



West Irondequoit Central School District

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Greetings families and community members,

As I enter my third month as Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, I wanted to share a glimpse of our ongoing work to support Culturally Responsive Education (CRE), which is currently a topic of conversation in many schools. I hope to provide transparency and information so you can best understand the work we have done as a district and where I see it headed over the next couple of years.

Our Why: It's important to first distinguish the why behind our drive to create a K-12 Culturally Responsive Education. Our district mission states our goal is to provide, "a comprehensive educational experience that balances high expectations, diverse opportunities, intellectual growth, and personal responsibility."

In 2019, New York state presented its Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework ([linked here](#)). It is our district's responsibility to digest it and determine what the framework looks like in action for our students. More recently, we've also been given a call to action by the NYS Board of Regents, which can be found [linked here](#).

Based on our mission statement and the NYS guidance, **our goal is to create CRE in which students see themselves through a diverse representation, culture is celebrated, and students have equitable access. That means every student has access to experience high levels of success engaging in authentic and rigorous learning.**

Our On-Going Work: Over the past couple of years, we have started working toward this goal. To see some of the work that has led us to today, you can visit some of our past presentations and materials on our district webpage [linked here](#). Based on the NYS framework, our student data and anticipated learning gaps caused by the pandemic, early in the 2020-21 school year we created the following **instructional** focus areas for 2021.

1. *Engagement in research-based best practices that build community and close learning gaps in a hybrid, remote or in-person learning environment.*
2. *Establishing a foundation of culturally relevant pedagogies (teaching) and practices within buildings and classrooms.*

The first goal primarily focused on the targeted, streamlined instruction we knew we would need to provide for students after last year's building closures. The second goal was the result of studying different approaches and research regarding culturally responsive education. We decided the needs of our district matched best with culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP). There are three main tenets, or beliefs, of CRP: high expectations, cultural competency, and socio-political awareness. We tried to imagine what would be realistic for us to take on as a district this school year. Building our teacher

and staff understanding of culturally relevant pedagogies seemed to be a realistic next step. We also wanted to provide our students with experiences in which they were presented with more diverse perspectives. Below highlights some of our action steps we undertook to support these goals.

- 1) At faculty, department and School-Based planning team meetings, we focused on reading and discussing research about culturally relevant pedagogy (or teaching) and implicit bias.
- 2) We contracted with Dr. Jevon Hunter from The State University New York, Buffalo State, who is an educator with research-based experience regarding Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. He led a key note session to all staff at the start of the school year, has provided professional development to our leadership staff and is currently working with a group of representative K-12 teachers in which they discuss culturally relevant pedagogies and how to implement aligned practices into their classrooms.
- 3) We have created partnerships with Pathstones and Center of Urban Educational Success (CUES). Our CUES work aligns with a county-wide partnership with Monroe County school districts. Both partnerships resulted in resources and materials to support our current curriculum as a first step in creating more equitable and diverse learning experiences for our students. More details on these partnerships can be found through this presentation (<https://ensemble.monroe.edu/Watch/f4SKx97P>).

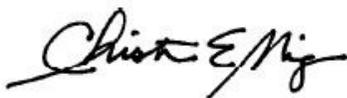
Our Next Steps: This school year we built a foundation of understanding of what CRE is and could be for our teachers and staff. Over the next few years, we hope to achieve the following:

- 1) Create a consistent and clear understanding of CRE with staff, students, families and community members.
- 2) Create a multi-year plan in which we establish common components of CRE and then begin a process to review and revise curriculum to match those components.
- 3) Communicate our progress to build understanding and clarity within the community.

To achieve these next steps, we will continue to immerse ourselves in research and utilize our District Curriculum Council and Coalition for Equity & Diversity to help guide our work.

As always, I appreciate your dedication as a district to ensuring our students have the best possible educational experience. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or comments. I look forward to our continued partnership!

Sincerely,



Christina Miga
Assistant Superintendent for Instruction

