

A Blueprint for Developing Culturally Proficient/Responsive School Administrators in Special Education

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This article addresses the important topic of culturally proficient/responsive school administrators for culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students with learning disabilities (LD). Culturally proficient/responsive school administrators with knowledge and strong leadership skills in multicultural education are essential to impact school change. Key factors—social organization, commitment, vision, leadership roles, etc.—impacting school administration effectiveness are discussed. The perspective of schools as (a) professional learning communities, (b) culturally proficient/responsive school administrators, and (c) principals and leaders who work cohesively with general and special educators is advocated. Lastly, the role of culturally proficient/responsive principals and the implementation of IDEIA requirements are discussed.

More than ever before, the growing cultural diversity and increasing pluralism of our schools require school administrators to be socially competent in ways that demonstrate respect, mutual understanding, social justice, and concerns for culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students who are culturally unlike them. This article addresses the important topic of culturally proficient/responsive school administrators for CLD students with learning disabilities (LD).

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP

School administrators must be prepared to work with CLD students who (a) differ racially and ethnically; (b) speak different languages; (c) have different beliefs; and (d) have different ways of expressing their cultural distinctiveness (Bakken, O'Brian, & Shelden, 2006). For school administrators to be successful, they must also consistently model socially competent attitudes, values and dispositions by (a) demonstrating interactions that are shaped by understanding and (b) embracing the three principles of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy. In Ladson-Billings' (1995) view, culturally responsive pedagogy rests on three propositions: (a) students must experience academic success; (b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence, and (c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the social order. For this to happen, school administrators need to promote these propositions to preservice and practicing teachers so that they can learn about them.

A culturally responsive curriculum benefits all children by building on the richness of varied experiences and cultures to make learning more meaningful. CLD students with LD are more successful when schools honor and value each child as an individual (Menchaca, 2001) and will participate more in the learning process when

their own background experiences are aligned with the school task (Pransky & Bailey, 2002). The school administrator must lead by example and provide necessary professional development for their teachers. In addition, the academic achievements of students with CLD backgrounds will improve if schools, administrators, and teachers make an attempt to ensure that instruction is responsive to the students' home culture (Phuntsog, 1999).

The context of diversity provides special challenges to school administrators and demands awareness not only of their students, but also of the implications of their interactions with them. Lack of self-knowledge and awareness of the implications of traditional practices among educators, for instance, can impede leaders' ability to facilitate the optimal educational experiences in a linguistically and culturally diverse environment that will lead all students to learn. The "hidden curriculum" also transmits meanings such as what it means to work, the value of hierarchy and authority, the meaning of learning, what matters and what does not matter, and what it means to "be good". There exists ample evidence that the hidden curriculum typically represents Eurocentric, middle-class values (Thornberg, 2009; Vang, 2006) which are far from universal. CLD students with LD who enter school with life experiences and languages that are different or "exotic" by traditional school standards are thus often at a disadvantage in the schools. To understand what diversity "means" in a given school, research must include examination of how the school and community embrace, transmit, or transform the content of the hidden curriculum in instructional practice and community interactions.

The school's social organization determines how you interact with your teachers, staff, students, and members of the community and how they interact with you and one another. In addition, the social organization within a school determines how individuals react to things that happen in the school and/or district and the community it serves. The organizational norms, the school climate, and the unwritten rules of your organization are all reflections of the school's framework (Brown, 2004).

As a member of the Caucasian culture, you may not notice or understand the many different ways in which the school's organizational structure impacts CLD students and their families. However, as an administrative leader, (a) making a commitment to align your practices with culturally proficient behaviors and (b) working to engage others in making similar commitments require that you begin where you are—individually and organizationally. Here are important culturally proficient/responsive behaviors one should exhibit according to Lindsey, Robbins, and Terrell (2003).

- A way of being that enables both individuals and organizations to respond effectively to people who differ from them (p. 5).
- A way of being that enables people to successfully engage in new environments (p. 13).
- An approach to addressing diversity issues that goes beyond political correctness (p. 13).

These behaviors include the administrator's belief (a) that all children can succeed in the child-centered and "loving" nature of the school and (b) that the valuing of the "racial culture and first language of the children" is respected.

A culturally proficient/responsive administrator influences others to make changes in their values, beliefs, and attitudes. Challenging and supporting others (a) to build their capacity to confront difficult socioeconomic and cultural problems in their community and (b) to take them on successfully are priorities for an administrator intent on fostering culturally proficient/responsive behaviors among others. Indeed, such an administrator makes it his or her purpose to help the community become culturally competent and to support it in building productive, functional patterns of social interaction. Administrators must realize that (a) culture is a predominant force in people's lives, (b) the dominant culture serves people in varying degrees, (c) people have both personal identities and group identities, (d) diversity within cultures is vast and significant, and (e) each individual and each group has unique cultural values and needs (Lindsey, Roberts, & Campbell-Jones, 2005).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

How do we best meet the needs of CLD students with LD? We believe that in order to be effective, things need to change. First and foremost, administrators need to change their way of thinking (and acting), and preparers (universities) of administrators need to fully educate candidates so that they are prepared for CLD students with LD. It begins by helping these individuals see the importance of establishing a vision and by having a plan to give services to these individuals and their parents. Second, administrators need to be involved (participate) with their school personnel in self-improvement planning, which includes developing goals and strategies to achieve them. Third, administrators also need to realize the importance of school personnel and how they can impact CLD students with LD in regard to academic, behavioral, and social growth. This should be addressed in how administrators recruit, hire, retain, and evaluate school personnel. Fourth, materials (curriculum and resources) should also be chosen that factor in strengths of these CLD students. The input of many—teachers, parents, and administrators—should be elicited before decisions are made. Fifth, there should be communication with parents of CLD students with LD and community members. Obtaining their input and feedback and incorporating them in the process of education of their CLD students with LD will be critical to the successes or failures that the students experience. Sixth, administrators also need to consider professional development issues: (a) what kind of training school personnel will need to be better qualified to work with these students and (b) how this is to be accomplished. Finally (and probably the most important point of all) is the ability to respond to the needs of CLD students with LD. All of these components are separate, but function together and interchangeably as a whole. Administrators cannot expect to be prepared on day one, but must realize that the education of these students is a process and work must continue daily, weekly, and monthly within all of these components. See Appendix A for a display of this framework.

ROLE OF THE CULTURALLY PROFICIENT/RESPONSIVE PRINCIPAL

The culturally proficient/responsive principal as the leader in a school building or district plays an undisputed role in establishing a vision and setting the tone for school climate and working with CLD students with LD and their parents. Given the changing demographics in many schools and the gap between the demographics

of the teachers and administrators and their CLD students with LD (a phenomenon that is increasing in our schools), it is imperative that the culturally proficient/responsive principal or school leader take specific intentional steps to ensure that the needs of all CLD students (of diverse cultural and ethnic groups and of varying abilities) are met. The wide range of backgrounds and ethnicity of students in the schools today requires that school personnel are culturally proficient/responsive and actively seek to understand the CLD family and the child's perspectives and utilize this information to shape effective responses that will facilitate meaningful partnerships.

Significant research has confirmed the critical role of the culturally proficient/responsive principal in establishing a school's vision and climate. Effective schools' literature continues to identify the role of principals as critical in defining and communicating the school mission (Williamson & Blackburn, 2009). A culturally proficient/responsive principal, who is committed to maximizing opportunities presented by a multicultural and/or CLD community, responds to the diverse strengths, needs, and interests of its stakeholders by engaging in continual learning, involving its members, and by taking specific actions to ensure that learning is enriched and enhanced. The culturally proficient/responsive principal has the responsibility to establish school-wide policies and procedures and to respond to single issues and individual concerns of all CLD students with LD and families.

Within each of the major responsibility areas, the culturally proficient/responsive school principal can take specific steps to increase awareness and responsiveness to multicultural characteristics of CLD students with LD and families. The culturally proficient/responsive principal is responsible for facilitating the business of learning via (a) establishing a vision for the school; (b) developing a school improvement plan which includes the identification of goals and strategies to accomplish the vision; (c) recruiting, hiring, retaining, and evaluating staff with the knowledge, skills, and training in culturally responsive teaching practices; (d) developing curriculum and selecting resources geared towards CLD students with LD and their families; (e) communicating (in positive ways) with CLD parents and the community; (f) creating and supporting the ongoing work of professional learning communities within the school; and (g) setting up culturally responsive systems of referral, assessment, identification, and instruction for CLD students with LD. By incorporating all of these tasks as part of the school's responsibilities, the overall climate of the school will be enhanced.

Establishing a Vision

The culturally proficient/responsive principal can facilitate the development of an articulated vision that uses explicit language to convey the desire to build a dynamic multicultural learning community to impact CLD students with LD and their parents. The school administrator facilitates and provides insight and leadership during this process. The vision should specify the inclusion of all stakeholders including the CLD students with LD and families (of various cultures and ethnic groups and those with varying abilities). The vision should then be in the forefront when decisions are made in the building and should be the filter by which actions are determined and evaluated.

Culturally proficient/responsive administrators should also demonstrate and model actions and language that continually promote and support the vision. They should keep the discussion of how beliefs about culture and differences influence thinking in the forefront by asking the tough questions and by modeling curiosity and openness towards CLD students with LD and their parents.

School Improvement Planning

An effective school improvement plan (SIP) process allows schools to develop a strategic and continuous plan that focuses on quality education and high levels of achievement and outcomes for CLD students with LD. School improvement means changing a school's practices and policies to improve teaching and learning for CLD students with LD. School improvement planning is led by the principal and a school improvement team but ultimately must involve the entire staff and school community. The SIP team should include CLD parents that represent the diverse populations that are part of the school community. The culturally proficient/responsive school principal will involve these individuals and convey confidence in parents as partners in problem solving through specific efforts to identify their perspectives and attitudes regarding the school environment.

The SIP plan should include explicit goals and strategies that will lead to increased awareness and understanding of cultures and perspectives of those in the community. The SIP team plays a critical role in identifying the various strategies that will be implemented. Opportunities for promoting the vision of a multicultural learning community might include school community events that bring members of the community together to celebrate student work and achievements or highlight the rich cultural characteristics of community groups and individuals. SIP members will add information and ideas regarding how the various groups and individuals perceive the school and how best to engage and represent them in activities and events in the school.

A strong SIP includes methods for gathering data so that the results of strategies can be monitored and changes made as needed to ensure continuous progress toward reaching the goal. As data is collected, it should be shared with the community so that all stakeholders can see the efforts and progress that is made to create a multicultural learning community. An open invitation to give input to the process should be communicated so that the vision of a learning community is actualized.

Recruitment, Hiring, Retention, and Evaluation of Staff

The culturally proficient/responsive school principal is charged with the responsibility to create a professional community of teachers and support staff who have the knowledge, skills, and training in CLD teaching practices for CLD students with LD. The culturally proficient/responsive principal must establish expectations that the principal and school staff are all on a continuous journey to learn about their own cultural viewpoints and biases and how these influence actions and expectations (Murtadha-Watts & Stoughton, 2004).

In order to accomplish this, the culturally proficient/responsive school principal must first recruit a staff that has strong personal characteristics that include (a) the ability to be open-minded and curious; (b) the strength of empathy and compassion; (c) a willingness to learn and grow in their attitudes, knowledge, and skills about

CLD students with LD; (d) a willingness to implement effective instructional practices; (e) receptivity to feedback; and (f) the willingness and ability to be self-reflective. A culturally proficient/responsive principal should review applicants with these filters and develop interview processes which garner information on experiences and evidence that the candidate demonstrates these capabilities. This might include questions which ask the candidates to demonstrate responsiveness and openness to cultures, knowledge of CLD students, parents, and effective instruction (strategies) and their ability to self-reflect with questions such as (a) What experiences do you have with different cultures and what is your assessment of your ability to work with individuals who are from those cultures? (b) How do you respond to CLD students with LD, their parents, and other individuals who present vastly different ways of thinking about school and learning? (c) Is it important to learn about the cultural beliefs/values and languages of students with LD you work with? (d) How do you go about learning about cultural diversity of students? (e) What is your experience in working with CLD students and parents? and (f) What teacher training or professional development opportunities have you had regarding CLD students with LD and their parents? The culturally proficient/responsive school principal should make it clear that it is the expectation that school staff clearly support the vision of the school in working with CLD students with LD and their parents to candidates when they are recruiting and interviewing. This specific effort to find individuals to work within the school should not be limited to teaching and other professional staff, but should also apply to the office, cafeteria, and maintenance staff. Everyone must be knowledgeable and respond to the vision of the school and to CLD students with LD and their parents.

The vision also needs to have a clear presence in process for retention and evaluation of staff. Retention of staff is improved when they feel they have efficacy. Research conducted by Yost (2006) found that when self-reflection is used as part of a problem-solving process, teachers are more able to cope with the various challenges and situations they encounter. The culturally proficient/responsive school principal needs to convey openness to allow staff members to experiment and ask questions with an expectation that staff will grow and evolve as members of the learning community and representatives of the vision and work with CLD students with LD and their parents. The evaluation of staff must include attention to specific strategies and efforts they have undertaken to support and follow the vision of the school and to specifically implement the SIP. There should also be an emphasis on the growth and development in (a) working with CLD students with LD and their parents and (b) developing effective teaching practices. Staff needs to be given feedback and be recognized for their efforts in this journey and given the opportunity to give input on professional development topics for growth and development. Individual goals can be set during annual teacher/staff evaluations which help the staff member to have a clear idea of expectations and to identify avenues for professional development and other methods to improve their effectiveness.

Murtadha-Watts and Stoughton (2004) presented the concept of cultural mirroring which is "the ability of a school leader to speak and act across differences to reflect to the staff possible biases, prejudice and stereotyping" (p. 4). As culturally proficient/responsive school principals engage in cultural mirroring, they will ask tough questions and facilitate discussion with individuals during evaluation but

also with groups of teachers and the whole staff to examine their efforts to promote and accomplish (a) their work with CLD students with LD and their parents, (b) the vision of the school, and (c) the strategies identified in the SIP. Cultural mirroring will allow the principal to model self-reflection as he or she examines his or her own language, behaviors, and actions. That willingness to model cultural mirroring will provide an avenue to put the questions on the table for all to think about, discuss, and reflect upon as a group and as individuals towards the common goal of effectively educating CLD students with LD and their parents. Engaging in ongoing conversations about multicultural sensitivity and responsiveness increases the expectation that it is a valued effort. It will also set the stage for developing habits that support self-questioning and reflection which are critical to continuous improvement in working with all CLD students with LD and their parents.

Development of Curriculum and Resources

Effective teaching and learning of CLD students with LD requires sound curriculum and resources which provide sufficient support. Curriculum, while seemingly straightforward, is based on what is valued and what schools think students should know and be able to do (Phuntsog, 1999). As a result of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-110), state standards have caused schools to focus on these outcomes. State standards often reflect a majority cultural viewpoint, and while this may be important, we also need to consider how we can communicate value for diversity and alternative viewpoints in a school that is striving for multicultural sensitivity and responsiveness.

A highly regarded approach to developing curriculum and resources which responds to diversity is Universal Design for Learning (UDL). This is the design of products and environments that are usable by all individuals to the greatest extent possible and without the need for adaptation or specialized design. UDL was originally defined by the Center for Applied Special Technology in the 1990s and is explained on the website for the Center <http://www.cast.org/index.html>. The concept of UDL provides a framework for addressing diverse learners and can be applied to populations that have varying abilities but also to those with varying experiences and cultural backgrounds. Schools have begun to effectively implement UDL principles to make decisions about teaching strategies and resources to address the needs of CLD students with varying abilities including those who have LD. Multicultural aspects of CLD learners can also be addressed via this framework by addressing

- multiple means of representation to give CLD learners various ways of acquiring information and knowledge, including how members of these different cultures and with different backgrounds access learning;
- multiple means of action and expression to provide CLD learners alternatives for demonstrating what they know including the various ways that these individuals from different cultures may express learning;
- multiple means of engagement to tap into CLD learners' interests, challenge them appropriately, and motivate them to learn including consideration of how these learners from diverse cultures are motivated and challenged.

There is probably no better way to model and promote value for multicultural viewpoints to students than through these decisions that are made about daily lessons and activities. The selection of resources is also an opportunity to make sure that all groups—whether gender specific, cultural, or of varying abilities—are represented respectfully and accurately. Culturally responsive general and special educators can present opportunities for students with LD to explore cultures and bring their own culture and perspectives to projects. The culturally proficient/responsive school principal as the instructional leader plays a key role in providing the time and support for general and special educators to examine curriculum, teaching methods, and resources with the goal of accomplishing the vision of the school to be a multicultural community of learners.

Communication with CLD Parents and Community Members

The culturally proficient/responsive school principal is a main source of communication to CLD parents and the community. The power of language to model and convey respect and expectations is critical to recognize. Non-verbal language as well can convey openness, interest, and respect. The culturally proficient principal's attitude toward varying cultural groups as well as CLD students with LD is readily apparent as the principal makes decisions about how to include individuals and represent their viewpoints. Individuals convey information and their level of understanding through their listening and questions that they ask, and it is very important for culturally proficient/responsive school administrators to value the input and ideas of others. Culturally proficient/responsive principals have frequent opportunities to listen and to ask questions to CLD parents and community members and should do so frequently to better meet the needs of CLD students with LD and families and to get feedback and suggestions regarding current program offerings in the school.

There are a number of avenues the culturally proficient/responsive school principal can use to increase communication and the expectation that CLD parents are a valued partner in the school. The culturally proficient/responsive principal can schedule informal coffees or teas in order to have conversations with CLD parents where the agenda includes opportunities for individuals to discuss and talk about their concerns and ideas. The culturally proficient school principal can arrange opportunities for school staff and CLD parents to learn about each other in informal settings. Research conducted by Ladky and Peterson (2008) underscores the value of including an informal aspect to parent involvement particularly when navigating the often complex and formal path of identification of special needs to provision of an individual education program. Another idea is to schedule parent teacher meetings early in the new school year with the purpose of creating an opportunity for CLD parents to talk about their son or daughter and discuss what they want for their child and how they view the school. They may also want to discuss how their culture and language may impact the school and their learning. This can be a critical time for the stage to be set and for open communication to be established. The culturally proficient/responsive school principal can take concrete visible steps to increase the likelihood that parents will be involved by using clear language, setting up family-friendly activities and giving CLD parents time to ask questions.

Written communication is another way communication can take place with CLD parents. Culturally proficient/responsive school principals must remember that written communications from schools need to always be done in the language that CLD parents can access, and translations must be accurate and timely. When written translations are not possible or not the preferred method, culturally proficient/responsive principals must be willing to facilitate the verbal communication of important messages. Many schools are now using technology to send phone or e-mail messages to CLD parents regarding announcements, reminders, and other content. A team of translators can be developed that can assist with sending these kinds of verbal messages.

Creating and Supporting the Ongoing Work of a Professional Learning Community

The culturally proficient/responsive school principal manages the resources including the budget earmarked for professional development. Given that many teachers and school personnel lack expertise regarding CLD students with LD, there must be a commitment to continuous learning and improvement through professional development. The concept of Professional Learning Communities (PLC) was first presented by DuFour and Eaker (1998) as a means by which groups of adult learners within the school are engaging in self- and community-reflection about learning. In the context of cultural responsiveness, PLCs will engage in efforts to look critically at how and what they will do in schools to promote understanding and inclusion of multicultural viewpoints and CLD students with LD and their parents. The culturally proficient/responsive school principal will organize time and resources to respond to needs of staff to develop understanding of divergent cultures and learning needs of CLD students with LD. Being able to become optimally responsive to these needs requires deep self-knowledge and the possibility of not only learning new information about CLD students with LD and their parents but perhaps unlearning other information that may impede their progress, communication, and learning. It is important that general and special educators understand how their beliefs and attitudes influence important decisions they make as a teacher (Murtadha-Watts & Stoughton, 2004). When school staff (including paraprofessionals, secretaries, custodians, and others) do not understand or are not informed about the viewpoints and characteristics of individuals from different cultures, they may have a tendency to avoid involvement, to continue the status quo without consideration of differences and to develop biases or solidify the ones they already have. On-going training is essential to make sure all school personnel understand CLD students with LD and their parents and how their culture and language impact them in a school environment.

The culturally proficient/responsive school principal needs to provide the dollars and the time for staff to work on inclusion efforts, to work with parents, and to work as a PLC and individuals to improve their understanding of what the impact of culture and language can have on learning. During all of these efforts the culturally proficient/responsive school principal needs to help staff consider how culture and their beliefs and biases influence their day-to-day decisions that make and create hidden curriculums and perpetuate a status quo that may not be fully responsive to the changing demographics in the school.

Setting up Systems for Responding to the Needs of CLD Students with LD

The culturally proficient/responsive school principal is charged with managing the school and all of its processes and systems. One of those is the method by which CLD students with LD are identified for interventions. There are numerous times in the process when CLD parent involvement can be utilized to improve the effectiveness of the school's responsiveness to students who are struggling. When a CLD student with LD first begins to show signs that they may be struggling with learning, it is critical to convey to parents how much their input regarding their child is valued. CLD parents play a vital role in gathering assessment information including knowledge on how their child learns, their interests, and their home experiences. Setting up initial opportunities for CLD parents to communicate with school staff and including them in all aspects of problem identification and problem solving is critical in order to help their child reach their fullest potential.

It is also important to sort through the role of language differences and cultural influences on the learning characteristics of CLD children at risk for school failure. Schools have grappled with the dilemma of trying to determine whether learning problems are caused by, correlated with, co-exist with, or are entirely unrelated to language and cultural differences. Determining whether a CLD student has a specific LD requires that teams rule out educational deprivation or lack of experience as causes of learning problems (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act 2004, P.L. 108-446, 118 Stat. 2647, 2004). As these possibilities are discussed and explored, it is essential to understand the parents' points of view and to gather information about the CLD students with LD development and experiences. Students who are having learning problems and who are also English language learners (ELL) or who come from vastly different cultural experiences present complex concerns for the school to sort out. We cannot fully understand these concerns without the parents' help, and research has shown that parent involvement has a positive impact on the development of exceptional students (Kim & Morningstar, 2005).

It is also critical for the leader to help the multidisciplinary team to recognize that they may have formed negative views of CLD students and their families regarding their ability and willingness to support the student with disabilities (Harry, 2008). In putting that possibility on the table, staff may be more cognizant of these factors and more wary of allowing them to interfere with encouraging family involvement. Using culturally mirroring might cause staff to become aware of some differential treatment that is a result of this bias. For example, the culturally proficient/responsive school principal might raise the question with the multidisciplinary team (MDT). This team should involve professionals from different cultural groups. The question is, Could it be that we take less time to do our individualized education program (IEP) meetings with our parents who are (name the ethnic group/culture) because we just assume they will not have any comments and have nothing to say? Staff must identify and confront hidden agendas and biases and acknowledge that families from various backgrounds and experiences have different viewpoints and reactions to disability. Ethnic and cultural perspectives play a role in how a family will interpret and respond to disability, and these factors are important as the MDT works to fully understand a child's learning characteristics and determines the best approaches to respond to and support the child (Ferguson, 2002). One step in the

right direction would be to compose a MDT that has professionals from many different cultural groups. This would broaden the knowledge and perspectives of the team, and they would be more prepared and qualified to work with CLD students with LD and their parents.

The culturally proficient/responsive school principal plays a key role in asking important questions to be raised through a system with steps that ask the following:

1. What has been the past experiences of the CLD child regarding learning?
2. What factors in the CLD child and family experiences (including those influenced by culture) may have played a role?
3. What goals and values regarding learning and school are present and may play a role in the CLD child's experiences and responses?
4. How can the parents and family contribute to the interventions and decisions about resources?
5. How can the school contribute to the efforts of the CLD child's parents to provide support for the student?

The individual educational program planning process is by its nature full of legalese and formal questions and can be intimidating to CLD parents with all kinds of backgrounds. It is critical that the team take the time to use clear language and to explain each step.

When a school community has made a commitment to actualizing the vision of being a multicultural learning community, the culturally proficient/responsive school principal by the very nature of his or her role in the school becomes a beacon and a catalyst for this vision. The culturally proficient/responsive school principal will demonstrate on a daily basis a personal commitment to learning/acting with sensitivity to avoiding biases. The culturally proficient/responsive school principal creates a climate of tolerance and acceptance and ultimately conveys that vision by communicating and acting in such a way that is transparent. By using such techniques as cultural mirroring, the culturally proficient/responsive school principal conveys expectations that staff will engage in reflection. By engaging in his/her own efforts of continuous improvement, by empowering CLD parents, and by behaving in a manner and using language which conveys value and openness for differences, the culturally proficient/responsive school principal actualizes the vision. Our CLD parents and community that are from different cultures and may speak a different language will look to actions of the principal to identify the values and beliefs he or she holds. The culturally proficient/responsive school principals who not only display those actions in the school setting, but also serve on community organizations and committees increase the likelihood that they will be perceived as open and inclusive.

DIRECTORS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

In some areas (school districts) principals will be involved with all of the previously described information, but in other areas (school districts), there will be directors of special education who will also be involved. These specialized administrators will work directly with special education teachers, support staff, and related services personnel. These administrators also need to be aware of how our student population is changing and the need to change current practices to more effectively

work with CLD students with LD and their parents. They will be instrumental in being a liaison between the school principal and the other school professionals in the school. It will be very important that they plan accordingly to meet the need of teachers, support staff, students, and parents by consulting and collaborating with the school principal. In addition, directors of special education will need to make sure that special education teachers have the same opportunities (i.e., to be involved with curriculum, decision-making, and professional development) as other school personnel. Directors of special education must also incorporate the same factors as school principals to meet the needs to CLD students with LD.

CONCLUSION

Culturally responsive teaching is one way that we can meet the needs of a culturally and linguistically diverse school population. Since our schools and school systems are more diverse than ever before, it is very important that culturally proficient/responsive administrators develop, maintain, and support a positive climate for the CLD students with LD, teachers, their families, and communities. Culturally proficient/responsive school principals and directors of special education must learn and understand how culture can and will influence and impact learning. It is also important that culturally proficient/responsive school principals and directors of special education lead by example and foster a positive and caring environment for the ever-changing diverse population. This should be evidenced through the school or district's vision, planning, recruitment, hiring practices, curriculum, communication with others, and professional development. As the make-up of schools and districts change, so must school principals and directors of special education.

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APPENDIX A

Cultural Behaviors for School Administrators

- Assess culture: Claim your differences.
- Value diversity: Name the differences.
- Manage the dynamics of difference: Frame the conflicts caused by differences.
- Adapt to diversity: Change to make a difference.
- Institutionalize cultural knowledge: Teach about differences.
- Implement a common vision through active leadership. School personnel have a sense of common mission. They feel they have the tools necessary to carry out the academic program. Administrators expect special and general education teachers to participate in educating students with disabilities.
- Challenge all students and their teachers to achieve high standards. Teachers use instructional strategies that help students achieve the knowledge and skills they are expected to learn. They provide assistance to students, and use class time to teach study skills. Students are assessed using multiple strategies, and teachers typically use assessment data to modify and adjust their teaching strategies.
- Encourage stakeholder involvement in school leadership. Teachers have a major role in curriculum development and development of school policies. Students, as well as parents, have ample opportunities to participate in school activities. For example, administrators solicit ideas from all stakeholders and offer opportunities to keep everyone informed.
- Promote innovation and professional development among staff. Teachers—the majority of whom have higher degrees—report positive experiences with professional development activities; for example, visiting colleagues' classrooms and participating in sessions in which the content is aligned to the school goals. Many describe their instructional style as child-centered.
- Build an inclusive and collaborative community of learning. Collaboration practices between general and special education teachers lead to strong student outcomes (Lindsey, Roberts, et al.).

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