

A Framework for Equity and Cultural Proficiency in Santa Barbara Unified School District

Overview

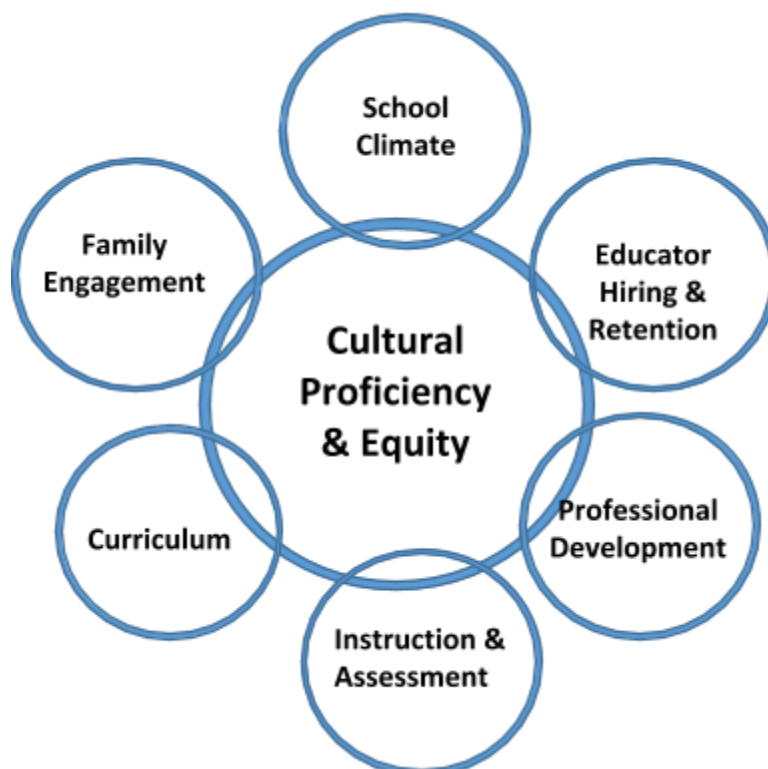
We live in a multicultural world. The United States is a nation of immigrants and this creates differences among us that involve language, culture, and generational patterns. This definition from the American Academy of Family Physicians is relevant to us:

Cultural proficiency is broadly recognized as the knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs that enable people to work well with, respond effectively to, and be supportive of people in cross-cultural settings. Cultural proficiency is not solely the acceptance of cultural differences, but rather a transformational process that allows individuals to acknowledge interdependence and align with a group other than their own.

This aligns with the approach we take to equity in our schools. The California Department of Education defines equity as “fair outcomes, treatment, and opportunities for all students.” Cultural proficiency and equity have been priorities of SB Unified for over a decade and the work continues to be needed and sharpened. This report presents a framework and vision for the cultural proficiency and equity work in our district.

A Framework for Cultural Proficiency and Equity

Issues of cultural proficiency and equity are complex and multi-faceted. No one effort or program will teach our students how to be culturally proficient during their experience in our district and prepare them for the world they will experience. With our first LCAP goal as context-- “through organizational transformation, develop a culturally proficient district to ensure success for all students. ”--we present this diagram and framework as a model for how we can organize and improve our outcomes for cultural proficiency and equity. We envision six domains that must work in collaboration and coordination to equip students to be culturally proficient graduates.



For each of the six domains, examples of activities and resources are listed. Some are already in place and subject to ongoing monitoring and improvement; others call out areas for growth. This is by no means an exhaustive list, but intended to serve as a starting point for discussion:

- School climate – traditional discipline as well as Restorative Approaches; student education about bias outside of the traditional academic program (explicit cultural proficiency programming, clubs and orgs, etc.). This domain also serves as a clear nexus to the School Safety & Climate diagram.
- Hiring and retention--a primary focus of Human Resources is the recruitment and support of employees who can serve as “mirrors and windows” for our students of all backgrounds
- Professional development – implicit bias training; teaching in a multicultural setting
- Instruction and assessment – teachers’ design and delivery of instruction, and administration and interpretation of assessment, must be undertaken in a culturally proficient way
- Curriculum – the scope and content of coursework and instructional materials should feature representative inclusivity; proposed Ethnic and Social Justice Studies graduation requirement
- Family engagement – systems and programs that support all families in navigating and accessing the educational system that is public education in our community

Cultural Proficiency and School Safety

We see a strong connection between school safety and cultural proficiency. In our diagram and framework around school safety, we had a circle that was labeled “education about bias”. We felt that title was a placeholder for a more robust and comprehensive idea. We suggest replacing that circle with a circle with the words “Cultural Proficiency & Equity.” We believe these two topics of School Safety & Climate and Cultural Proficiency & Equity should be linked as pictured in the separate diagram.