

## Appendix A

### Guidance on MN Cultural Competency Training Requirement for Teachers

Forethought: Cultural Competency Training was written into the requirements for Minnesota teachers due to the diverse needs of many students within many districts and schools. Many students find themselves unable to connect with (a) schools which reflect the values or culture they do not possess and/or (b) school staff who lack understanding and knowledge. While true competency cannot be attained without living a culture completely (including all of its intricacies and traditions), finding respect, appreciation and value in other cultures, people and especially students is something that every teacher can strive for. Cultural Competency Training should be designed to create a continuum of understanding and connecting with students better. As a result, this training is more of a process rather than a quick “one and done” exercise, class or in-service. It would therefore be advised that Cultural Competency Training is offered annually, continually building upon past experiences and needs for and within the school.

The requirement for Cultural Competency Training for Relicensure can be satisfied if:

- (a) Teachers work to deepen their own frames of reference on students, students' families, & the school communities
- (b) Teachers recognize potential bias in their own frames of reference on students, students' families, & the school communities
- (c) Teachers recognize the impact of these frames of reference on students, students' families, & the school community
- (d) Teachers should discuss (a-c) &
- (e) Teachers should be provided time for Self-Reflection regarding (a-d).

This training can focus on one or more of the following:

- Racial, cultural, and socioeconomic groups
- American Indian and Alaskan native students
- Religious diversity
- Gender identity, including transgender students
- Sexual orientation
- Language diversity
- Individuals with disabilities and mental health concerns
- Systemic racism

Note: If a teacher is unable to attend the training provided by their school or district for Cultural Competency, that teacher may pursue this training through collaborative study with other teachers. For example, creating and participating in a book study on American Indian Youth through *The Seventh Generation: Native Students Speak About Finding the Good Path* by Amy Bergstrom, Linda Miller Cleary and Thomas D. Peacock. These teachers may then share their thoughts in a Professional Reflection (which may also include efforts to help ELL students). Bear in mind, the Professional Reflection is no longer required by the State of Minnesota.

## Appendix A (continued)

### Guidance on MN Cultural Competency Training Requirement for Teachers (continued)

#### Cultural Competency Example Training:

Over the spring and summer of 2019, PELSB has offered regional trainings on Cultural Competency. The following notes cover one such training on May 20th and 21st at ISD 709's Central Administration Building, led by Paula O'Loughlin and Leiatua Dr. Robert Jon Peterson.

Dr. Peterson used an indigenous traditional practice of Recognition and Introduction to illustrate personal connection and offer some importance to the modules to be completed. Time was also taken to weigh and consider the difficulties and impact of pursuing the unknown and reinforcing the necessity to increase our efforts as educators in understanding ourselves, our students, our society and the diversity and challenges present in such pluralities.

*Module 1 – Awareness of Frames of Reference* – This exercise focused on the myriad of ways in which an individual could recognize themselves (family role, religion, career, demographics, etc.). With those frames of identity as a reference, time was given for each individual to consider a brief story both on a time that they were respected or included & a time they were disrespected or excluded for possessing one of these “descriptors” or “self-identifiers”. After discussion (via pairs and then the class), each person created a statement based upon these experiences. Example: “I am a Christian, but I am NOT a radical right-wing Republican.”

(Module completed ~ 1.5 hours)

*Module 2 – Understand Implicit Bias* – This exercise first focused on methods to become an Equitable Educator and the importance of these pursuits. Small groups were then assigned to use Case Studies on Diversity and Social Justice Education (by Gorski and Pothini), where groups were tasked to (a) identify bias, (b) consider diverse perspectives, (c) find the challenges and opportunities in the situation, (d) develop equitable/just outcomes for the situation, (e&f) brainstorm intermediate and long-term solutions and (g) craft a theoretical plan of action. Example: A teacher believes that a child (who is responsible for her younger siblings) lacks the grit and support at home to be truly successful in that teacher's class. She reaches out to a colleague and their conversations reveals where the teacher is biased. Brainstormed solutions include adapting homework to manageable levels for the student and possibly restructuring homework policy.... Discussion and sharing was then had by all groups with the class and time was spent better understanding implicit bias.

(Module completed ~ 2 hours)

*Module 3 – Awareness of Impact* – These exercises focused on introspective observation of how personal and dominant cultures can create complications between intent and impact as educators (examples of these mistakes include microaggressions, hidden curriculum, macroaggressions, etc.). Articles and methodologies were read and discussed individually, as small groups and cooperatively as a class. In addition, exercises were completed in recognizing existing traditions and policies which reinforce the complications between people and dominant cultures.

(Module completed ~ 2.5 hours)

*Module 4 – Moving Toward Action* – After completing Modules 1-3, time and guidance was given to develop an eight step action plan (also a SMART goal) to better meet the diverse needs of each teacher's school and/or classroom. Example Goal: Restructuring English 10 Curriculum to emphasize equity and diverse focus on and connected to American Literature while guiding students' dialogue within their differing perspectives.

(Module completed ~ .5 to 3 hours)

Note: It should be advised, that this training was a stripped-down, bare bones training. Additional Time would have led to stronger impact. Finally, the goals reached by educators can change or meet new challenges over time, allowing further opportunity for future trainings to look deeper into the continuum of understanding themselves and their students better.