration, teachers, and support personnel discipline students with a sensitivity towards students' cultural and linguistic differences.	3	2	1	0	n/a
3	Classroom rules and procedures are written and explained in language that is clear to students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.	3	2	1	0	n/a
4	Teachers are knowledgeable about certain behaviors that are consistent with students' cultural background so as not to consider them deviant.	3	2	1	0	n/a
5	Teachers utilize resource persons belonging to or familiar with a students' cultural and linguistic background to assist in planning behavioral interventions.	3	2	1	0	n/a
6	Students are taught school-sanctioned behaviors, particularly as they might conflict with culturally specific behaviors.	3	2	1	0	n/a
7	Students are made aware of behaviors that might be culturally specific so they can learn how to interact appropriately with students from cultures other than their own.	3	2	1	0	n/a

PLEASE NOTE EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THE RATING OF ANY ITEM(S) ABOVE (OPTIONAL):

V. SPECIAL EDUCATION PRE-REFERRAL AND REFERRAL PROCESSES AND PROGRAMS

The special education process is complex. To determine whether a school provides effective

and culturally appropriate services requires a multi-level analysis. Adequate and appropriate programming and instruction must be initiated even before the referral process begins, and

culturally responsive practices must be implemented throughout assessment and intervention. This section assists in evaluation of this process and programming.

A. PRE-REFERRAL AND REFERRAL PROCEDURES RECOMMENDATIONS		ALMOST ALWAYS	FREQUENTLY	SOMETIMES	ALMOST NEVER	NOT APPLICABLE
1	The Child Study Team uses a flow chart to help with decision-making during the referral process.	3	2	1	0	n/a
2	The flowchart ensures that students have been provided with meaningful, appropriate pre-referral strategies, adequate opportunities to learn, and validation of their difficulties across time and settings.	3	2	1	0	n/a
3	Participants in Child Study Teams are knowledgeable about and able to facilitate a range of meaningful pre-referral strategies.	3	2	1	0	n/a
4	Sufficient time is devoted at team meetings to selecting the best strategies for individual students based on data collected by teachers and others prior to the meeting.	3	2	1	0	n/a
5	Pre-referral strategies are varied and substantive, such as transferring a student to another teacher's class or providing individual tutoring through an after-school program.	3	2	1	0	n/a
6	Classes are taught by certified teachers who speak the child's first language.	3	2	1	0	n/a
7	Classroom room size is controlled to ensure an optimal learning environment that addresses the needs of all the students.	3	2	1	0	n/a
8	Specific instructional objectives are developed for each child, and teams specify who is responsible for addressing these objectives and the timeframe in which they are to be monitored.	3	2	1	0	n/a
9	The classroom context (e.g., teaching style, classroom arrangement and management, and peer relationships) from which a child is referred is carefully considered.	3	2	1	0	n/a
10	School personnel knowledgeable about cultural and linguistic diversity, including differentiating between second language acquisition and disabilities in the case of English language learners, should be present at the Child Study Team meeting.	3	2	1	0	n/a
11	Parents/Caregivers should be involved as respected, valued partners at every stage of the process.	3	2	1	0	n/a

PLEASE NOTE EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THE RATING OF ANY ITEM(S) ABOVE (OPTIONAL):

**B.ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION
RECOMMENDATIONS**

		ALMOST ALWAYS	FREQUENTLY	SOMETIMES	ALMOST NEVER	NOT APPLICABLE
1	Administrators, teachers, and related support personnel are knowledgeable about the special education process.	3	2	1	0	n/a
2	Administrators, teachers, and support personnel are knowledgeable about the evaluation guidelines outlined in the Individual with Disabilities Education Act. (IDEA)	3	2	1	0	n/a
3	Instruction is modified appropriately to facilitate achievement before students are referred for special education evaluation.	3	2	1	0	n/a
4	The student is assessed by someone who speaks his/her native language and who is knowledgeable about the impact of second language acquisition on IQ and achievement.	3	2	1	0	n/a
5	English language learners are assessed in their native language as well as English.	3	2	1	0	n/a
6	In assessment the student is observed in his or her classroom as well as in other contexts and settings.	3	2	1	0	n/a
7	The assessment team uses alternative assessments (e.g., curriculum based assessment, portfolio assessment) to assist in determining eligibility for special education.	3	2	1	0	n/a
8	The administration ensures that the assessment team includes a resource person familiar with the student's cultural background.	3	2	1	0	n/a
9	The assessment team utilizes culturally appropriate and culturally valid assessment tools.	3	2	1	0	n/a
10	The school assigns personnel who are knowledgeable about student's cultures to conduct assessments.	3	2	1	0	n/a
11	Individualized Education Plans take into consideration the student's cultural and linguistic background.	3	2	1	0	n/a
12	A resource person familiar with the student's cultural and linguistic background assists in the development of interventions and in the monitoring of the student's progress.	3	2	1	0	n/a

PLEASE NOTE EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THE RATING OF ANY ITEM(S) ABOVE (OPTIONAL):