

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Equity Toolkit for Administrators

2010

201 E. COLFAX AVE. DENVER, CO 80203

Learning is a treasure
that will follow its owner everywhere.
-Chinese Proverb

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Table of Contents

Introduction	5
Definition of equity	6
Cultural Competency	7
Cultural Proficiency	9
Leadership	13
Purposeful Conversation	15
Frameworks	17
Defining the Work	19
School level Assessments	20
Bias	31
Training for Teachers, Staff and Community Members	32
Discrimination and Harassment	34
Community and parental engagement	36
Setting goals and next steps	41
Federal and State Statutes	44
Colorado Educational Demographics	46
Appendices	49
A: Resources	
B: Articles of Interest	
C: Principal Speech to A.D.L.	
D: Work Cited	

Introduction

In order to promote and preserve our democracy, we as educators are acutely aware of the need for all of our children to have both access and opportunity for educational equity.

Societal issues that impact our communities also impact our schools. Our success in addressing societal issues is directly related to our ability to collaborate and work together as a community. We must take action to lead our communities in eliminating the negative impact on our students, faculty, staff and parents. Everyone in our school community is impacted by the harassment of our students or staff because of our identities. Harassment and prejudice in the areas of race, ethnicity, culture, lifestyle, language, socioeconomics, religion, sexual orientation, gender, and ability, among others, are social and community issues which must be addressed within the community, as well as in schools.

This toolkit is designed to support you and your community in creating a plan and action steps for intervention and maintenance of a more accepting culture. The toolkit provides resources to support you in working through the impacts of a crisis within the school, as well as creating intervention and maintenance plans outside of a crisis. This model is community based, and relies on the participation and voices of the school community.

The toolkit is not a magic bullet, as issues of discrimination and inequities have a long history in our educational systems. We are well aware that we cannot reverse these inequities overnight but we can make concerted efforts to pay attention to issues of equity and provide school administrators resources to address beginning such “courageous conversations” in their own schools and communities.

The current reality of bias, harassment, prejudice and discrimination in our schools and communities challenges us all to take effective measures to create and sustain a safe and enjoyable learning environment for our students. As we look at the broader social and community impacts of this challenge, it is clear to the Colorado Department of Education we must provide service and support for all of our schools in dealing with these impacts.

In alignment with Commissioner Jones’ focus on service and support, this Equity Toolkit is designed to support school and community leaders in the endeavor to effectively address bias, harassment, prejudice and discrimination in your school communities.

Thank you for being a part of this important work. CDE is committed and available to support school districts and individual schools in the important endeavor of creating equitable schools and communities.

-Dr. Barbara Medina - Assistant Commissioner of Innovation and Transformation, Colorado Department of Education

The Toolkit is designed to create personal awareness and an understanding of the complexities and actions related to Equity, Cultural Competence and Cultural Proficiency.

Equity

True educational equity is not the same as equality. In decisions regarding educational equity, the following must be considered:

1. **Access:** An equal opportunity to gain entry.(Board, 2000)
2. **Process:** A state beyond nondiscrimination that is characterized by fair and just, but not identical treatment.
3. **Outcome:** All students are provided educational experiences that ensure the achievement of certain uniform goals and objectives.

In order to ensure successful learning for all students, students must “see themselves” in their curriculum and instructional materials. Further, they must have access, support, and resources to achieve success in school and become productive citizens. There can be no educational excellence without educational equity. Excellence is indicated by conditions and practices, resulting in schools that are associated with high levels of learning for all students in all valued goal areas of the common curriculum. Equity exists when there are no systematic differences in the distribution of these conditions, practices, and results based upon race, ethnicity, gender, economic status, or any other relevant characteristics.

The College Board. (2000). *Educational equity school-level services PACESETTER* July, 19, 2001, from <http://www.collegeboard.org/SIS/pace/html/p-equity.htm>

In order to attain and promote educational equity, one should strive for cultural competency.

Cultural Competence

Cultural competence refers to an ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures and is comprised of four components: (1) Awareness of your own cultural worldview, (2) Attitude towards cultural differences, (3) Knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews and (4) cross-cultural skills.

Cultural competence is defined as a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enables that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations (Cross et al., 1989; Isaacs & Benjamin, 1991). Operationally defined, cultural competence is the integration and transformation of knowledge about individuals and groups of people into specific standards, policies, practices, and attitudes used in appropriate cultural settings to increase the quality of services; thereby producing better outcomes (Davis, 1997).

Developing cultural competence results in an ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures.

The word **culture** implies the integrated patterns of human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of racial, ethnic, religious, or social groups. The word **competence** implies having the capacity to function in a particular way: the capacity to function within the context of culturally integrated patterns of human behavior defined by a group.

Competence in functioning cross-culturally means learning new patterns of behavior and effectively applying them in the appropriate settings. Intra-group differences, such as geographic location or socioeconomic background, require practitioners to avoid over generalizing. The unknowing teacher might offend some students. **Cultural competence** is a developmental process that evolves over an extended period. Both individuals and organizations are at various levels of awareness, knowledge and skills along the cultural competence continuum.

Cultural competence requires organizations to:

Have a defined set of values and principles, and demonstrate behaviors, attitudes, policies, and structures that enable them to work effective cross-culturally.

Have the capacity to (1) value diversity, (2) conduct self-assessment, (3) manage the dynamics of difference, (4) acquire and institutionalize cultural knowledge and (5) adapt to diversity and the cultural contexts of communities they serve.

Incorporate the above in all aspects of policy-making, administration, practice and service delivery, systematically involve consumers, families and communities.

Guiding Questions:

What is your understanding about how to learn about yours and other cultures?

What does individual and organizational culture mean to you?

How do you interact effectively in a variety of cultural environments?

In order to achieve cultural proficiency in education one should use cultural competence skills to successfully teach and interact with students and work effectively with colleagues from a variety of cultures.

Cultural Proficiency

Cultural Proficiency in education is the level of knowledge-based skills and understanding that are required to successfully teach and interact with students and to work effectively with colleagues from a variety of cultures by holding all forms of cultural difference in high esteem; a continuing self-assessment of one's values, beliefs and biases grounded in cultural humility; an ongoing vigilance toward the dynamics of diversity, difference and power; and the expansion of knowledge of cultural practices that recognize cultural bridges as going both ways. Culturally proficient services require that both the individual and the institution be culturally proficient.

The following five essential elements contribute to an institution's ability to become more culturally proficient:

1. Valuing diversity.
2. Having the capacity for cultural self-assessment.
3. Managing the dynamics of difference
4. Having institutionalized cultural knowledge.
5. Having developed adaptations to service/curriculum delivery reflecting an understanding of cultural diversity.

1. Value Diversity: Claim Your Differences

- Incorporate differences into the curriculum
- Acknowledge the contribution of various cultural and ethnic groups through teaching and lessons

2. Assess Culture: Name the Differences

- Recognize how your culture affects the culture of others.
- Describe your own culture and the cultural norms of your organization.
- Understand how the culture of your organization affects those with different cultures.

3. Manage the Dynamics of Difference

- Develop a process for cross cultural communication (for example see purposeful conversational on page XX)
- Create a cross cultural conflict mediation plan

4. Institutionalize Cultural Knowledge

- Incorporate cultural knowledge into teacher induction plan
- Weave into professional development plan
- Structure opportunities to engage parents and communities

5. Adapt to Diversity

- Realize that change is challenging and healthy
- Revisit community needs and values to align school policies and resources

These five elements should be manifested at every level of an organization including policy making, administration, and practice. (Cross, etal. 1989)

Cultural Proficiency Continuum

The following continuum represents the various levels of cultural proficiency, from the least proficient to most proficient:

Cultural destructiveness: The elimination of other people's cultures. (Genocide to majority-conformity approach) *See the difference, stomp it out.*

Cultural incapacity: Belief in the superiority of one's own culture and behavior that disempowers another's culture. (Ethnocentrism, acts of discrimination, internalized inferiority) *See the difference, make it wrong.*

Cultural blindness: Acting as if the cultural differences one sees do not matter or not recognizing that there are differences among and between cultures. "I don't see color I only see another human being." *See the difference, act like you don't.*

Cultural pre-competence: Awareness of the limitations of one's skills or an organization's practices when interacting with other cultural groups. *See the difference, respond inadequately.*

Cultural competence: Interacting with other cultural groups using the five essential elements of cultural proficiency as the standard for individual behavior and school practices. *See the difference; understand the difference that difference makes.*

Cultural proficiency: Knowing how to learn about individual and organizational culture; interacting effectively in a variety of cultural environments. Proficient use of the five elements of cultural proficiency and the ability to successfully adapt teaching and service in response to cultural diversity at individual and institutional levels. *See the difference and respond effectively and affirmingly.*

Based in part on *Cultural Proficiency, A Manual for School Leaders, 2nd Ed.* Lindsey, Robins, and Terrell, 2003.

A culturally Proficient School Leader:

- Celebrates and encourages the presence of a variety of people in all activities.
- Recognizes differences as diversity rather than as inappropriate responses to the environment.
- Accepts that each culture finds some values and behaviors more important than others.

Qualities of Culturally Proficient Educators:

- Proactive in involving a wide variety of people from all areas of the school.
- Openly address the need to serve all persons who are different.
- Accept that cultures vary, evoking different feelings and behaviors.
- Provide leadership in developing policy statements on diversity and cultural competency.
- Respect personal space.
- Celebrate the languages of LEP students
- Stay open-minded to various experiences.
- Have a formal selection process for materials that have culturally diverse images.
- Display materials that have culturally diverse images.
- Take overt actions to hire people at all levels to represent a diverse workforce.

- Promote activities that recognize that there are differences within ethnic groups.
- Support your staff in the work of equity.

Based in part on *Cultural Proficiency, A Manual for School Leaders, 2nd Ed.* Lindsey, Robins, and Terrell, 2003.

An Ongoing Journey

Moving along the cultural continuum and building capacity in cultural competence is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that are present in a system, agency, or individual to enable that system, agency, or individual to function effectively in interactions with people from a variety of cultural backgrounds (adapted from Cross et al.).

Three Critical Steps in the Process:

- 1. Unlearning**--Identifying and correcting learned biases
- 2. Learning**--Acquisition of information, knowledge, and wisdom
- 3. Diversification**--Increased collective capacity

The following terms will be essential elements in your conversations about cultural competency (Sonia Alvarez-Robinson, 2000):

Authentic Representation: The integration of people from diverse backgrounds where mutual respect, appreciation, and full value for the contributions of all participants is demonstrated.

Tokenism: When an organization considers the perspective of one person to be reflective of their entire cultural group--when relationships are approached as a "for" people instead of "with" people dynamic--when decisions are made "about" people "without" people--and where people are devalued in positions with no power.

Identity: This includes awareness of self, identification (the label used for one's own group), attitudes about the group you belong to, and attitudes about other groups and the patterns of behavior that are commonly associated with a specific group: "How we perceive the world and how the world perceives us."

Diversity: Relationships of difference, including differences in communication, life view, definitions of family, identity, culture, experiences of institutional racism/sexism/ageism/homophobia/and other biases: "How our spirits behave when they intersect."

Experience: This develops a base of information--which may translate into knowledge--which can transform into wisdom. "Experience of our ancestry shapes our history--our history shapes our experiences--our experiences shape history--which shape the experience of our descendants."

Culture: This is a pattern of behavior among a group that includes what they think, value, and believe; how they communicate, behave, and celebrate: "Not necessarily who we are as a result of where our ancestors came from, rather who we are as a result of where we have been. However, where our ancestors came from does play a role in the experiences we will have."

Guiding Questions:

How do we celebrate and encourage the presence of a variety of people in all activities?

How do we recognize differences as diversity rather than as inappropriate responses to the environment?

How do we show acceptance for each culture, set of values and behaviors?

One of the most critical elements in change-making and equity work is strong and courageous leadership. Following are leadership qualities found to be integral to equity work in schools and educational institutions

Leadership

What type of Leadership is needed to support Equity Work in Schools?

Leadership as an activity, not a person or a trait

Leadership that is inclusive of all involved rather than direct authority (authority can be both a *resource* and a *constraint* on leadership)

Leadership that facilitates acknowledging barriers and inequities

Leadership that is about changing a current system that produces racial disparities

Culturally proficient leadership that values diversity and celebrates and encourages the presence of a variety of people in all activities

How does a School Leader Value Diversity?

You are proactive in involving a wide variety of people from all areas of the school.

You openly address the need to serve all persons who are different.

You accept that cultures vary, evoking different feelings and behaviors.

You provide leadership in developing policy statements on diversity and cultural competency.

You respect personal space.

You celebrate the languages of LEP students

You stay open-minded to various experiences.

You have a formal selection process for materials that have culturally diverse images.

You display materials that have culturally diverse images.

You take overt actions to hire people at all levels to represent a diverse workforce.

You promote activities that recognize that there are differences within ethnic groups.

You support your staff in the work of equity.

Based in part on *Cultural Proficiency, A Manual for School Leaders, 2nd Ed.* Lindsey, Robins, and Terrell, 2003.

How does a school leader facilitate clear and effective communication?

In order to produce the most effectively led dialogues and understanding, the objectives for communications should be clear. Following are guidelines for clear and effective communications about issues equity:

Overcome defensive behaviors, interact productively on sensitive issues and surface biases in individuals and organizations.

Provide and model of leadership that rewards truth, openness and healing.

Create organizations where taking responsibility, making informed choices and open dialogue are effective and valued.

Facilitate productive dialogue regarding issues of discrimination and equity in schools and create safe learning environments for all students by using purposeful conversation model.

Leading a Purposeful Conversation

Purposeful conversation is the action of sharing information within a purposeful protocol. This means thinking about what you want to say and how you want to express yourself before you speak, and staying conscious of your purpose throughout the conversation.(Consulting, 2008)

Combined with positive body language and tone of voice, purposeful conversation will allow you to get your message across in a way that honors you and the other person you are interacting with. A purposeful conversation builds efficacy and confidence in all parties involved by creating successful experiences of interaction.

Considerations before Initiating a Purposeful Conversation:

Establish the purpose: What do you hope to share or learn through the conversation?

What evidence during the conversation will lead you to know you have been successful?

What do you want to be sure you do well during the purposeful conversation?

Steps in Purposeful Conversation

Invite the conversation:

“I’m wondering if we could talk about _____?”

“Do you have a few minutes to clear up _____?”

State your purpose:

“I’m hoping that we can figure out _____.”

“Would you support me in making a decision/getting clarity around...”

Ask the other person to share their purpose in the conversation.

Listen without interruption to each other, allowing each person to talk and changing speakers conversationally throughout.

Paraphrase occasionally to invite reflection:

“You’re feeling...”

“So you’re concerned about...”

“So you’re hoping to...”

“So your belief is...”

Maintain your awareness on your purpose, if you find the conversation moving in an unproductive direction, gently re-direct it by restating the purpose for the conversation.

As you reach a conclusion, reflect on how the purposeful conversation cleared up the subject of the conversation.

“I feel that this conversation supported us in...”,

“I feel that this conversation was successful because...”

“How do you feel that this conversation helped?”

If the conversation will not be concluded in the purposeful conversational time frame (15-30 minutes), ask the other person if you can continue the conversation another time, request a time.

During a **purposeful conversation**, the following points are helpful:

Stay aware of your purpose throughout the conversation.

Be flexible and willing to hear the other party’s perspective.

Paraphrase.

Invite collaboration in the conversation and in problem-solving.

Redirect yourself to a positive contribution when needed.

Before responding, wait 10-20 seconds.

Reflect before responding.

During a **purposeful conversation**, avoid the following:

Using the words “never” and “always.”

Listening only with the intention of responding.

Immediate negative response or interjection or question.

Interjecting your own beliefs instead of paraphrasing.

Accusations.

Guiding Questions:

What do you hope to accomplish from your communications?

With whom do you want or need to communicate?

What is this issue really about? Who is affected?

What communications capacity do you have – staff and time?

It is useful for school leaders to have frameworks for cultural proficiency, competency, and equity work provide underlying ideas, guiding principles, and agreements.

Frameworks

Why Have a Framework to Support Equity Work in Schools?*

We do not have a common and compelling direction or shared sense of current reality.

We disagree about the cause of racial disparities in the system.

We lack the skills to talk about race.

We lack the skills to analyze our systems.

We lack the skills to exercise leadership to intervene in our systems.

We do not share a common and compelling direction or shared sense of current reality.

We acknowledge that there are multiple frameworks that guide equity work in our schools. We are highlighting three of these to elicit discussion and insights into your school community. We encourage you to use the framework is relevant and addresses your own issues and outcomes for equity. For information on three recognized frameworks, see Appendix .(Hill, Price, & Singleton)

* Published with the permission of West Wind Education Policy Inc. Authors: Deanna Hill, Senior Policy Analyst West Wind Education Policy, Inc; Steve Price, Superintendent Middletown City Schools; Glenn Singleton, Executive Director Pacific Educational Group, Inc.

Banks Framework of Cultural Competency (From least to most competent)

Level One: Contributions - *Heroes, holidays, and discrete cultural element.*

Level Two: Additive - *Content, concepts, themes, perspectives **added** to the curriculum without changing structure.*

Level Three: Transformative - *Structure of curriculum **changed** to enable students to view concepts, issues events and themes from diverse perspective.*

Level Four: Social Action- *Students **make decisions** on important **social issues** and take actions to help solve them. Interdisciplinary, infused approach.*

Books by: James A. Banks, Multiethnic Education: An Introduction to Multi Cultural Education Teaching Strategies for Ethnic Studies

Gorski Framework of Shifts in Consciousness(Gorski)

1. Cultural Awareness in Not Enough
2. Justice first, *Then* conflict resolution

3. Rejecting deficit Theory
4. Transcending the Dialogic Surface
5. Acknowledging sociopolitical context
6. “Neutrality” = Status Quo
7. Accepting a loss of likeability

Books by: Paul Gorski: Dismantling the Digital Divide: A Multicultural Educational Framework gorski@edchange.org

Voltz Framework of Urban Teacher Competencies(Voltz)

- 1. Socio Cultural** – The awareness of and understanding of the impact of social, cultural and historical influences on learning and behavior, ideas of social justice.
- 2. Affirmative Attitude** – The impact of teacher expectation, developing caring relationships, ongoing reflection, respect for student/family/community cultures, commitment to equity issues
- 3. Collaborative Skills** – Skills to collaborate and problem solve with students, families, communities, and other professionals, and to understand own areas of influence within larger systems.
- 4. Pedagogy Diversity** – Specific knowledge and skills around culturally responsive instructional, accommodation/modification, management, assessment, and curricular strategies and resources; addresses issues of differentiation, grouping, and tiered interventions.

Books by Deborah Voltz: Engineering Successful Inclusion in Standards Based Urban Classrooms

Guiding Questions:

What are the implications of this statement: “Systems are perfectly designed to get the results they are getting.”

What are the implications of this statement: “Each of us perpetuates systemic inequities.”

DEFINING THE WORK

Equity

True educational equity is not the same as equality. In decisions regarding educational equity, the following must be considered:

1. **Access:** An equal opportunity to gain entry.
2. **Process:** A state beyond nondiscrimination that is characterized by fair and just, but not identical treatment.
3. **Outcome:** All students are provided educational experiences that ensure the achievement of certain uniform goals and objectives.

In order to ensure successful learning for all students, students must “see themselves” in their curriculum and instructional materials. Further, they must have access, support, and resources to achieve success in school and become productive citizens. There can be no educational excellence without educational equity. Excellence is indicated by conditions and practices, resulting in schools that are associated with high levels of learning for all students in all valued goal areas of the common curriculum. Equity exists when there are no systematic differences in the distribution of these conditions, practices, and results based upon race, ethnicity, gender, economic status, or any other relevant characteristics.

The College Board. (2000). *Educational equity school-level services PACESETTER* July, 19, 2001, from <http://www.collegeboard.org/SIS/pace/html/p-equity.htm>

Guiding questions regarding equity in education:

What is our current reality?

Where do we need to heal as a community?

What can we do differently?

Where is equity work reflected in our curriculum, instruction and assessment work?

If equity work is not reflected in our curriculum, instruction and assessment, how are these being affected by the lack of equity work?

How does our equity work align with our cycle of continuous improvement?

What are our motives for doing equity work? Are we here to “save” students from their deficits? Or, are we here to provide access to educational opportunities that allow students to maintain their individual identities?

School Level Assessments and Evaluations

Naming our current reality is a crucial first step in any process of change. There are many avenues to discovering and naming our current reality. Below are some essential steps to choose from in order to assess the current reality of your school or community.

Action Steps:

1. Have students and school personnel take a written self-assessment survey to assist in their self-reflection on issues of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, linguistic differences, culture and religion. (See Appendix, pages 21 to 27 for sample assessment written by Nancy Papke of Cherry Creek School District)
2. Collect and disaggregate data in order to inform decision making around curriculum and policies. This data could include standardized test scores, referral, suspension and expulsion reports, the percentage of students placed in ELL, AP and remedial classes, as well as parent and student perceptions about school.
3. Discuss the indicators of community and family engagement checklist (found on pages 11-12) with staff and parents. Create a plan to implement more of the items on the checklist that would create a learning environment that is engaging and inviting for the larger community.
4. Utilize one of the evaluation tools found on the following pages to determine current reality and next steps. These evaluation tools are designed to lead schools in self reflection and creation of more culturally responsive practices. All schools and districts vary in need and demographics. Assessments may be adapted to best meet the needs of your specific community. All statements pertain to multiple forms of equitable practices including, but not exclusive of, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, linguistic differences, culture and religion.
5. Discuss with staff and parents whether the school:
 - *Displays a mission statement committing the work of the school to students, families, and the community it serves?*
 - *Reflects an orderly and safe environment conducive to effective learning by students and productive work by staff?*
 - *Displays internal and external signs welcoming visitors to the school?*
 - *Uses friendly language to describe what visitors should do when entering the school?*
 - *Has designated parking areas for visitors?*
 - *Employs office staff who are friendly to visitors, provide needed information easily, and answer the phone in a way that makes the caller glad she/he has called?*

- *Sets standards of welcoming behavior for all staff and volunteers, including bus drivers, custodians, and cafeteria workers?*
- *Displays student academic work throughout the school?*
- *Display large readable signs with directions to such areas as the library, gym, cafeteria, and rest rooms?*
- *Has an identified and furnished work space for parents and other volunteers?*
- *Has a cheerful and suitably furnished waiting area for visitors?*
- *Has clearly written information available to parents and visitors explaining school philosophy, programs, and how a person can be involved?*
- *Has an outside marquee that is readable from the street and carries notices of meetings, recognition of students/staff/organizations?*
- *Makes it possible for staff to be easily accessible to parents?*
- *Produces an overall climate that is cheerful and student-centered?*
- *Ensures that students demonstrate friendly and courteous behavior?*

Self-Assessment for District Administrators*

	Most of the time	Some of the time	Never
I am aware of my own racial, ethnic, and cultural background and understand how it affects my perceptions and values.			
I seek opportunities to learn about the cultural practices in my school community, including staff, families, and students.			
I regularly reflect on my own bias and how I view and treat people with cultural practices that are different than my own.			
Our district collects and disseminates academic and behavioral data, and examines achievement gaps by race, native language, socio-economic status, and gender.			
Strategic plans are put in place to support schools with achievement gaps in academics and behavior.			
Our district provides professional development for administrators, staff, and teachers to examine their own cultural awareness and learn culturally relevant educational practices.			
Our district actively reaches out to families from various backgrounds to give feedback and assist in the creation of district policies.			
Our district has clear procedures to report and respond to allegations of inequity. These issues are dealt with in a sensitive and timely manner.			
We actively recruit applicants of diverse cultural backgrounds and ethnicities to work in our district.			
We provide support systems in order to meet the needs of our staff from diverse backgrounds.			
District communication with families is available in multiple languages and is sensitive to varying family structures as well as diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.			
The district provides translators to improve school and family communication.			

Art work and photographs embedded in district communication (including web-sites, décor in administrative buildings, and printed matter) reflect the demographics of our student body.			
District administrators openly confront inequitable practices and have policies in place to hold staff accountable for their actions.			
District policies are created while consciously working towards equity for all students and families. Historical policies are reviewed for cultural sensitivity. Members representing the demographics of the community assist in this process.			
District curriculum and assessments are reviewed to make sure that materials are historically accurate, culturally relevant, and anti-bias.			
District standards and curriculum reflect that culturally relevant lessons are embedded in day to day teaching, rather than isolated units.			
District curriculum includes differentiation tools to meet the needs of students from varying backgrounds.			
District policies include how to respect holidays in a manner that is sensitive to the religions and cultural practices of students and families.			
Staff evaluations include equity related expectations.			

*The following assessments were adapted from “Minneapolis Public Schools, Positive School Climate Tool Kit, First Edition” by Nancy Papke of the Cherry Creek School District and Kristen Genevieve Davidson.

Self-Assessment for School Administrators*

	Most of the time	Some of the time	Never
I am aware of my own racial, ethnic, and cultural background, and understand how it affects my perceptions and values.			
I seek opportunities to learn about the cultural practices in our school community, including staff, families, and students.			
I regularly reflect on my own bias and how I view and treat people with cultural practices that are different than my own.			
Our school regularly examines academic and behavioral data for achievement gaps by race, native language, socio-economic status, and gender.			
Strategic plans are put in place to address all achievement gaps.			
Data is disseminated to families with procedures for them to offer support in improving our school for all students.			
I support professional development for administrators and faculty to examine our own cultural awareness and develop culturally relevant schoolwide and classroom practices.			
I actively reach out to families from various backgrounds to give feedback and assist in the creation of school policies.			
I actively recruit families to volunteer in the school and on committees so that volunteer pools reflect the student body.			
Our school has clear procedures to report and respond to allegations of inequity. These issues are dealt with in a sensitive and timely manner.			
I actively recruit applicants of diverse cultural backgrounds and ethnicities to work in our school.			
Our school has support systems in order to meet the needs of our staff from diverse backgrounds.			
School communication with families is available in multiple languages and is sensitive to varying family structures as well as diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.			

I make sure that translators are available to improve school and family communication.			
Art work and photographs embedded in school communication and school decor reflect the demographics of our student body and are age appropriate.			
The books in our school library reflect our student body and depict varying cultural practices in a positive and anti-biased way.			
I openly confront inequitable practices and have policies in place to hold staff accountable for their actions. I encourage staff to do the same.			
School policies are created while consciously working towards equity for all students and families. Historical policies are reviewed for cultural sensitivity. Members representing the demographics of the community assist in this process.			
Curricula and assessments used in our school are reviewed to make sure that materials are historically accurate, culturally relevant, and anti-bias.			
Behavior expectations and policies have taken into account the varying cultural expectations and norms among students and families.			
Curriculum guidelines reflect that culturally relevant lessons are embedded in day to day teaching, rather than isolated units.			
Our school incorporates differentiation tools to meet the needs of students from varying backgrounds.			
School policies include how to respect holidays in a manner that is sensitive to the varying religions and cultural practices of the student population.			
Teacher expectations and evaluations include culturally relevant teaching, with a focus on equity and positive relationships.			

I am comfortable in leading discussions about race, culture, religion, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexual orientation with staff and students.			
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*The following assessments were adapted from "Minneapolis Public Schools, Positive School Climate Tool Kit, First Edition" by Nancy Papke of the Cherry Creek School District and Kristen Genevieve Davidson.

Self-Assessment for Teachers*

	Most of the time	Some of the time	Never
I am aware of my own racial, ethnic, and cultural background, and understand how it affects my perceptions and values.			
I seek opportunities to learn about the cultural practices in our school community, including staff, families, and students.			
I regularly reflect on my own bias and how I view and treat people with cultural practices that are different than my own.			
As a faculty member, I feel supported and valued for my own identity and perspectives.			
I value the diverse perspectives and cultural practices of my colleagues.			
I regularly examine academic and behavioral data for achievement gaps by race, native language, socio-economic status, and gender.			
I review data to inform instruction in ways that best meet the needs of individual learners, and collaborate with colleagues in data-based decision-making.			
I create positive relationships with families so that we can work as a team to best meet their child's needs.			
I engage in professional development to examine my own cultural awareness and develop culturally relevant teaching strategies.			
I encourage all families to give me feedback and volunteer in my classroom.			
I participate in action research focused on equity to better meet my students' needs and improve my instructional strategies. I monitor student engagement within this research.			
Students and families feel comfortable when reporting inequitable practices or incidents, whether parties involved include me, students or fellow colleagues.			

Communication is available to families in multiple languages.			
I make sure that there are translators available to improve school and family communication.			
Art work and photographs embedded in communication and classroom decor reflect the demographics of the students positively and are age appropriate.			
I act as a student and family advocate. I openly confront my colleagues if I see practices that I feel are inequitable.			
I preview visual media to make sure that it is culturally relevant and anti-bias.			
My behavioral expectations and policies have taken into account the varying cultural expectations and norms in my student demographics.			
I review curriculum and assessments for historical accuracy, cultural relevance, multiple perspectives, and anti-bias.			
Culturally relevant lessons are embedded in my day to day teaching, rather than taught in isolated units.			
I differentiate to meet the needs of students from varying backgrounds and have high expectations for all. I provide the support needed to reach expectations.			
Holidays are equally represented and celebrations are sensitive to the varying religions and cultural practices of my student population.			
I actively dispel racial and cultural stereotypes in my curriculum, assessments, materials, and classroom décor.			
I am comfortable in leading discussions about race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, and religion with students.			
I avoid imposing my personal values and opinions and assist students in learning the difference between fact and opinion. I encourage the sharing of opinions that are different than my own and looking at multiple perspectives.			

*The following assessments were adapted from “Minneapolis Public Schools, Positive School Climate Tool Kit, First Edition” by Nancy Papke of the Cherry Creek School District and Kristen Genevieve Davidson.

Self-Assessment for Students*

	Most of the time	Some of the time	Never
I am accepted as a valued member of my school community.			
My teachers encourage me to learn about people with various cultural practices.			
The staff at my school treats everyone fairly.			
Bullying is taken seriously and action is taken immediately.			
My teachers have created positive relationships with my family.			
I feel comfortable talking to my teachers when someone is treating me unfairly.			
I feel comfortable asking for help when needed.			
My own perspective is valued in school, even if it is different.			
My teachers have high behavioral and academic expectations for all students.			
My teachers give extra support to students who speak different languages.			
The staff at my school treats all students with respect.			
The people who volunteer at my school look like my classmates and me.			
I see pictures, artwork, and books in school that represent my friends and me.			
My teachers help me to see more than one point of view.			
I feel physically safe in my school.			
I feel emotionally safe in my school.			
My school celebrates differences.			
All of the holidays that students celebrate are represented equally.			

If my teachers hurt someone’s feelings, they accept responsibility and apologize. Students are taught to do the same.			
The teachers and staff at my school care about me for who I am.			

*The following assessments were adapted from “Minneapolis Public Schools, Positive School Climate Tool Kit, First Edition” by Nancy Papke of the Cherry Creek School District and Kristen Genevieve Davidson.

Bias

Each of us has unique preferences, perspectives and ideas. The blend of our individual patterns in the world creates an essential diversity. Our unique perspectives can also interfere with our ability to be impartial and unprejudiced. This is bias.

Our biases can be the root of our thoughts and actions, yet we rarely talk about the impact they have in our decision-making and community work. Biases aren't always bad. Every culture has biases related to norms, values and community. When we view others through our preconceived notions and stereotypes, biases become problematic. (Consulting, 2008)

Guiding Questions:

Did the self assessment reveal any biases?

Do my biases inhibit or enhance my ability to be objective in relationship?

Where do biases show up in our school community?

Action Steps:

Invite a mixed group of policy makers and community members for a conversation on bias.

Ask the participants to break into small groups of 3 to 5 and have these conversations together.

Share out to the larger group and decide what action steps to take in order to be change-makers within your community.

Personal Bias Reflection (this can be a journal or discussion activity):

What is your earliest memory of seeing another person (someone from a different background than your own) being treated unfairly or without respect? The mistreatment might have been prejudiced attitudes or actions toward someone because of ethnicity, gender, class, religion, disability, etc. It might have been societal, institutional or personal. How did you feel?

The results of your self assessment may suggest to you that you may indicate the need for additional training and support in the areas of cultural competence and bias.

Training for Teachers, Staff, Community Members

In working with stakeholders to create positive change in the area of equity, it is important to train participants to distinguish bias, and to communicate effectively and purposefully. Following are some guiding principles for training in the areas of bias and communication.

1. Explore the meaning of equity, cultural competence and cultural proficiency
2. Recognize that bias exists. Each of us has unique preferences, perspectives and ideas. The blend of our individual patterns in the world creates an essential diversity, without which the world would be a bland place indeed. Our unique perspectives can also interfere with our ability to be impartial and unprejudiced.
3. Recognize that bias impacts our schools and communities each and every day. Many times, bias inhibits progress and growth in school systems. When bias gets in the middle of conversations, it becomes a distraction from the real issue at hand – how are we going to provide the best educational experience for our children, who live in our community, so that all children have the opportunity to grow up to be contributing members of this or any society.
4. Acknowledge that biases often surface some tangled roots that underlie many decisions made in our community, such as how to educate children, where to send them to school, and why we separate subgroups of our community.
5. Recognize that every culture has biases related to norms, values and community. When we view others through our preconceived notions and stereotypes, biases become problematic.
6. Understand that bias is not all bad, and is worth taking a look at, to preserve the health of our relationships, cultures and communities. The challenge is to continue to have the deeper conversations about our roots – biases - and their impacts on our behaviors, families, professions and community. In our schools and communities, honest answers to this question could open many community-building doors. It is important to understand our biases and accept ownership for the outcome of our biased actions. (Consulting, 2008)
7. Discuss integration of equity into the curriculum and school climate.

Guiding Questions:

What is your earliest memory of seeing another person being treated unfairly or without respect due to prejudiced attitudes or actions toward someone because of ethnicity, gender, class, religion, disability, etc.? What impression did it have on you?

Relationships span our personal, professional and community lives - how we behave in relationships is paramount. Our biases can be the root of our thoughts and actions, yet we rarely talk about the impact they have in our decision-making and community work. Do my biases inhibit or enhance my ability to be objective in relationship?

The current reality of bias, harassment, prejudice and discrimination in our schools and communities challenges us all to take effective measures to create and sustain a safe and enjoyable learning environment.

Discrimination and Harassment

It is important for us to strengthen our efforts to understand and combat discrimination, harassment and structural racism. School based programs should draw from a variety of psychological, theoretical and cultural theories and use well-developed methods to address prejudice, privilege, bias, internalized oppression, diversity and intergroup relations. Effective efforts should provide important opportunities to stimulate personal growth and healing, and improve relationships among people from diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives.

To sustain equitable school systems, we must support, develop and integrate more sophisticated analysis and practical tools for understanding and changing institutional policies, practices and power structures that shape communities. A goal of equity work is to advance efforts that translate awareness into action.

The key challenges are to clarify language; differentiate among types of oppression; address the emotional aspects of equity, racism and discrimination; expand time and financial commitments; evaluate progress; and extend the reach of professional development.

Current school district or school based Equity Program directors are encouraged to build alliances with other race-related initiatives and coordinate efforts across programs to produce a more diverse set of teachable skills.

Fostering cooperation and coordination among approaches and methods can help build upon existing successes, and offer more sustained activities to interrupt the dynamics of equity and racism that divide and damage our communities.

Adapted from 2002 by The Aspen Institute fulfillment Office

Guiding Questions:

Have there been incidents of discrimination or harassment in our school?

What are the sources or causes of such incidents?

Are such incidents more prevalent at certain grade levels or ages?

Action Steps:

1. Responding to Allegations: *Develop a plan for addressing equity, harassment and diversity issues that may include: pre and post assessments, responsibilities of school leaders, training for teachers and other staff, student-led efforts, community outreach and engagement and public media campaign.*

2. Resolving an issue of Discrimination and Harassment: *It is important for all of us to strengthen our efforts to understand and combat discrimination, harassment and racism. Effective efforts will provide important opportunities to stimulate personal growth and healing and improve relationships among people from diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives.*

Checklist to be used after a specific discrimination or harassment event:

- ✓ *Acknowledge the incident and the impacts on each party involved; determine the appropriate resolution for involved parties.*
- ✓ *Contact parents of the involved students to report to them the event and its impact.*
- ✓ *Using the Purposeful Conversation model, have a whole school discussion to report on the incident and its impact and global reflections of the societal impact. This could happen through small group/ grade level groups/ whole school discussions.*
- ✓ *Engage the larger community in discussions regarding the impact of these behaviors and how the community can be a part of the solution.*
- ✓ *Identify the leaders in the community for various stakeholder groups.*
- ✓ *Maintain monitoring and creation of an action plan for implementation.*

Education is an integral part of our society. It is important for all parties to be at the table, providing input and resources to better the learning outcomes for our students. Working in genuine partnerships is mutually beneficial.

Community and Family Engagement

Most issues of inequity are societal and community based. Taking action to make changes should be the role of both school and community engagement. Research has shown that more will be accomplished if schools, families and communities work together to promote successful students. (Joyce Epstein, Hopkins University, National Network of Partnership Schools).

The steps to create a Community Engagement Plan are simple and direct. The first step is to identify your current reality and build goals to address this reality. Invite participation from stakeholders, and let volunteers, consumers and partner agencies participate in the design and implementation of the campaign. Engaging the community supports the dialogue and actions necessary for objectives to be realized.

Community engagement is critical to success because:

School personnel can't do the work alone.

Alterations in power relationships can create new opportunities.

Sustainability is most likely with stakeholder involvement.

Local knowledge can guide reform implementation.

Cost of not having community support can create an enormous barrier to change.

If community believes short term struggle will lead to long term improvements, they may tolerate difficult reforms.

Reasons to Engage Community and Families:

1. Decades of research show when families are involved students demonstrate higher grades, test scores, and graduation rates, better school attendance, increased motivation, better self-esteem, lower rates of suspension, decreased use of drugs and alcohol, fewer instances of violent behavior (National Parent Teacher Association).

2. Family participation in education is *twice* as predictive of students' academic success as family socioeconomic status. Some of the more intensive programs had effects that were *10 times* greater than other factors (Walberg in his Review of 29 Studies of School-Parent Programs, 1984).

3. School Benefits include: Improved teacher morale, higher ratings of teachers by families, more support from families, higher student achievement, better reputations in the community (*A New Generation of Evidence: The Family is Critical to Student Achievement*, Anne T. Henderson and Nancy Berla, Center for Law and Education, Washington, D.C., 1996).

4. Family involvement leads to feelings of ownership, resulting in increased support of schools. (*Low Income Parents and the Schools: A Research Report and a Plan for Action*. Davies, Don. 1988).

5. Families express a genuine and deep-seated desire to help their children succeed academically, regardless of differences in socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, and cultural background. (Mapp Adapted from the Michigan Department of Education Parental Engagement Policy, 1999).

Six Types of Parental Involvement in Schools (Epstein):

Parenting: The basic obligations of parents include housing, health, nutrition, and safety for their children. Parents also should provide home conditions for learning at all levels.

Communicating: The basic obligations of schools include school-to-home communication (such as memos, notices, newsletters, report cards, conferences, and phone calls) and information (on schools, courses, programs, and activities). Parents provide home-to-school communication, making a two-way channel for interaction and exchange.

Volunteering: Parents volunteer their time and talents at school activities and fundraising.

Learning at Home: Parents help their children with homework and with setting educational goals.

Decision Making: Parents participate in PTA/PTO organizations and school decisions on policy, leadership, and advocacy.

Collaborating with the community: Parents encourage partnerships with community resources and services.

Five Guiding Principles for Involving Parents in Schools (Comer and Haynes):

1. A no-fault approach, focusing not on who is to blame but on what can be done.
2. Coordination and cooperation among all adults concerned with the child's best educational interests.
3. Decision by consensus whenever possible.
4. Regular meetings representing the entire school community.
5. Active involvement of parents.

Action Steps for all Educators:

Seek out opportunities for [professional development and training in parent involvement](#).

Make parents and families feel welcome in the school.

Provide a parent/family center for use while at school.

Reach out to parents whose first language is not English.

Learn about the various [ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds](#) of the students and know how to communicate with diverse families.

Accommodate parents' work schedules when creating parent-involvement opportunities.

Keep parents informed of their children's performance and school activities by means of notes, telephone calls, newsletters, conferences, and meetings.

Provide opportunities for parents to visit the school, observe classes, and provide feedback.

Develop a [plan to promote teacher-parent partnerships](#) at school.

Invite parents to serve on school or district committees.

School Community and Parent Engagement Checklist:

Does Your School...

Display a mission statement committing the work of the school to students, families, and the community it serves?

Reflect an orderly and safe environment conducive to effective learning by students and productive work by staff?

Display internal and external signs welcoming visitors to the school?

Use friendly language to describe what visitors should do when entering the school?

Have designated parking areas for visitors?

Employ office staff who are friendly to visitors, provide needed information easily, and answer the phone in a way that makes the caller glad she/he has called?

Set standards of welcoming behavior for all staff and volunteers, including bus drivers, custodians, and cafeteria workers?

Display student academic work throughout the school?

Display large readable signs with directions to such areas as the library, gym, cafeteria, and rest rooms?

Have an identified and furnished work space for parents and other volunteers?

Have a cheerful and suitably furnished waiting area for visitors?

Have clearly written information available to parents and visitors explaining school philosophy, programs, and how a person can be involved?

Have an outside marquee that is readable from the street and carries notices of meetings, recognition of students/staff/organizations?

Make it possible for staff to be easily accessible to parents?

Produce an overall climate that is cheerful and student-centered?

Ensure that students demonstrate friendly and courteous behavior?

Guiding Questions:

1. *In what ways is our school welcoming already?*

2. *What immediate steps can we take to make our school even more welcoming?*

3. *What steps can we take to involve more community and parent stakeholders in our school improvement work?*

Action Steps:

1. Create a Community Involvement Plan:

Involve key partners - Your engagement plan is strengthened when multiple organizations support the work and promote it to their constituencies.

Develop meaningful and memorable messages - Messages are the core of what you tell the public about your campaign.

Have effective messengers - Messengers convey your message to the public. It is important to have the “right” messenger so that your message will be received and your audience will be engaged.

2. Invite a community members (policy makers, city council, Chamber of Commerce members, local business owners, community resource providers, parents) together for a conversation about any relevant school issue that needs to be addressed.

Discuss the current reality of issue and how to work through it as community. Decide on timelines and outcomes.

Discuss goals and objectives as a school and district with the community.

Engage the community as a problem solver. It is crucial to create a defined plan based on a clear message, with measurable assessments, benchmarks and outcomes.

Create planning and implementation groups and set short timelines with multiple measureable successes.

3. Articulate your plan of action to all community members and stakeholders with clear communication using the following guidelines:

Step 1: Starting with the end in mind, create a communications plan defining your objectives and how they might be accomplished, and a timeline for doing so.

Step 2: Decide upon an evaluative assessment to be used to determine if objectives were accomplished.

Step 3: Be transparent by communicating all parts of the plan with all relevant stakeholders, in writing. Keep this plan in all stakeholders' awareness by referring to it frequently in communications, newsletters, remarks, etc.

Setting Goals for Educational Equity and Next Steps

An important goal of equity work is to translate awareness into action. By building **cultural competence**, we facilitate personal reflection, insight and awareness that give us the ability to interact effectively with people of other cultures. When our schools achieve **cultural proficiency**, school personnel successfully teach and interact with students and colleagues from a variety of cultures integrating **educational equity** throughout the entire curriculum and school climate where there are no systemic differences in access, support, resources, conditions and practices based upon race, ethnicity, gender, economic status or any other relevant characteristics.

Basic Checklist for Creating an Equity Plan

___ Assess school climate regarding equity

Students and personnel take a written self-assessment

Collect and disaggregate data – test scores, referrals, suspension/expulsions, percentage of ELL students in remedial & AP classes, etc.

Have purposeful conversations with staff, students and parents

___ Set goals for improvement or change

Address the emotional aspects of equity, racism and discrimination

Integrate educational equity throughout the entire curriculum and school climate

Identify areas for change needed to achieve equity

Determine how to evaluate progress

___ Professional development for Teachers and Staff

Develop cultural competence and cultural proficiency

Examine biases, norms and values

Work on school goals for improvement or change

___ Communication Strategy

Determine audience – students, school personnel, parents, community.

Encourage open dialogue and honesty

Articulate goals and message

Clearly define roles and responsibilities

Use purposeful conversation

___ **Strategies to resolve a specific discrimination event**

Acknowledge the incident and determine impact on parties involved

Contact parents and use purposeful conversation regarding the incident

Whole school discussion on causes/impacts

Larger community discussions

___ **Parental Involvement**

Make parents feel welcome at school

Include parents to give them “ownership” of the equity plan

Share research showing increased academic achievement of children whose parents are involved in their school.

Communicate regularly on progress of the plan in school newsletters

___ **Community Engagement**

Invite community leaders to discuss issues and goals

Engage the community as a problem solver

Include community members to build their “ownership” of the equity plan

___ **Evaluation**

Determine how to assess whether goals and objectives are being met

Develop a timeline

Create benchmarks

Guiding Questions:

What is your current view of equity? What is your current view of educational equity?

What is your school district's view of educational equity? If you could change one thing in your approach to educational equity what would that one thing be?

What are the practices that hinder/help with equity issues?

How is education equity evident in your school? What are your indicators?

What are our motives for equity? Are we here to “save” students from their deficits or are we here to provide access to educational opportunities that allow students to maintain their individual identities?

What can we do differently?

How does equity work affect our curriculum and instruction?

How does equity work align with a cycle of continuous improvement?

Reflections on Educational Equity

The main themes of educational equity are removing barriers and providing access, opportunity, relationship building and academic rigor for all without judgment or prejudice. All of these factors guide a student to attaining more educational capital and should guide our policy-making.

Everyone faces barriers in their lives, but some groups face laws or practices or even expectations that, intentionally or not, create barriers for whole groups at a time. If one group faces barriers more than other groups do, it is not likely to lead to good outcomes for all. Educational equity is the commitment to provide for students the resources necessary to enable them to achieve at their highest levels without judgment or prejudice.

Schools and communities should work together to achieve educational equity through discussions, building awareness, and setting specific goals to address bias, prejudice and discrimination. This collaborative relationship is vital because societal issues that impact our communities also impact our schools. The health of our schools, our communities and our democracy is clearly linked to our level of success in achieving equity for all.

Federal and State Statutes

CDE is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination in relation to race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status or disability in admissions, access to, treatment, or employment in educational programs or activities which it operates.

Federal Law:

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects individuals from discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in any program or activity that receives Federal financial assistance from the Department of Health and Human Services. Specific discriminatory actions prohibited under Title VI include:

- Providing services more limited in scope or lower in quality
- Limiting participation in a program

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in federally assisted education programs.

Colorado Law --- Prohibits discrimination in the areas of:

Employment based on:

Race	Age (between 40 and 70)
Color	Physical or Mental Disability
National Origin	Religion or Creed
Ancestry	Retaliation
Sex	Marriage to a co-worker
Sexual Orientation	

Housing based on:

	Sexual Orientation
Race	Religion or Creed
Color	Physical or Mental Disability
National Origin	Retaliation
Ancestry	Marital Status
Sex	Familial status (having children under the age of 18)

Public Accommodation based on:

Race

Color

National Origin

Ancestry

Sex

Sexual Orientation

Religion or Creed

Physical or Mental Disability

Retaliation

Marital Status

School District Policy

An important starting point for school districts in the prevention of civil rights concerns is the issuance of comprehensive policies based on current law prohibiting discrimination within all programs and activities. Such policies place staff students and the public on notice regarding expectations and also provide standards for taking actions when problems arise.

Fairness and equity in policymaking is done with intention. Policy making bodies must pay close attention to the impact of their policies and play an active role in ensuring that both their intent and impact are consistent with a communities expressed values. The measure of accountability and assessment are whether policies and rulemaking advance a shared agenda of fairness, opportunity and access.

Office of Civil Rights

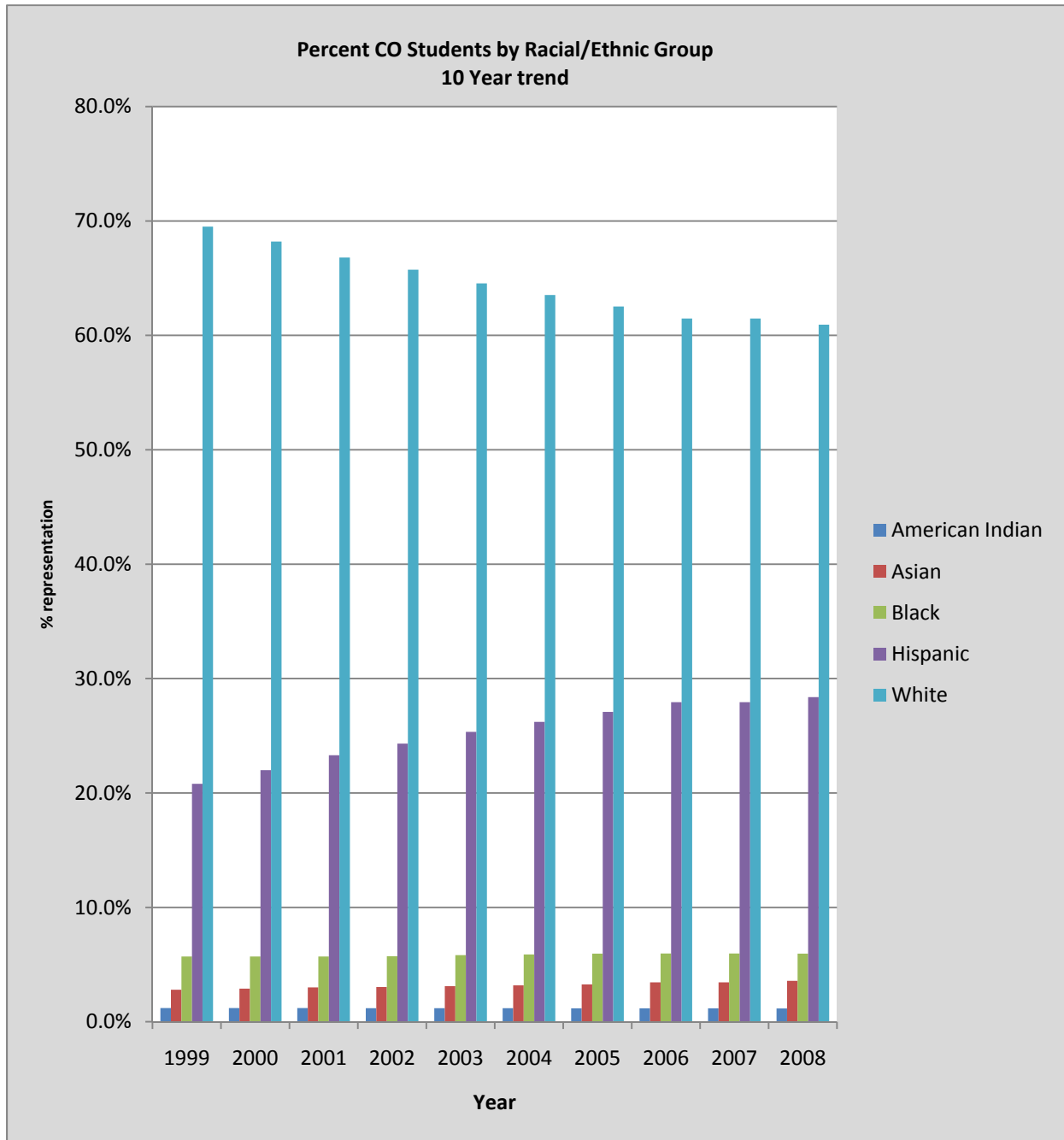
The mission for the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) within the U.S. Dept. of Education is to ensure equal access to education and to promote excellence throughout the nation though vigorous enforcement of civil rights.

Colorado Civil Rights Division

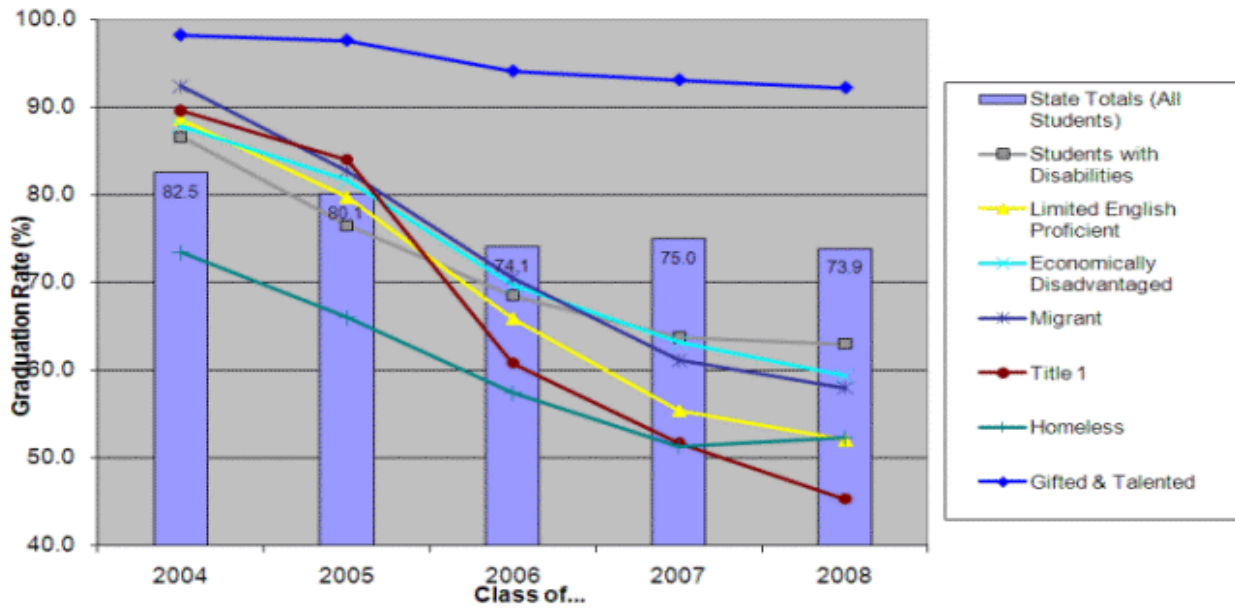
The Colorado Civil Rights Division, along with the Civil Rights Commission, administers and enforces Colorado's anti-discrimination laws. The mission of the Colorado Civil Rights Division is to assure that all persons are afforded the equal protection of the law.

Colorado Demographics

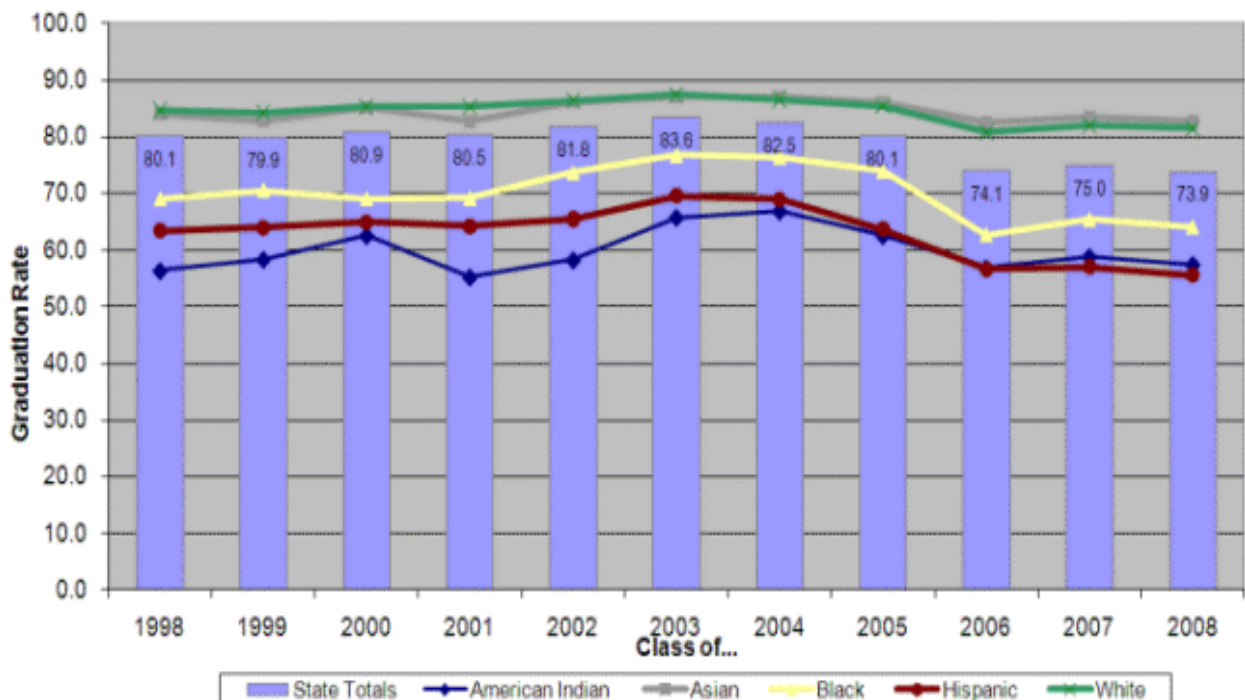
Among the 818,443 students in Colorado in 2008, 60.9 percent (498,713) are white; 28.4 percent (232,226) are Hispanic; 6 percent are black (48,757); 3.6 percent are Asian (29,253) and 1.2 percent are American Indian (9,494).



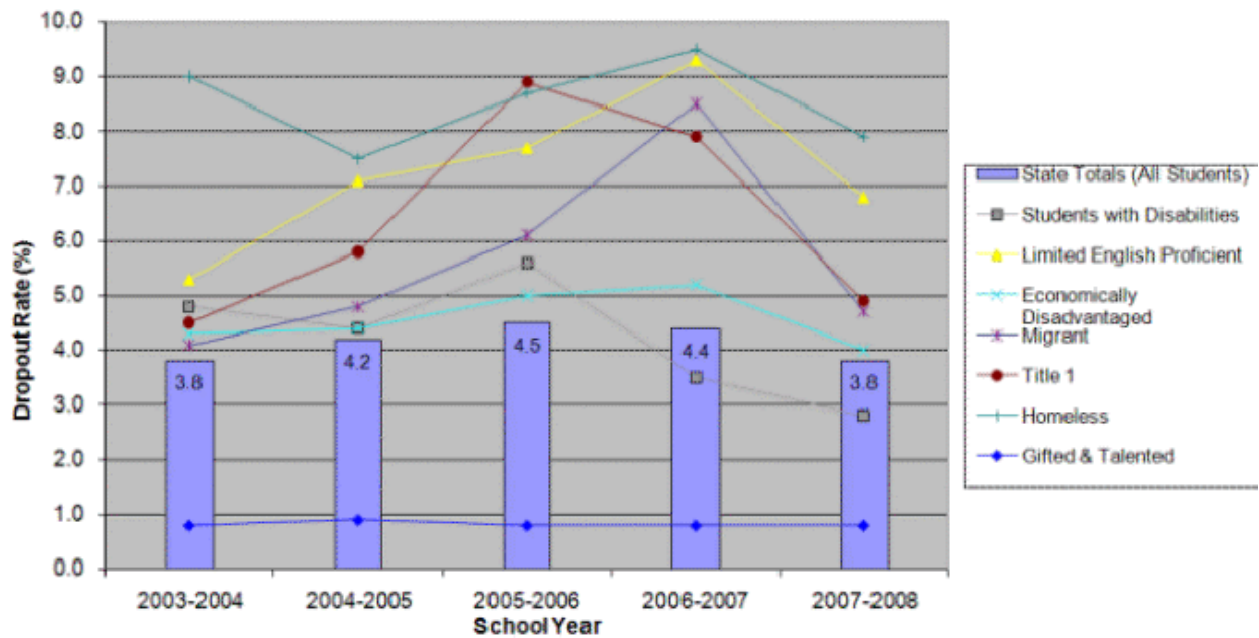
Graduation Rates by Instructional Program Service Type - 5 Year Trend



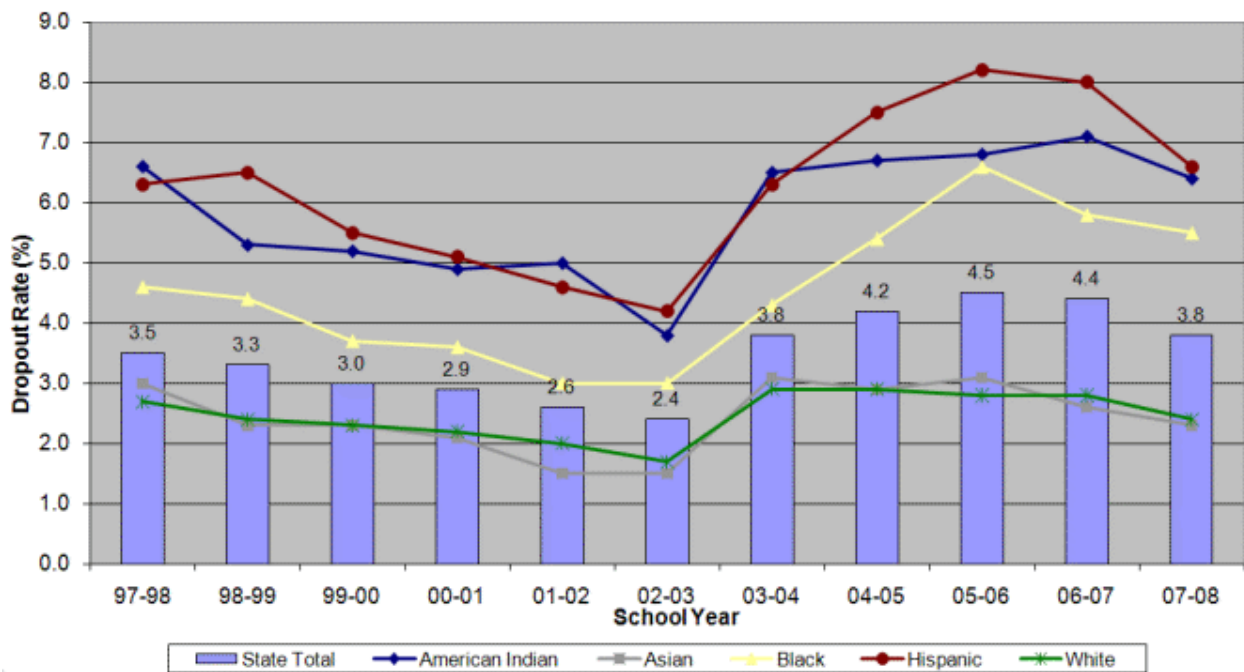
Graduation Rate by Race/Ethnicity - 10 Year Trend



Dropout Rates by Instructional Program Service Type - 5 Year Trend



Annual Dropout Rate by Race/Ethnicity - 10 Year Trend



Appendices

A: Resources

B: Articles of Interest

C: Principal Speech to A.D.L.

A: Resources

Anti Bullying

AmeriCorps

http://www.americorps.gov/for_individuals/current/stories.asp

Easing in a little anti-bullying activity, providing a time to discuss alcohol and drugs safely, and making home visits all help students make better choices.

Anti-Bullying

http://www.ago.state.co.us/safe_communities.cfm?cpyID=107

The Attorney General is a partner in the Colorado Anti-Bullying Project to assist parents, children, and schools in being "bully-proof." Find out more about the danger signs for victims of bullying ...

Bullying is Not a Fact of Life. National Mental Health Information

<http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/SVP-0052>

/"... in highly publicized shooting incidents in the late 1990s spurred several State legislatures to propose laws requiring schools to adopt anti-bullying policies. By 2001, New Hampshire, West Virginia ..."

Media Advisory: Bush Administration to Sponsor Anti-Bullying ...

<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2004/04/04162004.html>

The Departments of Education and Health and Human Services will co-sponsor an anti-bullying ... ABC-7/WJLA-TV news anchor and former CNN anchor Leon Harris will moderate the event, which will ...

Resources and Links to Anti-Bullying Websites

<http://www.nde.state.ne.us/Safety/ResourcesandLinkstoAnti-BullyingWebsites.htm>

United States Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention - (search "schools", "bullying")
STATE/REGIONAL SITES. California Department of Education

Communications

Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence

CU-Boulder 1877 Broadway, Suite 601 Boulder, CO 80302

Phone (303) 492-1032 Fax (303) 443-3297

Blueprints@colorado.edu

Courageous Conversations about Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools.

by [Glenn E. Singleton](#) (Author), [Curtis Linton](#) (Author)

Facilitator's Guide Courageous Conversations About Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools (Paperback)

by [Glenn E. Singleton](#) (Author), [Curtis Linton](#) (Author)

Center for Multicultural Education

University of Washington, Box 353600, 110 Miller Hall Seattle, WA 98195-3600
centerme@u.washington.edu.

Nonviolent Communication

“A Language of Life” Marshall Rosenberg Ph.D.
The Center for Nonviolent Communication
5600 San Francisco Rd. NE Suite A Albuquerque, NM 87109 USA
Tel: +1.505.244.4041
www.cnvc.org

Ripples of Hope “Building Relationships for Educational Change” Julian Weissglass
weissglass@education.ucsb.edu

We Can’t Teach What We Don’t Know – Gary R. Howard Gary R. Howard
Diversity Training and Consultation
512 North Bowdoin Place Seattle, WA 98103
206-634-2073
garylottus@earthlink.net

Shaping School Culture “The Heart of Leadership” Terrence E. Deal Kent D. Peterson
SpeakersBureau@CorwinPress.com.

Community Outreach and Family Engagement

Advocacy Institute

www.advocacy.org
Inspiration and tools for coalition building and collaboration.

The Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition

7150 Hooker St. Suite B, Westminster, CO 80030
Phone: (720) 890 0123 FAX: (720) 540 8455
www.coparentcoalition.org

Provides training and technical assistance to schools in order to build School-based Parent Engagement Leadership Teams. The teams consist of an administrator, teachers and diverse parent representation. Teams receive technical assistance on aligning their parent engagement plans to state and federal parent engagement requirements and training to help them effectively engage parents in the educational process for the purpose of increasing student achievement.

Tom Wolff & Associates

www.tomwolff.com
Great newsletters, tip sheets and other resources to mobilize social change in communities.

Cultural Proficiency

Cultural Proficiency: A Manual for School Leaders. Lindsey, Randall B.; Robins, Kikanza Nuri; Terrell, Raymond. (2003) Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. This manual presents a strong conceptual understanding of cultural proficiency and gives specific, practical field-tested applications of this approach, illustrates how teachers and instructional leaders can adapt cultural proficiency to unique situations. It describes a framework for assessing program and behaviors and for implementing change. It also presents a comprehensive case study and structured exercises to analyze and address the issues that emerge in diverse environments.

Hispanic Education in the United States by Eugene Garcia 2001

National Association for Multi Cultural Education

www.nameorg.org

Rocky Mountain Intercultural Institute

Phone: (970) 689-0226 camil@frii.com

Our Vision To use our intercultural expertise, creativity and love for humanity to guide and nurture others in becoming skillful intercultural mediators who help resolve intercultural conflict and heal the fear of differences.

Why Culture Counts Teaching Children of Poverty

Donna Walker Tileston Ed.D. Sandra K. Darling Ph.D.

Gay and Lesbian resources

Colorado GLBT Bar Association

www.coloradoglbtabar.org

Gay & Lesbian Fund Resources

www.gayandlesbianfund.org

Gay & Lesbian Fund Speakers Bureau

Gay & Lesbian Fund staff members offer presentations, speeches, and panel participation to community groups and organizations.

Meeting Space for Nonprofit Organizations

The Gay & Lesbian Fund offers elegant, free meeting space to nonprofit organizations suitable for trainings and special events.

Workshops and Trainings Hosted by the Gay & Lesbian Fund

Colorado Legal Initiatives Project

P.O. Box 300397 Denver, CO 80203 Phone: (303) 282-5602

A non-profit law office specializing in cases concerning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or HIV status. Assistance in Spanish is available.

School and Community Training

Anti-Defamation League

1120 Lincoln Street, Suite 1301 Denver, CO 80203

Phone: (303) 830-7177 Fax: (303) 831-1554

Denver@adl.org

The Anti-Defamation League is the world's leading organization fighting anti-Semitism and other forms of bigotry through programs and services that counteract hatred and prejudice. The Mountain States Office located in Denver and covering the states of Colorado and Wyoming, provides advice and informal intervention in disputes involving issues of discrimination and/or religious liberty. The ADL does not provide legal representation, but does maintain a list of lawyers who have offered to provide advice or representation on a private basis.

A World of Difference™ Institute

A Classroom of Difference™ is at the heart of the Institute, developed to address diversity in the pre-kindergarten through 12th grade school communities.

No Place for Hate®

The No Place for Hate® campaign empowers communities, especially schools, to promote respect for individual and group differences while challenging prejudice and bigotry.

Positive Impact!

Whether you act individually, or as part of a group, you can help effect real change and create an environment where diversity is respected and hatred is rejected.

I Can Problem Solve (ICPS)

Drexel University 245 North 15th Street, MS 626 Philadelphia, PA 19102

Phone: (215) 762-7205 Fax: (215) 762-8625

www.thinkingpreteen.com/icps.htm

Formerly the Interpersonal Cognitive Problem Solving, is a school-based intervention that trains children in generating a variety of solutions to interpersonal problems, considering the consequences of these solutions, and recognizing thoughts, feelings, and motives that generate problem situations. By teaching children to think, rather than what to think, the program changes thinking styles and, as a result, enhances children's social adjustment, promotes pro-social behavior, and decreases impulsivity and inhibition.

Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

Clemson University 158 Poole Agricultural Center Clemson, SC 29634

Phone: (864) 710-4562 Fax: (864) 656-6281

www.clemson.edu/olweus

Is a universal intervention for the reduction and prevention of bully/victim problems. The main arena for the program is the school, and school staff has the primary responsibility for the introduction and implementation of the program.

The Aspen Institute

One Dupont Circle, NW Washington, DC 20036-1133

publications@aspeninstitute.org

Additional copies of *Training for Racial Equity & Inclusion: A Guide to Selected Programs* can be obtained from: **The Aspen Institute** Fulfillment Office P.O. Box 222
109 Houghton Lab Lane Queenstown, Maryland 21658

Human / Civil Rights

American Civil Liberties Union

400 Corona Street Denver, CO 80218-3915
Phone: (303) 777-5482; Fax: (303) 777-1773
<http://www.aclu-co.org>

The ACLU is a private, non-profit, pro bono provider that litigates exclusively in the civil rights/civil liberties, Constitutional law area. Fee: None. Assistance in Spanish is available.

Anti-Defamation League

1120 Lincoln Street, Suite 1301 Denver, CO 80203
Phone: (303) 830-7177 Fax: (303) 831-1554
Denver@adl.org

The Anti-Defamation League is the world's leading organization fighting anti-Semitism and other forms of bigotry through programs and services that counteract hatred and prejudice. The Mountain States Office located in Denver and covering the states of Colorado and Wyoming, provides advice and informal intervention in disputes involving issues of discrimination and/or religious liberty. The ADL does not provide legal representation, but does maintain a list of lawyers who have offered to provide advice or representation on a private basis. FREE.

The Colorado Civil Rights Division

1560 Broadway, Suite 1050 Denver, CO 80202-5143
Phone: (303) 894-2997 Fax (303) 894-7830; (800) CO-CIVIL (262-4845)
Most services are free. There is a \$5 fee for copies of laws, rules and regulations.
<http://www.dora.state.co.us/Civil-Rights>

Administers and enforces Colorado's civil rights laws in employment, housing and public accommodations. The Colorado Revised Statutes (1988) prohibit discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations based on race, sex, national origin, ancestry, disability, creed, color, marital status (housing and public accommodations), and familial status (housing only). Discrimination in employment based on age or marriage to a co-worker also is prohibited. The CCRD implements the civil rights statutes through administrative enforcement (compliance) and outreach (research and education). Training programs are available in all aspects of civil rights, sexual harassment, preventive and ethnic and disability sensitivity. Publications are available in Spanish and English regarding current civil rights laws.

Colorado Legal Initiatives Project

www.coloradoglb.org
Phone: (303) 282-5602

A non-profit law office specializing in cases concerning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or HIV status. Assistance in Spanish is available.

Denver Agency for Human Rights and Community Relations

201 West Colfax Avenue, Dept. 1102 Denver, CO Phone: (720) 913-8450; TTY (720) 913-8475

The City and County of Denver established the Agency for Human Rights and Community Relations (HC/CR) in 1948. The agency empowers communities to address local issues and strives to promote equal opportunity and protect the rights of all regardless of race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age or disability. We service as a link between Denver citizens and City government and among governmental agencies for the purpose of seeking out citizen participation in city issues, forecasting community issues, and empowering people to solve their own problems through governmental and private sources. HR/CR is the umbrella agency for the following commissions and offices: Denver Anti-Discrimination Office, Denver Commission for People with Disabilities, Denver Commission on Aging, Denver Women's Commission, Office of Community Support and the Public Safety Review Commission.

The Center's Legal Initiatives Project -CLIP

P.O. Box 9798 Denver, CO 80209

Location: 1050 Broadway Denver, CO 80203

Phone: (303) 733-PRIDE (7743); Youth: Crisis Pager: (303) 461-1650

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

303 E. 17th Avenue, Suite 510 Denver, CO 80203 Phone: (303) 866-1300

The agency receives and investigates allegations of employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age and disability. It provides advice and technical assistance to attorneys representing plaintiffs in federal litigation under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Equal Pay Act, Title I of the Americans With Disabilities Act and sections of the Civil Rights Act of 1991.

This agency also enforces the various laws by filing direct suits or intervening in existing lawsuits. Fee: None. Assistance in Spanish is available.

Restorative Justice

'Restorative Justice' means those practices that emphasize repairing the harm to the victim and the community caused by criminal acts. Restorative justice practices may include victim-offender conferences attended voluntarily by the victim, a victim advocate, the offender, community members, and supporters of the victim or the offender that provide an opportunity for the offender to accept responsibility for the harm caused to those affected by the crime and to participate in setting consequences to repair the harm. Consequences recommended by the participants may include, but need not be limited to, apologies, community service, restoration, and counseling. The selected consequences are incorporated into an agreement that sets time limits for completion of the consequences and is signed by all participants."

Safe and Drug free Schools

The mission is creating safe schools, responding to crises, drug abuse and violence prevention, ensuring the health and well being of students and promoting development of good character and citizenship. Below is a listing of programs administered by OSDFS, and a link to the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities (SDFSC) Advisory Committee.

[Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Advisory Committee](#)

[Character and Civic Education](#)

[Drug-Violence Prevention - State Programs](#)

[Drug-Violence Prevention - National Programs](#)

[Health, Mental Health, Environmental Health, and Physical Education](#)

[Policy and Cross-Cutting Programs](#)

Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities

Title IV, Part A of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

The purpose of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Program (SDFSC) is to support programs that prevent violence in and around schools and the illegal use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs; involve parents; and coordinate these efforts and resources with other federal, state, and community entities. Grant funds are allocated (based on poverty rate and student population) to school districts to establish, operate, and improve local programs of school drug and violence prevention, early intervention, rehabilitation referral, and education in elementary through secondary schools. Districts apply for their allocation by submitting the "Local Consolidated Application for Federal Programs" to the Colorado Department of Education.

Colorado Department of Education

Office of Prevention Initiatives

There are a variety of programs, consultants, and schooling alternatives available for those students put at-risk either by their own actions or by circumstances beyond their control. CDE is dedicated to presenting a full spectrum of help options to both parents and students. These include **Homeless Children and Youth and Drop-out Prevention and Student Re-Engagement**

http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_atrisk.htm

Office of Language, Culture and Equity

Our mission is to support all English language learners, linguistically, socially and academically, by providing educational leadership for teachers, parents/guardians, students and Colorado communities.

http://www.cde.state.co.us/cde_english/index.htm

Bill de la Cruz

De La Cruz Consulting

B: Articles of Interest

Knowledge base	Citation	Abstract
Socioculture approaches to learning and instruction	Brown, A. (1997, April). Transforming schools into communities of thinking and learning about serious matters. <i>American Psychologist</i> , 52(4), 399.	This article describes Fostering Communities of Learners. A research-based program, it is designed to teach 6-12-yr old students in urban schools the strategies of meta-cognition and flexible thinking.
	Campione, J. (1989, March). Assisted Assessment: A Taxonomy of Approaches and an Outline of Strengths and Weaknesses. <i>Journal of Learning Disabilities</i> , 22(3).	This article explores the relationship between instruction and assessment and the traditional assessment methods. The importance of supportive social contexts in learning and the impact of traditional teaching methods are also discussed.
	Gutierrez, K.D., & Rogoff, B. (2003). Cultural ways of learning: Individual traits or repertoires of practice. <i>Educational Researcher</i> , 32(5), 19-25.	This article addresses a challenge faced by those who study cultural variation in approaches to learning: how to characterize regularities of individuals' approaches according to their cultural background.
	Shulman, L., & Shulman, J. (2004, March). How and what teachers learn: a shifting perspective. <i>Journal of Curriculum Studies</i> , 36(2), 257-271.	The authors analyze the best methods for teaching teachers how to create a "community of learners" and a new framework for conceptualizing teacher development within communities and contexts.
	Moll, L., & Arnot-Hopffer, E. (2005, May). Sociocultural Competence in teacher education. <i>Journal of Teacher Education</i> , 56(3), 242-247.	This article discusses the importance of teachers' ability to understand the socio-cultural characteristics of schools and take on issues of diversity within education.
	Nieto, S. (2005, Spring2005). Public Education in the Twentieth Century and Beyond: High Hopes, Broken Promises, and an Uncertain Future. <i>Harvard Educational Review</i> , 75(1), 43-64.	This article discusses the dimensions of multicultural education, including content integration, the level at which that integration occurs, knowledge construction, and the extent to which teachers and students understand how bias shapes the knowledge offered in various disciplines.
Simultaneous renewal of teacher education & P-12 schools	Clark, R. (1999, July). School-University Partnerships and Professional Development Schools. <i>PJE. Peabody Journal of Education</i> , 74(3/4), 164.	The author describes examples of effective PDSs, the importance of strong leadership within this model, and the benefits to schools and universities from creating these partnerships.
	Goodlad, J. (1999, April). Flow, Eros, and Ethos in Educational Renewal. (Cover story). <i>Phi Delta Kappan</i> , 80(8), 571.	This article discusses the difference between school reform and school renewal, including the role of the community, talk of tough standards, traditional versus progressive

<p>Inquiry as a stance</p>		<p>ideas, and the talk and action of school reform.</p>
	<p>Sirotnik, K. (1999, April). Making Sense Of Educational Renewal. (Cover story). <i>Phi Delta Kappan</i>, 80(8), 606.</p>	<p>This article describes the important role of critical inquiry into current practices in educational renewal, distinguishes between renewal and reform, explores the systemic challenges with accountability programs, and addresses the complexity of the issue.</p>
	<p>Cochran-Smith, M. (2006, March). Ten promising trends (and three big worries). <i>Educational Leadership</i>, 20-26.</p>	<p>Trends that have the power to reinvent the profession of teacher preparation include: focusing attention on teacher quality; viewing teacher preparation as an all-university responsibility; recognizing multiple pathways into teaching; acknowledging complexity; using research to guide the curriculum; and implementing a new research agenda.</p>
	<p>Cuban, L. (2007). Hugging the middle: Teaching in an era of testing and accountability. <i>Education Policy Analysis Archives</i>, 15(1).</p>	<p>Looking at the rise in hybridized classrooms, the author draws attention to the impact of this model of teaching and away from the argument that testing and accountability are the primary forces reshaping education.</p>
<p>Culturally responsive education</p>	<p>HARGREAVES, A., & SHIRLEY, D. (2008, October). Beyond Standardization: Powerful New Principles for Improvement. <i>Phi Delta Kappan</i>, 90(2), 135-143.</p>	<p>This article asserts the need for educators to move past accountability and assessment to create learning environments that promote flexibility, creativity, and inclusiveness.</p>
	<p>Banks, J. A., Cookson, P., Gay, G., Hawley, W.D., Irvine, J.J., Nieto, S., Schofield, J.W., Stephan, W.G. (2001). Diversity within unity: Essential principles for teaching and learning in a multicultural society. <i>Phi Delta Kappan</i>, 83(3), 196.</p>	<p>Offers design principles for educational policy makers and practitioners with a goal of a democratic and pluralistic society.</p>
	<p>Delpit, L., & White-Bradley, P. (2003, Fall2003). Educating or Imprisoning the Spirit: Lessons From Ancient Egypt. <i>Theory Into Practice</i>, 42(4), 283-288.</p>	<p>This article discusses the dehumanizing methods of scripted learning in low-income, urban schools and compares these methods to an ancient technique from Egypt that fostered a deeper ability for teachers and students to expand fully into their humanity.</p>
	<p>Gay, G. (2002, November). Culturally responsive teaching in special education for ethnically diverse students: setting the stage. <i>International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education</i></p>	<p>This article discusses the disproportionality of students of color in Special Education as a result of low cultural awareness on the part of educators, and asserts how education for all students can be greatly improved by utilizing instructional methods that reflect</p>

	(<i>QSE</i>), 15(6), 613-629.	the cultures of students.
	Ladson-Billings, G. J. (2005). Is the team all right? Diversity and teacher education. <i>Journal of Teacher Education</i> , 56, 229-234.	Explores the challenges facing teacher education in the U.S. Implications of ethnic, language and cultural diversity for teacher education.
	Sleeter, C. E. (2001). Preparing teachers for culturally diverse schools: Research and the overwhelming presence of whiteness. <i>Journal of Teacher Education</i> , 52(2), 94-106	The author reviews 80 studies of effects of various preservice teacher education strategies, including recruiting and selecting students, cross-cultural immersion experiences, multicultural education coursework, and program restructuring. The author argues for figuring out how to populate the teaching profession with excellent multicultural and culturally responsive teachers.
	Valenzuela, A. (2000). The significance of the TAAS test for Mexican immigrant and Mexican American adolescents: A case study. <i>Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences</i> . 22(4). 524-539.	This article discusses how high-stakes testing serves to alienate students. The article asserts that these assessments are a component of the larger educational system, which systematically negates the language and culture of Mexican youths.
	Valentin, S. (2006). Addressing diversity in teacher education programs. <i>Education</i> , 127(2), 196-202.	This article presents a holistic approach to examining diversity in education program and describes an initiative by a college of education to infuse diversity throughout all education courses and programs.
	Villegas, A.M. & Lucas, T. (2002). Preparing culturally responsive teachers: Rethinking the curriculum. <i>Journal of Teacher Education</i> , 53(1), 20-32.	The authors provide a vision of culturally responsive teachers that includes those that: are socioculturally conscious; have affirming views of students from diverse backgrounds; see themselves as responsible for and capable of bringing about change to make schools more equitable; understand how learners construct knowledge and are capable of promoting knowledge construction; know about the lives of their students; and design instruction that builds on what their students already know while stretching them beyond the familiar.

C: PRINCIPAL SPEECH TO A.D.L.

PRINCIPAL SPEECH TO A.D.L. REGARDING HATE INCIDENT AT A MIDDLE SCHOOL

On September 20th 2006, three short weeks into my first principalship, I found myself standing in the boy's locker room with graffiti remover in one hand and a rag in the other silently weeping while scrubbing a recently drawn swastika off the locker of a boy who had just moved to the US from Israel. And, while I did not know it at the time, thus began our two year journey at Middle School to become the first school in the to gain the ADL designation of No Place for Hate®.

I am honored to be here tonight to tell our story. It is a good story, filled with human drama and emotion, heartache and struggle, but ultimately it is a story of hope, compassion, and the triumph of the human spirit. Heroes abound in this story, some of whom are already familiar - including the ADL, and others whom I will introduce to you tonight including and the students of Middle School, most especially the Student ADL Leaders. So thank you for indulging me, the lucky narrator, as I recount true tails of heartache and heroism to you this evening.

The myriad of emotions I was feeling as I stood scrubbing the swastika off the locker are difficult to articulate. Shock, horror, repulsion, anger, disbelief, heart-wrenching pain were all vying for my attention, but above all of that I felt an overwhelming sense of sadness as a person overshadowed only by a profound sense of failure as an educator. I had to stop and ask myself what exactly we were teaching in my building and why. How could anything we were teaching matter in the least if our school climate could allow such an event to occur? I knew in that moment that everything needed to stop while we addressed this issue as a whole school community.

At first I wasn't sure exactly what we were dealing with, I didn't know if the swastika had been placed on the locker with malice of intent or if it was scrawled there in an adolescent moment gone seriously awry. Both were unconscionable. To think of it being an intentional act of hate was unbearable, for that would require a young person of middle school age to have internalized an unimaginable amount of bias. To think of it as an adolescent prank was also heartbreaking, for that would require the symbol of the swastika to have lost some of its historical significance and horrific meaning.

I spent the first of many sleepless nights as principal on the night September 20th 2006 searching for tangible and meaningful ways to include the entire student body in the process of addressing this issue while amplifying the student voice to become part of the solution. I ran across a copy of *Night* on my bookshelf which I had recently re-read and which is used as part of our 8th grade curriculum. In flipping through the book I was drawn to a quote by the author and holocaust survivor, Elie Wiesel, from his Noble Prize winning acceptance speech.

The very next morning, in place of our regular morning announcements I decided to address the entire student body. Using our intercom system I explained to the students the historical significance of the swastika, I recounted for them some of the horrific events of the holocaust, I told them what had happened the day before in our own gym locker room, and then I read to them the following quote by Elie Wiesel:

“And that is why I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. Sometimes we must interfere. When human lives are endangered, when human dignity is in jeopardy, national borders and sensitivities become irrelevant. Whenever men and women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must – at that moment – become the center of the universe.”

I went on to tell all of the students that I was deeply hurt by the incident because I loved our school, and I loved every person in it; each adult as a brother or a sister and every child as if they were my very own. All students in our school had a piece of paper with this quote at the top and I asked them to write about the incident. I gave them 3 choices. I told them they could write about how it made them feel as a member of our school community or what they knew about the incident or they could write a letter of support to, whose locker it was found on. Within 10 minutes I knew who had done it and the outpouring of concern for was overwhelming. I was unprepared for the raw beauty and power of the responses. At that moment the students of Middle School became my heroes, including the enormously remorseful boy who wept in my arms as he claimed ownership for drawing the swastika. The responses from the students were all so beautiful in fact that they were eventually published by one of our parents who is also affiliated with Reading to End Racism.

Although you might think this is the end of the story, it is only the beginning. Beyond repairing the harm done by this particular incident, I was intently interested in making sure nothing like this could ever happen again at our school. A teacher, trusted friend and dear colleague of 10 years as well as our Climate Liaison, suggested we contact the ADL for assistance. That was all it took. Immediately our very own team of hometown heroes, the ADL, and the students of took action to change the culture of our school. We worked to train 30 students as ADL Leaders for the first time at MMS last year. These student leaders became peer mentors as they delivered the ADL “Becoming an Ally” Curriculum to their peers during Advisory time.

Throughout the last 2 years I have seen a steady decline in discipline incidents at our school as well as a steady increase in school climate. I attribute both directly to the Programs provided by the ADL and the commitment to adhere to them by the students. It has been a magical thing to experience but it does not surprise me since I am there and I can see the positive impact the ADL programs and our student leaders have on our school each day. These results are lasting and profound, and you do not even have to take my word for it, you may see these reflected in the school safety section of our state report card and in our Climate Survey Data for our school. Each year both reports show tremendous positive change in our school climate.

Now, thanks to the ADL, the school and the ADL student leaders, Teaching Tolerance is woven into the very fabric of our school, and No Place for Hate® has become our battle cry. We have institutionalized the practice of identifying students each year as ADL leaders, the Becoming and Ally Program is the cornerstone of our 7th grade Advisory program and our vow to attain the designation as No Place for Hate® each year throughout the history of our school creates for us a common language and understanding as well as a unifying vision for our entire school community.

Although I have incredibly high expectations and am sometimes known as a dreamer, I have been continually amazed by the power and the impact the ADL programs have had in our school. While there are several organizations and countless programs out there designed to try to change school climate, none are even remotely as effective as what is offered by the ADL. I believe the success of the ADL programming lies in its accessibility to students and its wisdom of empowering the students themselves to be the leaders.

After the Resolution of Respect was signed by our student body in late April of this year signifying our school completing the final step necessary to gain the Designation of No Place for Hate®, the most amazing thing happened. All discipline issues stopped. I have never experienced anything like it in my 18 years in public education. (Especially – sorry kids – at the Middle Level) It is the job of the young adolescent to push the envelope. And it is the job of the adults in the young adolescent's life to gently but firmly redirect behavior. At a time when discipline issues normally pick up for the spring season, it was a ghost town in the front office of. This speaks to the power of people, especially students, rising to meet expectations.

“Some people think it is impossible to have a middle school that is free from hate, racism, and all other forms of prejudice and bias. Now you, the students at, are proving that it is possible as we stand here today accepting the designation of No Place for Hate. I am so very proud, but more importantly I hope you students are all incredibly proud of yourselves. This is how you change the world, one resolution at a time, one student at a time, one school at a time, one community at a time.”

I have one final story to share with you in closing. Just last week yet another reporter called and interviewed me about the steps we took to gain the No Place for Hate® Designation and how it has impacted our school. We had a wonderful discussion as I recounted for her much of what I have shared with you tonight. I have to say that she was quite impressed with the ADL and students of I had to agree. She asked if I thought the students who were graduating and moving on from would carry on to uphold the Resolution of Respect they had signed at my school into their respective high schools. Knowing the students as I do I did not hesitate before answering, “Of course they will.” And finally the reporter asked if I had any expectation of a final or more far-reaching outcome of our No Place for Hate Designation® as it carried out its ripple effects into our greater community over the years. Again without hesitation I said “absolutely I do.” When she asked what I was that I could foresee it culminating and I answered simply “I expect it to culminate in Peace on Earth.”

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