

# The Implementation Checklist for *Supporting Multicultural Learning*

a product of the High School Reform Strategy Toolkit at [www.highschooltoolkit.com](http://www.highschooltoolkit.com)

## **Describe the Student Population**

- Have school leaders analyzed and shared the following data with staff:<sup>1</sup>
  - student demographic data, including information about home life, languages spoken, and other data that will help administrators see the students as whole persons?
  - behavioral data disaggregated by subgroup?
  - disaggregated achievement data disaggregated by subgroup?

## **Set the Stage for Reform**

- Do school leaders support and encourage diversity initiatives?
- Do school leaders emphasize tolerance and acceptance in school publications, at meetings, in schoolwide addresses, and at all other opportunities?
- Have school leaders conducted a needs assessment to develop strategies for successfully introducing multiculturalism into the classroom and school?<sup>2</sup>
- Have school leaders set goals for multicultural learning?<sup>3</sup>
  - Do these goals include:<sup>4</sup>
    - ethnic and cultural literacy?
    - personal development opportunities?
    - attitude and values clarification?
    - multicultural social competence?
    - basic skills proficiency?
    - educational equity and excellence?
    - empowerment for societal reform?

## **Ensure All Students and Families “Welcome, Validated and Valued”<sup>5</sup>**

- Teachers and administrators view students as whole people, recognizing their individuality and culture?<sup>6</sup>
- Is it evident, through how the school approaches instruction, curriculum, and school events that it views students’ backgrounds as a valuable resource to learning, rather than an impediment?<sup>7</sup>
- If possible, does the school hire staff members who can communicate with students and families who do not speak English?<sup>8</sup>
- Does the school hire qualified teachers and staff members who represent the diversity of the school?<sup>9</sup>
- Does the school have clear policies in place on respecting, understanding, and incorporating diversity in the school and classroom?
- Are acts of intolerance, racism, and bigotry dealt with consistently, immediately and appropriately by school administrators and staff?
- Are students taught respect, understanding, and empathy of others?

- Are these qualities demonstrated by teachers on a day-to-day basis?
- Do teachers work to understand students' language and culture?<sup>10</sup>
- Do they hold all students, regardless of background, to high expectations?<sup>11</sup>
- Is the overall school experience personalized based on students' individual needs?

### **Ensure That Teachers Are Prepared to Teach Multiculturalism**

- Does the school staff receive mandatory, ongoing cultural sensitivity training?
- Does teacher education cover the following topics:<sup>12</sup>
  - how to integrate multicultural perspectives into the curriculum?
  - how to identify learning styles, behavioral patterns, and values, and how they affect the learning/teaching process?
  - how to help foreign students or recent immigrants build self-esteem, learn English as a second language, and adjust to American classrooms?
- Do teachers know and use instructional strategies for teaching a culturally diverse student body?
- Are teachers sensitive to racism and exclusion of certain groups in the curriculum?<sup>13</sup>
- Do teachers choose instructional materials carefully to represent all groups proportionally and comprehensively?<sup>14</sup>
- Are teachers aware of their own prejudices, and do they work to minimize them in the classroom?<sup>15</sup>

### **Support Multicultural Learning Inside the Classroom**

- Is multicultural learning fully "integrated into the school's formal instructional program?"<sup>16</sup>
- Is multicultural education aligned to learning standards?<sup>17</sup>
- Do teachers use student's prior experiences and background as a starting point for learning, connecting what students need to know to what they already know?<sup>18</sup>
- Are students encouraged to share and learn from their differences on a day-to-day basis?
- Does the curriculum represent a diverse student population?
- Do all students have an opportunity to explore their own and other cultures?<sup>19</sup>
  - Are they provided resources and support for doing so?<sup>20</sup>
- Are portrayals of groups realistic and comprehensive, rather than piecemeal and based on stereotypes?<sup>21</sup>
- Does the curriculum cover key issues such as race, racism, prejudice, and discrimination?<sup>22</sup>
- Is the curriculum interdisciplinary, allowing students to see how history, politics, literature, music, and other areas comprise a culture?<sup>23</sup>
- Does multicultural learning extend beyond the superficial to authentic discussions about the differences between people?
- Is multicultural learning achieved through classroom activities that follow the best practices of learning (e.g., gives students an opportunity to participate in the community, engages students and connects to real life experiences, uses a variety of instructional material and practices, has appropriate scope and sequence, and is evaluated through appropriate formative and summative assessment?)<sup>24</sup>
- Do questions relating to the history and culture of women and minorities appear on tests, showing that the school places importance on students knowing about these groups?

- Do students have the opportunity to work with, form friendships with, and learn from others who are different from themselves?
  - If the school does not have a diverse student body, does it partner with another school or participate in community-based activities to increase student interaction with people from different backgrounds?
- Do students report that lessons reflect multicultural approaches to learning?

### **Support Multicultural Learning Outside the Classroom**

- Does the school hold frequent events to introduce and celebrate differences (e.g., events where students have opportunities to share their backgrounds, presentations on diversity)?
- Do extracurricular activities allow students to express and share their culture?

### **Evaluate Programs**

- Is progress towards multiculturalism goals assessed annually?
- Does the school continuously strive to improve its commitment to diversity and a multicultural education?

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<sup>1</sup> Personnel communication with Riddile.

<sup>2</sup> Webb, 1990.

<sup>3</sup> Webb, 1990.

<sup>4</sup> Gay, 1994.

<sup>5</sup> Dahlman, 2008.

<sup>6</sup> Leiding, 2007.

<sup>7</sup> As at Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Alternative High School (Chicago). Described in Antrop-González, 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Dahlman, 2008.

<sup>9</sup> Dahlman, 2008.

<sup>10</sup> Nieto, 1998. In Antrop-González, 2006.

<sup>11</sup> Nieto, 1998. In Antrop-González, 2006.

<sup>12</sup> Capella-Santana, 2003.

<sup>13</sup> Leiding, 2007.

<sup>14</sup> Leiding, 2007.

<sup>15</sup> Leiding, 2007.

<sup>16</sup> Webb, 1990.

<sup>17</sup> DomNwachukwu, 2005.

<sup>18</sup> Valenzuela, 1999. In Antrop-González, 2006.

<sup>19</sup> Nieto, 1998; Valenzuela, 1999. In Antrop-Gonzalez, 2006.

<sup>20</sup> Nieto, 1998; Valenzuela, 1999. In Antrop-Gonzalez, 2006.

<sup>21</sup> Leiding, 2007.

<sup>22</sup> Leiding, 2007.

<sup>23</sup> Leiding, 2007.

<sup>24</sup> Jones, 1986. In Webb, 1990.

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