

Addressing Diversity in Schools for the Deaf

Demographic data across the country indicates that the majority of schools for the deaf consist of staff members whose diversity and backgrounds do not mirror those of the student population. As such, it is critical that schools be proactive and assertive in ensuring that diversity is respected and that efforts are made to reflect diversity in all that we do in the schools. It is the purpose of this paper to provide some guidelines and suggestions in terms of how schools can make such assurances.

Gather Information From Stakeholders

- By conducting surveys that include all your stakeholders, you can take the pulse of your community and identify areas that need addressing and gaps in your sensitivity, awareness, and actions.
- Hosting a Town Hall meeting or Community Forum allows for face to face interaction and the building of allies and relationships with your stakeholders.
- Identify priorities and create an action plan in response to input gathered from the stakeholders.
- **Relevant Resources**
 - <https://www.acep.org/uploadedFiles/ACEP/advocacy/state/Guide%20to%20Hosting%20a%20Town%20Hall%20Meeting.pdf>
 - <http://www.aauw.org/resource/how-to-put-together-an-issue-forum-town-hall-or-tele-town-hall/>
 - <http://www.brighthubpm.com/project-planning/99511-methods-of-data-collection-in-stakeholder-analysis/>
 - http://www.fhi360.org/sites/default/files/webpages/se-toolkit/SE_Toolkit_and_Steps_PDF_files/Stakeholder_Engagement_Toolkit-Step_5.pdf
 - https://nces.ed.gov/programs/slds/pdf/best_practices.pdf
 -

Embed Diversity in the Curriculum

- Careful examination of the curriculum and the materials that are being utilized is essential to ensure that everything is reflective of your school's diversity as well as that of the world.
 - Include views of different groups in the discussions. Remind your teachers to partner with those who are different from themselves and gain varying perspectives to share with students

CEASD's Recommended Best Practices for Addressing Diversity in Schools

- Be sure to look at toys, posters, text books, books, etc... throughout your school.
- Make sure your school's collateral (brochures, flyers, posters etc...) reflect your program's diversity.
- **Relevant References**
 - <http://www.adl.org/education-outreach/curriculum-resources/c/creating-an-anti-bias-learning-environment.html>
 - Allen, J. (Ed.). (1999). *Class actions: Teaching for social justice in elementary and middle school*. New York: Teachers College Press.
 - Bank, J. & Banks, C. (2003). *Handbook on research on multicultural education* (2nd Ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
 - Bapiste, H. (Ed.). (2015). *Multicultural Education*. San Francisco: Caddo Gap Press.
 - Boyd, F., Brock, C. H. with Rozendal, M. S. (Eds.). (2004). *Multicultural and multilingual literacy and language: Contexts and practices*. New York: Guilford Press.
 - Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.
 - Huber, T. (2002). *Quality Learning Experiences for ALL Students*. San Francisco: Caddo Gap Press.
 - Nieto, S. (2000). *Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural education*. New York: Longman.
 - Derman-Sparks, L., Edwards, J. O., & National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2010). *Anti-bias education for young children and ourselves*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Analyze Data

- Data driven instruction and planning is essential in all we do in schools and using data to address diversity issues is no different. Make sure your schools collect data, analyzes it, and then uses it to make programmatic and systemic changes.
 - School demographic data provides you with the picture of who your community is.
 - Discipline data is critical for identifying unintentional biases of staff or issues with students that assist in planning for professional development and/or student support.

CEASD's Recommended Best Practices for Addressing Diversity in Schools

- Achievement data via test scores, report cards, failing notices, etc. also helps identify bias and deficiencies that are helpful in planning training and support.
- **Relevant Resources**
 - http://www.naesp.org/sites/default/files/Student%20Achievement_blue.pdf
 - http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practice_guides/dddm_pg_092909.pdf
 -

Recruit with Diversity in Mind

- Hiring diverse adults to serve diverse students can be challenging so it is essential that recruitment efforts are made that provide the broadest applicant pool possible.
 - Advertise on sites and at conferences that cater to people of color and diverse backgrounds
 - Indicate diversity awareness and cultural sensitivity training experience as a desired skill
 - Include questions about diversity in your interview process
 - Consider all adults in your setting as potential role models for students. Volunteers, outside contractors, trainers, and support positions all contribute to students' perceptions of diversity.
- **Relevant Resources**
 - Valle-Riestra, Martinez, D. Shealey, M & Cramer, E. "Recruiting and Retaining Culturally Diverse Special Educators." *Interdisciplinary Journal of Teaching and Learning*. v1 n2 p68-87. Fall 2011
 - Howey, K., Post, L., & Zimpher, N (Eds). (2006). *Recruiting, Preparing and Retainig Teachers for Urban Schools*. American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.
 - Lindsey, R. B., Robins, K. N., & Terrell, R. D. (2003). *Cultural proficiency: A manual for school leaders*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Corwin Press.

Use Existing Resources

- Provide families and students with diverse mentors and buddies using the staff, volunteers, and community members you have that reflect the diversity of your students.
- **Relevant Resources**
 - Cornell, T., Fitzhugh-Walker, P., & Jefferies, P. (2000). *We Can Have Better Urban Schools*. San Francisco: Caddo Gap Press

CEASD's Recommended Best Practices for Addressing Diversity in Schools

Ensure Accessibility

- Recognize that families have varying home languages
 - Provide written materials in families' home language
 - Use interpreters for meetings in families' home language
 - Provide classes to support families' learning of ASL and written English
 - Utilize translation services (check your state's listings for translation services)
- **Relevant Resources**
 -

Celebrate Diversity

- Make opportunities to celebrate staff and students' diverse background
 - Community events, fairs, contests, cook offs etc.
 - After school clubs that recognize and provide advocacy and support for diverse groups
 - Deaf Black Advocates, GLBTQ Club, People of Color
 - Curricular extensions that celebrate diversity
 - Deaf Pride Month, Black History Month, GLBTQ Awareness, Disability Awareness, Family Day, etc...
- **Relevant Resources**
 - <http://www.adl.org/education-outreach/curriculum-resources/c/dos-and-donts-with-special.html#.VvEcUBhELHQ>
 - <http://www.adl.org/education-outreach/curriculum-resources/c/winter-holidays-december-dilemma.html#.VvEcqRhELHR>
-

Provide Professional Development for Staff

- Offer training and professional learning opportunities for faculty, staff and administrators on topics related to diversity such as cultural sensitivity and other relevant topics that reflect the needs of their schools and community.
- Consider offering workshops to parents/families and students.
- **Relevant Resources**
 - Castania, K. (2003). *The Evolving Language of Diversity*. New York. Cornell Cooperative Extension.
 - McIntosh, P. (1989). *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack*

Building Capacity

CEASD's Recommended Best Practices for Addressing Diversity in Schools

- Join and participate in national, state and local chapters and organizations concerning people of color and diversity
- Have your school staff, stakeholders and students attend national, state and local conferences concerning people of color and diversity
- Have your staff apply for the CEASD mini-grants
- ***Relevant Resources***
 - Nieto, S. (2010). *The light in their eyes: Creating multicultural learning communities*. New York: Teachers College Press.