**SECTION 2: CULTURE**

## Sample Materials

### Cultivate the belief with staff that *ALL* kids can learn

**and that it is all staff’s responsibility to ensure that they do**

Provide staff with trainings that foster cultural responsiveness, awareness of implicit biases, and the understanding of the difference between equality and equity. Afterwards, through an inclusive process that encompasses all stakeholders, districts should develop a statement of core beliefs such as this one from Beaverton School district:

**We believe:**

* every student can learn at the highest levels when all staff provide equitable access and opportunity for learning, and hold every student to high expectations;
* maximizing the academic achievement of every child requires allocating resources equitably, not equally;
* every adult in the District should have the moral imperative, collective ownership, and will to act to eliminate disparities and prepare all students to be college and career ready and;
* all families play a critical role in supporting their children’s educational goals.

### Create a shared vision and mission

Districts should create a shared vision and mission statement, based on their core beliefs.

**Sample Vision:** All students, regardless of race, economic status, ethnicity, language, or special needs, achieve academic and personal excellence; become lifelong learners and responsible citizens of the world.

**Sample Mission Statement:** To ensure all students benefit from meaningful, effective instruction that fosters high expectations and achievement for all students within a caring, culturally responsive RTI system.

### Use data to determine gaps between the current reality and the shared vision

Use disaggregated data to examine the difference between the district’s vision and current levels of student achievement.

Here is an example of a chart for analyzing the difference or gap between groups of students.

### Use evidence-based practices shown to reduce the achievement gap

**Sample School District Evidence-Based Practices**

Our district believes that by implementing the following practices, we can reduce the achievement gap and increase outcomes for all student groups.

Leadership:

Work with staff through training and coaching to have high expectations for all students

Provide high quality professional development to support teachers in delivering effective instruction

Teaming/Assessment:

Use data-based decision making, universal screening, and progress monitoring

Instructional:

Use explicit instruction to teach the 5 big ideas of reading

Use sheltered instruction in all classes all day long

Use effective, predictable classroom management routines

Embed intensive vocabulary instruction in all subject areas

Provide instruction to develop academic English

Integrate oral and written English language instruction into content area teaching

Provide regular opportunities for students to develop written language skills

Provide Interventions for students who need more

### Develop and implement an action plan

Through an inclusive process that encompasses all stakeholders, districts should develop an action plan designed to close the gap by selecting evidence-based approaches. A key step is to implement an RTI system with fidelity. Some districts require disaggregating data regularly and create district level goals that are then translated into school level actions. Below is a sample of an action plan Beaverton School district:

**Sample District Actions**

To realize our beliefs the District will:

* + use data, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, language, special education, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, and mobility (when available) to inform all district decision-making;
  + create and nurture an inclusive and welcoming environment for all students, families, and staff;
  + provide students with equitable access to a high quality curriculum, effective teachers and principals, support, facilities, and sufficient support services, even when this means differentiating resource allocation;
  + recruit, hire and retain high quality personnel that reflect student demographics at all organizational levels ;
  + support personnel at all organizational levels to engage in culturally responsive practices and delivery of service;
  + identify and mitigate culturally biased instructional materials, assessments, and pedagogies that result in achievement disparities;
  + incorporate the voice and perspectives of students, families and communities that reflect student demographics into decisions that benefit student success and;
  + ensure that the District Strategic Plan embraces the principle of equity as a key feature and outlines measureable outcomes to attain the goal of preparing all students for college and career readiness.

### Endorse collective accountability.

Better outcomes can be achieved when all stakeholders (teachers, support staff, principals, district administrators, etc.) share accountability to ensure the effective practices are implemented with fidelity. When staff share ownership of and responsibility for student outcomes and understand that if students are not learning, they haven’t been taught effectively, improvements can occur. Teacher teams such as professional learning teams or professional learning communities can begin working on collective problem solving, using disaggregated data to determine areas in need of focus.

**Examples of tools for assessing current status and creating actions**

We utilize the following tools as part of our Response to Intervention process to address a culture of collective accountability in our district.

* Belief Surveys
* 100% meetings
* Continuous improvement plans
* Walkthroughs of instruction
* District Data Review