

Meeting the needs of every student...

The seal of the Irvington Union Free School District is visible in the background. It is a circular emblem with a green border. The text "IRVINGTON" is at the top, "NEW YORK" is on the left, and "1856" is on the right. The bottom part of the seal contains the text "UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT" and the motto "PER ASPERA AD AESTIVAM".

An Update on the District's Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) work

September 28, 2021

Mission

The mission of the Irvington Union Free School District is to create a challenging and supportive learning environment in which each student attains his or her highest potential for academic achievement, critical thinking and lifelong learning. Our schools encourage the discovery and development of students' individual strengths, skills and talents, and foster social and civic responsibility.

Social Emotional Learning Draft Statement:



The Irvington School District is committed to developing individuals who embrace diversity of thought, culture and experience, which fosters mutual respect that creates equitable and inclusive learning environments.

We strive to develop self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making to foster a community that values empathy, kindness and resiliency, providing an SEL foundation for students to embrace their own unique potential as lifelong learners, possess a joy of learning, and act as agents of social change.



Assumptions

- We are all well-intentioned and want to see all of our children succeed in school and to achieve their personal best.
- Not one of us has all of the answers to the many complex questions about the equity issues facing our schools and communities.
- Some of us would much rather not talk about these equity issues as they relate to socio-economic status and race, but we agree to enter into this conversation under the agreement of trust and good will.
- Our students are feeling impacts of the pandemic which can affect their mental health; there is an urgent need to continue to enhance our SEL efforts



Agenda for tonight's presentation...

Tonight's presentation will:

- Provide an update on the District SEL and DEI work
- Review the frameworks that will inform our work
- Outline the next steps as part of a multi-year implementation plan



Defining SEL and its importance in student development

- **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)** is an integral part of education and human development. SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.
- SEL advances educational equity and excellence through authentic school-family-community partnerships to **establish learning environments and experiences that feature trusting and collaborative relationships, rigorous and meaningful curriculum and instruction, and ongoing evaluation.** SEL can help address various forms of inequity and empower young people and adults to co-create thriving schools and **contribute to safe, healthy, and just communities.**



What have been the District's SEL efforts so far?

- Building-level Work
 - Various Character Education programs/activities to promote SEL
 - CASEL competencies
 - <https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/what-is-the-casel-framework/> and [NYS Social Emotional Learning Benchmarks](#)
- Partnered with CASEL to facilitate initial efforts
 - Site visit in February of 2020 to develop a roadmap for systemic SEL based upon existing strengths, priorities and challenges
 - Established a District SEL team to develop a District-wide vision
 - District SEL team is made up of teachers, support staff, administrators, parents and BOE
- Professional Development



What are the goals for moving this work forward?

The District SEL team will meet throughout the school year and will focus on:

- Revisiting the draft SEL Mission Statement
- Developing School Teams to begin to look at systems in place to support SEL
- Continuing with professional learning to develop a shared understanding and language to promote SEL for all students and staff
- Reviewing curriculum, instructional strategies and supports in place for students

These goals will be an ongoing focus as part of a multi-year implementation plan.



What are the NYS SEL Benchmarks?

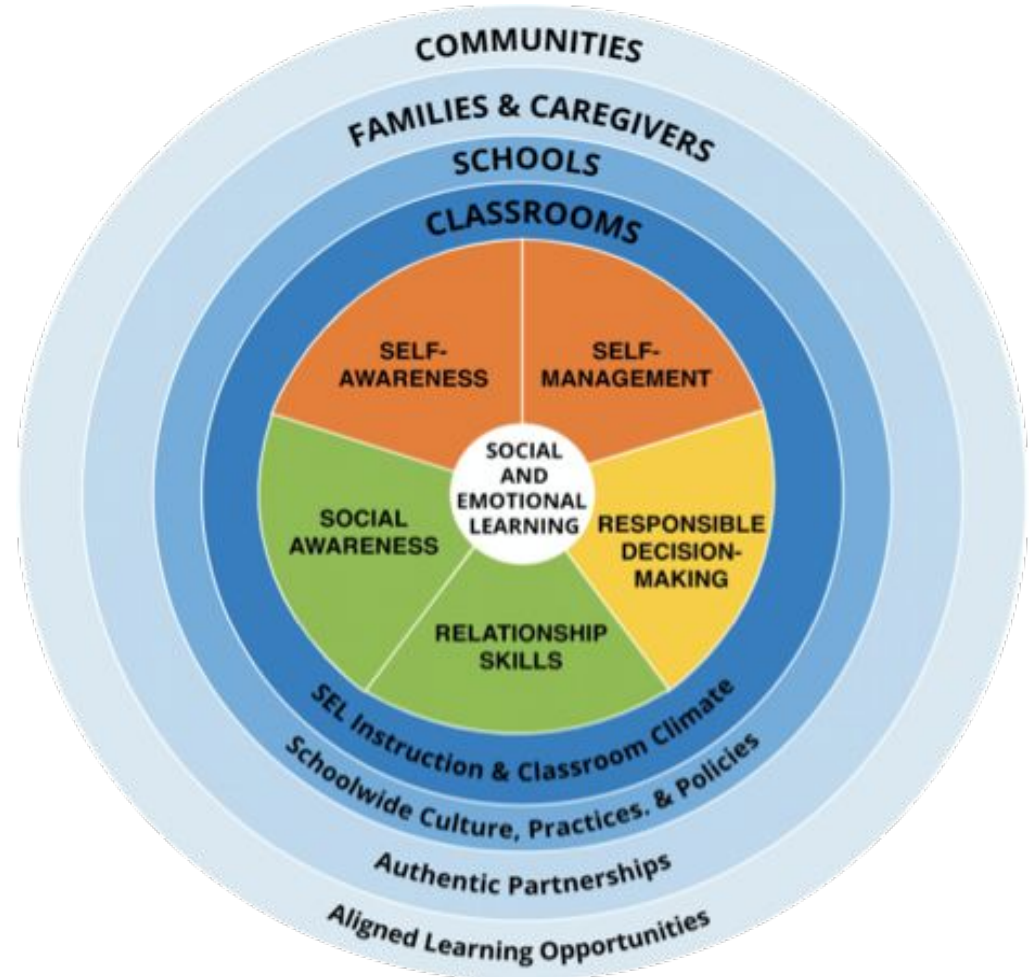
- **Goal 1:** Develop self-awareness and self-management skills essential to success in school and in life.
- **Goal 2:** Use social awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships.
- **Goal 3:** Demonstrate ethical decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts.



The CASEL 5...

Five broad and interrelated areas of competence:

- *Self-awareness*
- *Self-management*
- *Social awareness*
- *Relationship skills*
- *Responsible decision-making*

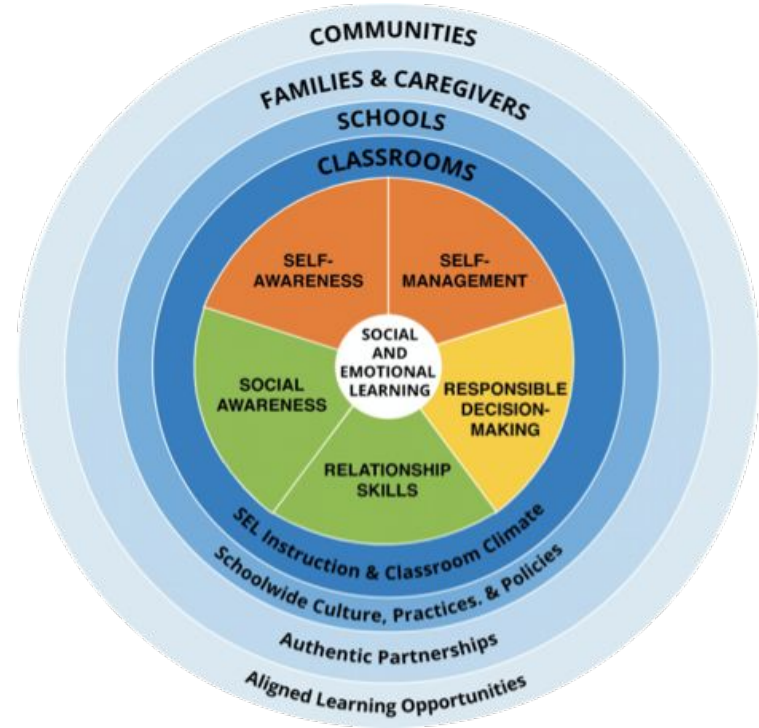


SELF-AWARENESS

The abilities to understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts. This includes capacities to recognize one's strengths and limitations with a well-grounded sense of confidence and purpose.

Such as:

- Integrating personal and social identities
- Identifying personal, cultural, and linguistic assets
- Identifying one's emotions
- Demonstrating honesty and integrity
- Linking feelings, values, and thoughts
- Examining prejudices and biases
- Experiencing self-efficacy
- Having a growth mindset
- Developing interests and a sense of purpose

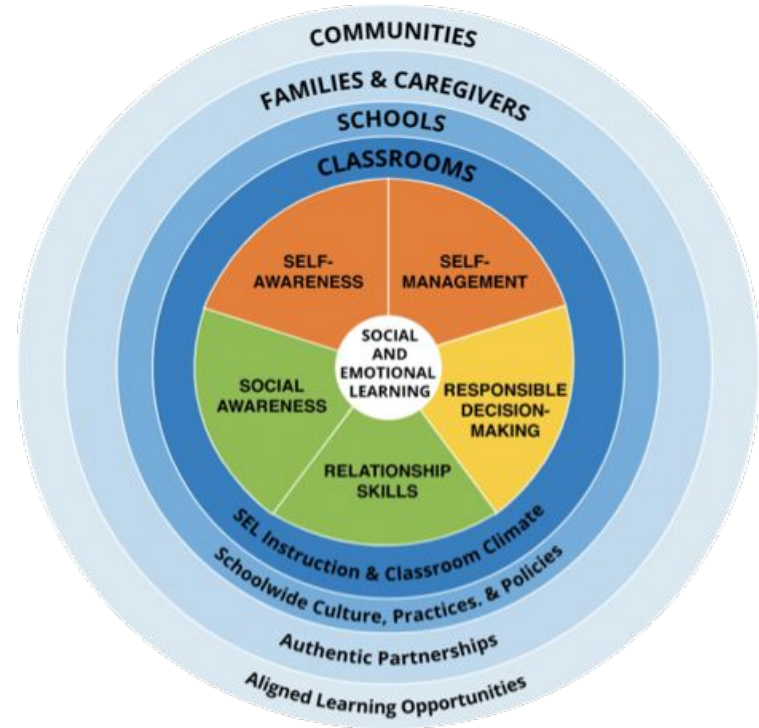


SELF-MANAGEMENT

The abilities to manage one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations and to achieve goals and aspirations. This includes the capacities to delay gratification, manage stress, and feel motivation and agency to accomplish personal and collective goals.

Such as:

- Managing one's emotions
- Identifying and using stress-management strategies
- Exhibiting self-discipline and self-motivation
- Setting personal and collective goals
- Using planning and organizational skills
- Showing the courage to take initiative
- Demonstrating personal and collective agency

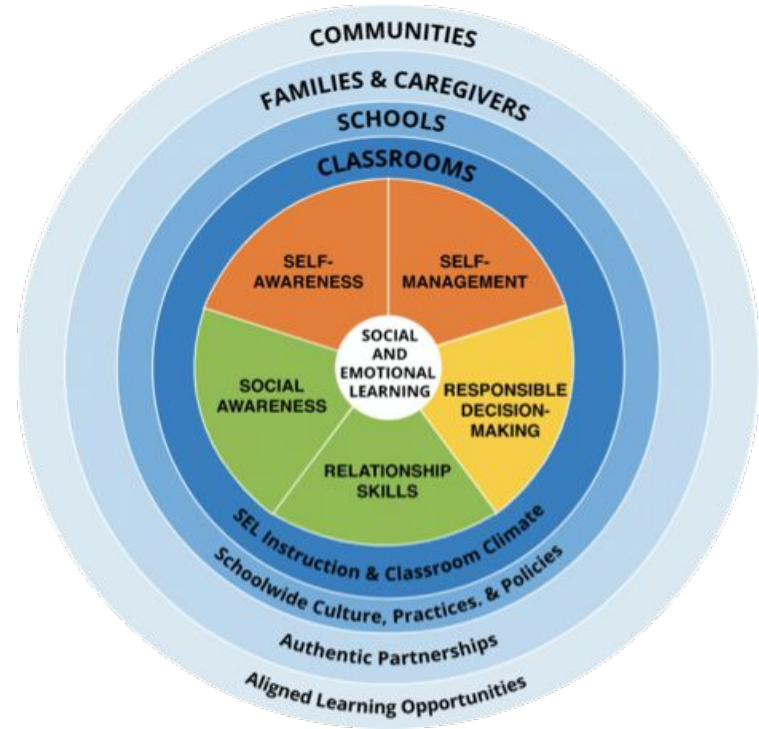


SOCIAL AWARENESS

The abilities to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts. This includes the capacities to feel compassion for others, understand broader historical and social norms for behavior in different settings, and recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

Such as:

- Taking others' perspectives into account
- Recognizing strengths in others
- Demonstrating empathy and compassion
- Showing concern for the feelings of others
- Understanding and expressing gratitude
- Identifying diverse social norms, including unjust ones
- Recognizing situational demands and opportunities
- Understanding the influences of organizations and systems on behavior

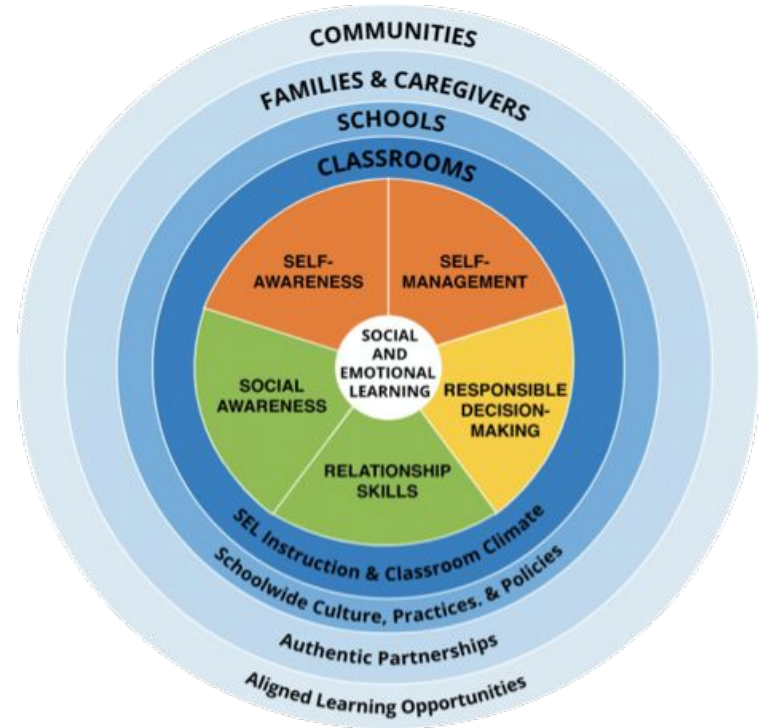


RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

The abilities to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups. This includes the capacities to communicate clearly, listen actively, cooperate, work collaboratively to problem-solve and negotiate conflict constructively, navigate settings with differing social and cultural demands and opportunities, provide leadership, and seek or offer help when needed.

Such as:

- Communicating effectively
- Developing positive relationships
- Demonstrating cultural competency
- Practicing teamwork and collaborative problem-solving
- Resolving conflicts constructively
- Resisting negative social pressure
- Showing leadership in groups
- Seeking or offering support and help when needed
- Standing up for the rights of others

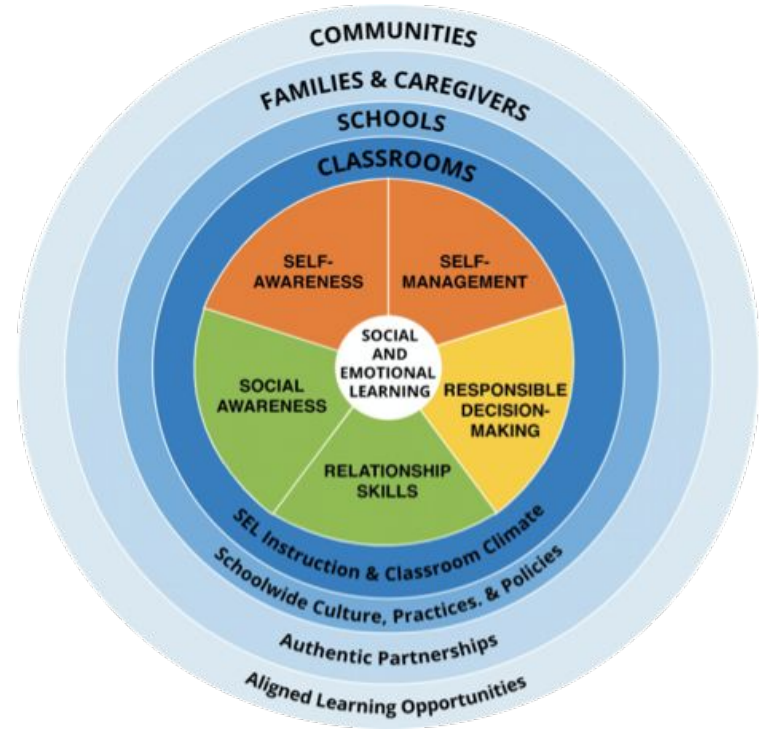


RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

The abilities to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations. This includes the capacities to consider ethical standards and safety concerns, and to evaluate the benefits and consequences of various actions for personal, social, and collective well-being.

Such as:

- Demonstrating curiosity and open-mindedness
- Learning how to make a reasoned judgment after analyzing information, data, and facts
- Identifying solutions for personal and social problems
- Anticipating and evaluating the consequences of one's actions
- Recognizing how critical thinking skills are useful both inside and outside of school
- Reflecting on one's role to promote personal, family, and community well-being
- Evaluating personal, interpersonal, community, and institutional impacts



SEL and Equity

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) can be a powerful lever for creating caring, just, inclusive, and healthy communities that support all individuals in reaching their fullest potential.

Systemic implementation of SEL both fosters and depends upon an equitable learning environment, where all students and adults feel respected, valued and affirmed in their individual interests, talents, social identities, cultural values, and backgrounds.

SEL...

- is relevant for all students in all schools and affirms diverse cultures and backgrounds
- is a way to uplift student voice and promote agency and civic engagement
- supports adults to strengthen practices that promote equity
- is a strategy for systemic improvement, not just an intervention for at-risk students



Schools must engage students, families and communities as authentic partners in social and emotional development



What have been the District's DEI efforts thus far?

- Partnered with NYU Metro Center to facilitate initial efforts
 - Lead Learner Team participated in learning about Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion
 - Root Cause Analysis Team performed a root cause analysis of District practices, policies, and student opportunities
- Professional Development
 - At various levels in each school with multiple partners
 - Two community-wide programs
 - District-level professional learning opportunities:
 - Keynote speakers in 2019-20 and 2020-21
 - Led by external experts and District leadership
- Curriculum Review
 - During Summer Curriculum work & Faculty meetings, teachers have begun to use a DEI lens to look at instructional resources

Importantly this work has been supported by the BOE, PTSA, IEF and IFA



Leadership and ownership of the “work”

The District’s goal is to provide welcoming environments for every student and their families and to provide equal opportunities and access for all students. Therefore this is work that is *owned and led* within our school community.

- This is not the work or initiative of external voices or consultants; however, it will engage experts in the field
 - But, no one single entity shall inform the work
- NYSED guidelines and expectations will be adhered to
- Our faculty members, administrators, staff members, students, parents and community members’ voices will continuously be welcomed and honored
- Our progress will be deliberate, steady and purposeful



Defining our goal and commitment

The District is **committed to creating welcoming school communities** for our students and their families. Such a commitment requires the **assurance of equitable access for all students to all opportunities** regardless of their identity, race, economic status, ability, etc.

To achieve such a goal, we must always **assess our own readiness** to deliver instruction and services that is reflective of our community and prepare our students for a global society. Further, **we need to evaluate our programs, practices and policies** to ensure no obstacles will interfere.



Defining our goal and commitment

We are not a school community that has a program, but we are a school district that has a **commitment to each student, their success and growth.**

To this end, we are committed to providing the very best, most enriching education in an environment that is **culturally responsive, embraces diversity, equity and inclusion, and is proactive in fostering social and emotional well-being.**

This can be challenging work, which will involve taking time to assess our readiness and identify the most appropriate entry points.



Mission - Stop and Reflect

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What are the goals for moving this work forward?

- Finalization of Root Cause Report and related community communication
- Four Focus Areas
 - Culturally Responsive Restorative Practices
 - Review Code of Conduct/documentation currently used in schools
 - Restorative Practices
 - Teaching and Learning
 - Culturally Responsive Teaching practices
 - Introduce CR-SE scorecard as a tool for looking at curriculum through a DEI lens
 - Book clubs
 - Professional Learning and Development
 - Provide ongoing training in Implicit Bias/CR-SE framework
 - Family and Community Engagement
 - Develop proactive, clear messaging and communication with families about this work and the intent
 - Expand community engagement in the DEI initiative - additional community forums



What are the goals for moving this work forward?

Year 1:

Focus Area	Point Person	Timeline
CR-S Restorative Practices	Dr. Harrison	November/December - form committee
Professional Learning	Dr. Duffy Building Administrators/Lead Learners	September-June
Teaching & Learning	Dr. Duffy/Building Administrators	September - June
Community Engagement	Dr. Harrison	On-going

These goals will be an ongoing focus as part of a multi-year implementation plan



The Framework

Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



New York State Education Department Definition

Culturally responsive-sustaining (CR-S) education is grounded in a cultural view of learning and human development in which multiple expressions of diversity (e.g., race, social class, gender, language, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, ability) are recognized and regarded as assets for teaching and learning.

The image shows the cover of the 'Executive Summary' section. At the top, there is a photograph of four diverse children sitting at a table and reading books. Below the photo is the title 'EXECUTIVE SUMMARY'. Underneath that is the New York State Education Department logo, followed by the text 'New York State Education Department Definition'. The main body of the cover contains the definition of Culturally Responsive-Sustaining (CR-S) education.

How is CR-SE defined in the Framework?

Culturally responsive education is about teaching **the students in front of you**. To do this requires that **one work to get to know their students** and develop meaningful relationships with students while engaging in the students' communities. However, culturally responsive education must also be sustaining, that is it must work to **encourage cultural pluralism** and not cultural assimilation....

THE WHOLE
PURPOSE OF
EDUCATION IS TO
TURN MIRRORS
INTO WINDOWS.

Sydney J Harris

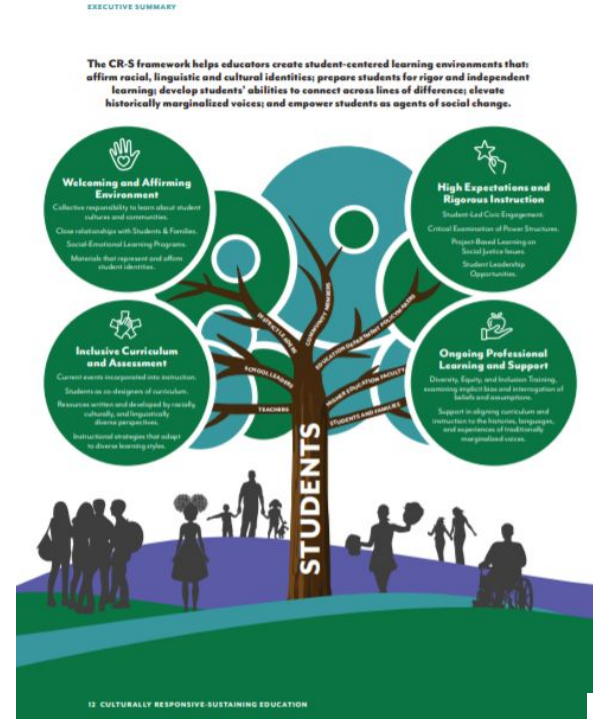
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NYSED CR-S Education Framework

CR-S Education Framework mindset believes:

- *Students & their families should be valued*
- *Culture is not an addition, but is a critical component of education*
- *Self-reflection is required to dismantle systems of biases and inequities (pg. 12)*



Focus Area 1: Welcoming and Affirming Environment

Welcoming and Affirming Environment

Collective responsibility to learn about student cultures and communities.

Close relationships with Students & Families.

Social-Emotional Learning Programs.

Materials that represent and affirm student identities.



Focus Area 2: High Expectations & Rigorous Instruction

High Expectations and Rigorous Instruction

Student-Led Civic Engagement.

Critical Examination of Power Structures.

Project-Based Learning on
Social Justice Issues.

Student Leadership Opportunities.



Focus Area 3: Inclusive Curriculum and Assessment

Inclusive Curriculum and Assessment

Current events incorporated into instruction.

Students as co-designers of curriculum.

Resources written and developed by racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse perspectives.

Instructional strategies that adapt to diverse learning styles.



Focus Area 4: Ongoing Professional Development

Ongoing Professional Learning and Support

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Training, examining implicit bias and interrogation of beliefs and assumptions.

Support in aligning curriculum and instruction to the histories, languages, and experiences of traditionally marginalized voices.

Shared language and guidelines for how to incorporate and respond to current events.



Focus Areas Align with IUFSD Goals

Focus Areas:

- Welcoming and Affirming Environment
- High Expectations and Rigorous Instruction
- Inclusive Curriculum & Assessment
- Ongoing Professional Development

NYSED's four Focus Areas clearly align with:

- District Mission and Vision,
- The District's Theories of Action,
- Support all aspects of the Strategic Plan and the 6 Strategic Objectives,
- Our shared commitment to student success and well-being, and
- Widely held community values.



Reflection

What can you do to become more culturally responsive:

... in the next week?

... in the next month?

... in this next school year?

