



TO: P-12 Education Committee
Higher Education Committee

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SUBJECT: Update on Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Practices

DATE: January 11, 2018

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SUMMARY

Issue for Discussion

To provide the Board of Regents with an update on work that is currently planned for Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Practices.

Proposed Handling

This item will come before the P-12 Education and Higher Education Committees for discussion at the January 2018 meeting.

Background Information

New York State's public school student population is among the most racially and socioeconomically diverse in the United States. According to the most recent New York State Education Department (NYSED or "the Department") enrollment data, New York State public school students are 45 percent white, 26 percent Latino, 18 percent black, 9 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, 2 percent multiracial, and 1 percent Native American. More than half of the students (52 percent) receive free- or reduced-price lunch, 8 percent are English Language Learners and 17 percent are students with disabilities.

For students to gain the full benefits of the diversity of our State, cultural awareness must be woven into daily classroom life. Culturally responsive education is an approach that recognizes the importance of including various cultural references in all aspects of learning. There has been a clear demand from stakeholders to strengthen cultural responsiveness in New York State. After the State released its first draft Every Student

Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan for public comment in May, the Department received more than 1,000 comments, with comments urging the State to do more to indicate its commitment to culturally responsive education. The ESSA draft plan submitted to the United States Department of Education in September 2017 places additional emphasis on New York State's commitment to cultural responsiveness.

The goal of the Board and the Department is for cultural responsiveness to be infused into all district and school instruction and engagement practices. New York is among the first states to endorse such a widespread approach to culturally responsive education and, for that reason, will develop resources related to this work from the ground up. A draft definition of culturally responsive education was presented to the Board in December, and this definition will be refined to reflect current thinking in culturally responsive education. This definition will include all types of student diversity, such as linguistically diverse students and differently abled students. The Department also plans to develop a set of principles and a framework for culturally responsive education and practices at multiple levels of the education system, including at the district, school, and classroom levels and including the Department.

The Department will convene an advisory group made up of leaders in the field of cultural responsiveness to inform and guide the development of this work. The advisory group will help the Department to develop its set of principles that will in turn guide the framework for culturally responsive practices. The Department will also develop materials and resources for educators and parents, and a comprehensive implementation plan, including strategies for professional development and parent and family engagement. Feedback will be collected from offices within the Department, district leaders, educators, parents, students, and the broader education community, and then incorporated into the framework to ensure that it captures as much stakeholder input as possible.

Related Regents Items

[December 2017 Regents Item](#)

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/1217hea1.pdf>

Timetable for Implementation

During spring 2018, the Department expects to work with the advisory group to draft the guiding principles and develop a framework which will then be used to engage stakeholders and collect feedback. In June and July of 2018, the Department will work with the advisory committee to determine the final draft of the framework, and develop the professional development plan that is necessary to successfully implement the framework. Ultimately, the Department will present the proposal for a culturally responsive framework to the Board of Regents in September 2018.

Next Steps

Department staff will convene the advisory group to develop a comprehensive definition of culturally responsive practices that reflects the values of the Department and current thinking on culturally responsive education. Once an agreed upon definition has been established, the Department can move forward with activities such as:

- Drafting principles and a framework for culturally responsive education in collaboration with stakeholders;
- Developing and managing an implementation plan for release of the New York State Culturally Responsive Principles and Framework to ensure all stakeholders, including, but not limited to, superintendents, school leaders, educators, teachers, parents, students, and advocates have access to and understand the material;
- Developing and coordinating a professional development plan for educators, teachers, and other stakeholders to introduce them to the new principles and framework and train them on how to embed cultural responsiveness in everyday district and school activities;
- Developing and disseminating resources to help districts and schools explain cultural responsiveness to their parents and students and help districts and schools carry out this engagement in a culturally responsive manner; and
- Continued coordination for the implementation of the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership with regard to school building leader practice and evaluation.