

ALASKA STANDARDS FOR CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE SCHOOLS

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This chapter will describe the context and processes that led to the development of the *Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools*, the purpose of which has been to bring the indigenous knowledge systems and ways of knowing that have sustained the Native people of Alaska for millennia to the forefront in the educational systems serving Alaska students and communities today. As part of a larger educational restoration initiative, Native people have sought to reintegrate their own knowledge systems into the school curriculum as a basis for connecting what students learn in school with life out of school and thus restore a traditional sense of place while at the same time broadening and deepening the educational experience for all students (Barnhardt and Kawagley, 2005). Imbedded in the “cultural standards” is an emphasis on the role of local Elders, traditional values, experiential learning and alternative ways of knowing, all of which serve as the basis for a pedagogy of place that shifts the emphasis from teaching *about* the local culture to teaching *through* the culture as students learn about the immediate environment they inhabit and their connection to the larger world within which they will make a life for themselves.

Background

In an effort to address the issues associated with converging knowledge systems in a comprehensive, in-depth way and apply new insights to address long-standing problems with schooling for Native students, in 1995 the Alaska Federation of Natives, in collaboration with the University of Alaska Fairbanks and with funding from the National Science Foundation, entered into a long-term educational restoration endeavor—the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative (AKRSI). The underlying purpose of the AKRSI was to implement a set of initiatives to systematically document the indigenous knowledge systems of Alaska Native people and develop school curricula and pedagogical practices that appropriately incorporate local knowledge and ways of knowing into the formal education system (Kawagley, 1995). The central focus of the AKRSI strategy has been the fostering of connectivity and symbiosis between two functionally interdependent but historically disconnected and alienated complex systems—the indigenous knowledge systems rooted in the Native cultures that inhabit rural Alaska, and the formal education systems that have been imported to ostensibly serve the educational needs of Native communities. This effort was predicated on the notion that within each of these evolving systems is a rich body of complementary knowledge and skills that, if properly explicated and leveraged, can serve to strengthen the quality of educational experiences and improve the academic performance of students throughout Alaska (Barnhardt and Kawagley, 1999).

One of the major constraints in achieving long-term improvement of any kind in rural schools in Alaska is the persistent high turnover rate among educational personnel (an average of one-third annually in rural schools), coupled with a statewide Alaska Native teaching staff of under five percent, when the Native student population constitutes 24% of the school enrollment.

Therefore, one of the challenges of any significant effort to improve schooling has been the need to bring about a degree of stability and continuity in the professional personnel in the schools, particularly through the preparation of qualified Alaska Native teachers and administrators, and engaging Elders and local experts in the educational process. This led the AKRSI to focus on local capacity building through the formation of a series of regional Native educator associations to foster collaboration among, and strengthen the role of those few teachers for whom the community/region/state is their home.

As the Native educators (including Elders) began to examine the curriculum development, staffing and policy issues impacting their schools, they became concerned about the constricting forces that were bearing down on their schools as a result of the nascent standards movement—a school reform process being driven by a national and state agenda in which they had little involvement. As they reviewed the standards that had been developed for the various content areas, they didn’t quarrel with what they saw, but were greatly concerned with what they didn’t see. From their perspective, neither the state nor the national content standards in all the subject areas added up to a well-rounded education—as one Elder put it, “The schools are more concerned about preparing our children to make a living than they are in preparing them to make a life for themselves.” With guidance from the Elders, the Native educators in each cultural region began to document what they thought their children and grandchildren needed to know and be able to do as they went through school, and the strategies by which these life-affirming knowledge, skills and values might be achieved.

A turning point in the AKRSI efforts took place in 1998, when the Native educators from each of the regional associations assembled their collective insights and produced the *Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools*, which have since been endorsed by the State Board of Education and are now in use in schools throughout the state. The “cultural standards” have provided a template against which schools and communities can examine the extent to which they are attending to the educational and cultural well-being of their students, i.e., preparing them to make a life for themselves. They include standards in five areas: for students, educators, curriculum, schools and communities. The emphasis is on fostering a strong connection between what students experience in school and their lives out of school by promoting opportunities for students to engage in in-depth experiential learning in real world contexts. The cultural standards embodied the cultural and educational restoration strategy of the AKRSI and their implementation has had ripple effects throughout Alaska, in urban as well as rural schools.

Rationale

Through the *Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools*, educators and community members are directed toward preparing culturally knowledgeable students who are well grounded in the cultural heritage and traditions of their community and are able to understand and demonstrate how their local knowledge and practices relate to other knowledge systems and cultural beliefs. This includes:

- providing multiple avenues for the incorporation of locally-recognized expertise in all actions related to the use and interpretation of local cultural knowledge and practices as the basis for learning about the larger world;

- reinforcing the positive parenting and child-rearing practices from the community in all aspects of teaching and to engage in extended experiences that involve the development of observation and listening skills associated with the traditional learning ways of the respective cultural community;
- incorporating cultural and language immersion programs and the organization and implementation of extended camps and other seasonal everyday-life experiences to ground student learning naturally in the surrounding environment.

As articulated by the Native educators, the *Alaska Standards for Culturally-Responsive Schools* point to the need for educators who:

- incorporate local ways of knowing and teaching in their work.
- use the local environment and community resources on a regular basis to link what they are teaching to the everyday lives of the students.
- participate in community events and activities in an appropriate and supportive way.
- work closely with parents to achieve a high level of complementary educational expectations between home and school.
- recognize the full educational potential of each student and provide challenges necessary for them to achieve that potential. (ANKN, 1998, p. 9-12)

Subsequently, the Native educator associations have elaborated on the cultural standards through the preparation of *Guidelines for the Preparation of Culturally Responsive Teachers* (which are now being put to use in pre-service and in-service programs around the state), as well as a set of *Guidelines for Respecting Cultural Knowledge*, *Guidelines for Nurturing Culturally Healthy Youth*, *Guidelines for Strengthening Indigenous Languages*, *Guidelines for Cross-Cultural Orientation Programs*, and *Guidelines for Culturally Responsive School Boards* (the latter have been adopted by the Alaska Association of School Boards). These cultural standards and guidelines are all designed to assist schools and communities in the appropriate integration of indigenous knowledge in all aspects of their operations, and are all rooted in the belief that a form of education grounded in the heritage language and culture indigenous to a particular place is a fundamental prerequisite for the development of culturally-healthy students and communities.

With regard to participation, the standards and guidelines themselves emphasize the importance of extensive community and parental interaction and involvement in their children's education, both in and out of school. Elders, parents and local leaders are encouraged to be involved in all aspects of instructional planning and the design and implementation of school programs and curricula. Culturally responsive schools foster extensive on-going participation, communication and interaction between school and community personnel. Elders are accorded a central role as a primary source of knowledge throughout the standards and guidelines. An important element for building upon the traditional learning styles of local indigenous peoples is the creation and maintenance of multiple avenues for Elders to interact formally and informally with students at all times. This includes opportunities for students to engage in the documenting of Elders' cultural knowledge on a regular basis, thereby contributing to the maintenance and transmission of that knowledge. The cultural and professional expertise of Elders is essential and is to be used in appropriate and respectful ways.

As they were being developed, all of the cultural standards and guidelines were deliberately phrased in positive and proactive terms, rather than dwelling on and delineating the negative aspects of past educational practices, i.e., the emphasis was on what schools and communities should do rather than what they shouldn't do. Some of the multiple uses to which Native educator's envisioned the cultural standards being put are as follows:

- They may be used as a basis for reviewing school or district-level goals, policies and practices with regard to the curriculum and pedagogy being implemented in each community or cultural area.
- They may be used by a local community to examine the kind of home/family environment and parenting support systems that are provided for the upbringing of its children.
- They may be used to devise locally appropriate ways to review student and teacher performance as it relates to nurturing and practicing culturally healthy behavior, including serving as potential graduation requirements for students.
- They may be used to strengthen the commitment to revitalizing the local language and culture and fostering the involvement of Elders as an educational resource.
- They may be used to help teachers identify teaching practices that are adaptable to the cultural context in which they are teaching.
- They may be used to guide the preparation and orientation of teachers in ways that help them attend to the cultural well-being of their students.
- They may serve as criteria against which to evaluate educational programs intended to address the cultural needs of students.
- They may be used to guide the formation of state-level policies and regulations and the allocation of resources in support of equal educational opportunities for all children in Alaska.

Since their adoption in 1998, the cultural standards have been used for all these purposes and many more, including serving as model criteria for an international accreditation system for indigenous-serving higher education programs and institutions (Barnhardt, 2006; WINHEC, 2004).

For educators new to the use of the cultural standards, a helpful resource has been the *Handbook for Culturally Responsive Science Curriculum*, which provides further insight, practical information and examples of how to incorporate traditional knowledge in science curricula and integrate it with Western science, how to relate curriculum topics to the cultural standards, and examples of culturally appropriate strategies for instruction and assessment. The *Handbook for Culturally Responsive Science Curriculum* provides useful information on how to approach and involve Elders as teachers, and highlights how traditional teaching and learning can be combined with strategies for teaching inquiry-based science. Some of the compatible strategies identified include:

- community involvement and cooperative groups;
- multiple teachers as facilitators of learning;
- investigate fundamental science questions related to life, seasons and environment;
- investigate questions from multiple perspectives and disciplines;
- learn by active and extended inquiry;

- use of multiple sources of expert knowledge including cultural experts;
- diverse representations and communication of student ideas and work to classmates and community (Stephens 2000, p. 28)

In an effort to assess the impact of the strategies embodied in the cultural standards on student achievement, we turned to the results from the current regimen of norm- and criterion-referenced tests implemented by the State of Alaska. The data reported here represent results from each of those tests in the area of mathematics, comparing the performance of students in the 20 AKRSI partner school districts with that of students in 28 non-AKRSI rural school districts. The national standardized CAT-5/6 test and state benchmark exams serve as indicators of the effects of the implementation of the AKRSI initiatives over a period of ten years. The data show a steady net gain of AKRSI partner schools over non-AKRSI rural schools in the percentage of students who are in the upper quartile on 8th grade standardized achievement tests in mathematics, as well as a steady gain in mathematics proficiency levels on state standards-based assessments for both 8th and 10th grade students in AKRSI partner schools (AKRSI, 2005).

In addition to the state benchmark data, we also have norm-referenced test results for 9th grade students who have been taking the Terra Nova/CAT-6 since 2002. Though the differential gains for each group between 2002 and 2004 remain small, the AKRSI students do show a steady increase in performance, while the non-AKRSI students reflect a small decrease in their performance over the three years of available data. The consistent improvement in academic performance of students in AKRSI-affiliated schools over each of the past ten years leads us to conclude that the cumulative effect of utilizing the *Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools* to promote increased connections between what students experience in school and what they experience outside school appears to have a significant positive impact on their academic performance (AKRSI, 2005).

With regard to academic achievement, the incorporation of the *Alaska Standards for Culturally-Responsive Schools* in all aspects of the school curriculum and the demonstration of their applicability in providing alternative avenues to meet the State content standards is central. As indicated in the cultural standards, culturally responsive curricula:

- reinforce the integrity of the cultural knowledge that students bring with them;
- recognize cultural knowledge as part of a living and constantly adapting system that is grounded in the past, but continues to grow through the present and into the future;
- use the local language and cultural knowledge as a foundation for the rest of the curriculum and provide opportunities for students to study all subjects starting from a base in the local knowledge systems;
- foster a complementary relationship across knowledge derived from diverse knowledge systems;
- situate local knowledge and actions in a global context: ‘think globally, act locally’;
- unfold in a physical environment that is inviting and readily accessible for local people to enter and utilize. (ANKN, 1998, p. 13-19)

Summary

The primary thrust of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative in its effort to create a place for indigenous knowledge in education can best be summarized by the following statement taken from the introduction to the *Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools*:

By shifting the focus in the curriculum from teaching/learning *about* cultural heritage as another subject to teaching/learning *through* the local culture as a foundation for all education, it is intended that all forms of knowledge, ways of knowing and world views be recognized as equally valid, adaptable and complementary to one another in mutually beneficial ways. (ANKN, 1998, p. 3)

While much remains yet to be done to fully achieve the intent of Alaska Native people in seeking a place for their knowledge and ways in the education of their children, they have succeeded in demonstrating the efficacy of an educational system that is grounded in the deep knowledge associated with a particular place, upon which a broader knowledge of the rest of the world can be built.

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**Cultural Standards for Students
Cultural Standards for Educators
Cultural Standards for the Curriculum
Cultural Standards for Schools
Cultural Standards for Communities**



Sponsored by:

ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES
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ALASKA FIRST NATIONS RESEARCH NETWORK
CENTER FOR CROSS-CULTURAL STUDIES

**Adopted by the
Assembly of Alaska Native Educators
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The following standards have been developed by Alaska Native educators to provide a way for schools and communities to examine the extent to which they are attending to the educational and cultural well-being of the students in their care. These “cultural standards” are predicated on the belief that a firm grounding in the heritage language and culture indigenous to a particular place is a fundamental prerequisite for the development of culturally healthy students and communities associated with that place, and thus is an essential ingredient for identifying the appropriate qualities and practices associated with culturally responsive educators, curriculum and schools.

For several years, Alaska has been developing "content standards" to define what students should know and be able to do as they go through school. In addition, “performance standards” are being developed for teachers and administrators, and a set of "quality school standards" have been put forward by the Alaska Department of Education to serve as a basis for accrediting schools in Alaska. To the extent that these state standards are written for general use throughout Alaska, they don't always address some of the special issues that are of critical importance to schools in rural Alaska, particularly those serving Alaska Native communities and students.

Through a series of regional and statewide meetings associated with the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative (with funding provided by the National Science Foundation and the Annenberg Rural Challenge, and administrative support from the Alaska Federation of Natives in collaboration with the University of Alaska), Alaska Native educators have developed the following "Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools" for consideration by educators serving Native students around the state. Though the emphasis is on rural schools serving Native communities, many of the standards are applicable to all students and communities because they focus curricular attention on in-depth study of the surrounding physical and cultural environment in which the school is situated, while recognizing the unique contribution that indigenous people can make to such study as long-term inhabitants who have accumulated extensive specialized knowledge related to that environment.

Standards have been drawn up in five areas, including those for students, educators, curriculum, schools, and communities. These “cultural standards” provide guidelines or touchstones against which schools and communities can examine what they are doing to attend to the cultural well-being of the young people they are responsible for nurturing to adulthood. The standards included here serve as a complement to, not as a replacement for, those adopted by the State of Alaska. While the state standards stipulate what students should know and be able to do, the cultural standards are oriented more toward providing guidance on how to get them there in such a way that they become responsible, capable and whole human beings in the process. The emphasis is on fostering a strong connection between what students experience in school and their lives out of school by providing opportunities for students to engage in in-depth experiential learning in real-world contexts.

By shifting the focus in the curriculum from teaching/learning about cultural heritage as another subject to teaching/learning through the local culture as a foundation for all education, it is intended that all forms of knowledge, ways of knowing and world views be recognized as equally valid, adaptable and complementary to one another in mutually beneficial ways.

The cultural standards outlined in this document are not intended to be inclusive, exclusive or conclusive, and thus should be reviewed and adapted to fit local needs. Each school, community and related organization should consider which of these standards are appropriate and which are not, and when necessary, develop additional cultural standards to accommodate local circumstances. Terms should be interpreted to fit local conventions, especially with reference to meanings associated with the definition of Elder, tradition, spirituality, or anything relating to the use of the local language. Where differences of interpretation exist, they should be respected and accommodated to the maximum extent possible. The cultural standards are not intended to produce standardization, but rather to encourage schools to nurture and build upon the rich and varied cultural traditions that continue to be practiced in communities throughout Alaska.

CULTURAL STANDARDS FOR STUDENTS

A. Culturally knowledgeable students are well grounded in the cultural heritage and traditions of their community.

Students who meet this cultural standard are able to:

- 1) assume responsibility for their role in relation to the well-being of the cultural community and their life-long obligations as a community member;
- 2) recount their own genealogy and family history;
- 3) acquire and pass on the traditions of their community through oral and written history;
- 4) practice their traditional responsibilities to the surrounding environment;
- 5) reflect through their own actions the critical role that the local heritage language plays in fostering a sense of who they are and how they understand the world around them;
- 6) live a life in accordance with the cultural values and traditions of the local community and integrate them into their everyday behavior.
- 7) determine the place of their cultural community in the regional, state, national and international political and economic systems;

B. Culturally knowledgeable students are able to build on the knowledge and skills of the local cultural community as a foundation from which to achieve personal and academic success throughout life.

Students who meet this cultural standard are able to:

- 1) acquire insights from other cultures without diminishing the integrity of their own;
- 2) make effective use of the knowledge, skills and ways of knowing from their own cultural traditions to learn about the larger world in which they live;
- 3) make appropriate choices regarding the long-term consequences of their actions;
- 4) identify appropriate forms of technology and anticipate the consequences of their use for improving the quality of life in the community.

C. Culturally knowledgeable students are able to actively participate in various cultural environments.

Students who meet this cultural standard are able to:

- 1) perform subsistence activities in ways that are appropriate to local cultural traditions;
- 2) make constructive contributions to the governance of their community and the well-being of their family;
- 3) attain a healthy lifestyle through which they are able to maintain their own social, emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual well-being;
- 4) enter into and function effectively in a variety of cultural settings.

D. Culturally knowledgeable students are able to engage effectively in learning activities that are based on traditional ways of knowing and learning.

Students who meet this cultural standard are able to:

- 1) acquire in-depth cultural knowledge through active participation and meaningful interaction with Elders;
- 2) participate in and make constructive contributions to the learning activities associated with a traditional camp environment;
- 3) interact with Elders in a loving and respectful way that demonstrates an appreciation of their role as culture-bearers and educators in the community;

- 4) gather oral and written history information from the local community and provide an appropriate interpretation of its cultural meaning and significance;
- 5) identify and utilize appropriate sources of cultural knowledge to find solutions to everyday problems;
- 6) engage in a realistic self-assessment to identify strengths and needs and make appropriate decisions to enhance life skills.

E. Culturally knowledgeable students demonstrate an awareness and appreciation of the relationships and processes of interaction of all elements in the world around them.

Students who meet this cultural standard are able to:

- 1) recognize and build upon the inter-relationships that exist among the spiritual, natural and human realms in the world around them, as reflected in their own cultural traditions and beliefs as well as those of others;
- 2) understand the ecology and geography of the bioregion they inhabit;
- 3) demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between world view and the way knowledge is formed and used;
- 4) determine how ideas and concepts from one knowledge system relate to those derived from other knowledge systems;
- 5) recognize how and why cultures change over time;
- 6) anticipate the changes that occur when different cultural systems come in contact with one another;
- 7) determine how cultural values and beliefs influence the interaction of people from different cultural backgrounds;
- 8) identify and appreciate who they are and their place in the world.

CULTURAL STANDARDS FOR EDUCATORS

A. Culturally responsive educators incorporate local ways of knowing and teaching in their work.

Educators who meet this cultural standard:

- 1) recognize the validity and integrity of the traditional knowledge system;
- 2) utilize Elders' expertise in multiple ways in their teaching;
- 3) provide opportunities and time for students to learn in settings where local cultural knowledge and skills are naturally relevant;
- 4) provide opportunities for students to learn through observation and hands-on demonstration of cultural knowledge and skills;
- 5) adhere to the cultural and intellectual property rights that pertain to all aspects of the local knowledge they are addressing;
- 6) continually involve themselves in learning about the local culture.

B. Culturally responsive educators use the local environment and community resources on a regular basis to link what they are teaching to the everyday lives of the students.

Educators who meet this cultural standard:

- 1) regularly engage students in appropriate projects and experiential learning activities in the surrounding environment;
- 2) utilize traditional settings such as camps as learning environments for transmitting both cultural and academic knowledge and skills;
- 3) provide integrated learning activities organized around themes of local significance and across subject areas;
- 4) are knowledgeable in all the areas of local history and cultural tradition that may have bearing on their work as a teacher, including the appropriate times for certain knowledge to be taught;
- 5) seek to ground all teaching in a constructive process built on a local cultural foundation.

C. Culturally responsive educators participate in community events and activities in an appropriate and supportive way.

Educators who meet this cultural standard:

- 1) become active members of the community in which they teach and make positive and culturally appropriate contributions to the well being of that community;
- 2) exercise professional responsibilities in the context of local cultural traditions and expectations;
- 3) maintain a close working relationship with and make appropriate use of the cultural and professional expertise of their co-workers from the local community.

D. Culturally responsive educators work closely with parents to achieve a high level of complementary educational expectations between home and school.

Educators who meet this cultural standard:

- 1) promote extensive community and parental interaction and involvement in their children's education;
- 2) involve Elders, parents and local leaders in all aspects of instructional planning and implementation;
- 3) seek to continually learn about and build upon the cultural knowledge that students bring with them from their homes and community;
- 4) seek to learn the local heritage language and promote its use in their teaching.

E. Culturally responsive educators recognize the full educational potential of each student and provide the challenges necessary for them to achieve that potential.

Educators who meet this cultural standard:

- 1) recognize cultural differences as positive attributes around which to build appropriate educational experiences;
- 2) provide learning opportunities that help students recognize the integrity of the knowledge they bring with them and use that knowledge as a springboard to new understandings;
- 3) reinforce the student's sense of cultural identity and place in the world;

- 4) acquaint students with the world beyond their home community in ways that expand their horizons while strengthening their own identities;
- 5) recognize the need for all people to understand the importance of learning about other cultures and appreciating what each has to offer.

CULTURAL STANDARDS FOR CURRICULUM

A. A culturally responsive curriculum reinforces the integrity of the cultural knowledge that students bring with them.

A curriculum that meets this cultural standard:

- 1) recognizes that all knowledge is imbedded in a larger system of cultural beliefs, values and practices, each with its own integrity and interconnectedness;
- 2) insures that students acquire not only the surface knowledge of their culture, but are also well grounded in the deeper aspects of the associated beliefs and practices;
- 3) incorporates contemporary adaptations along with the historical and traditional aspects of the local culture;
- 4) respects and validates knowledge that has been derived from a variety of cultural traditions;
- 5) provides opportunities for students to study all subjects starting from a base in the local knowledge system.

B. A culturally responsive curriculum recognizes cultural knowledge as part of a living and constantly adapting system that is grounded in the past, but continues to grow through the present and into the future.

A curriculum that meets this cultural standard:

- 1) recognizes the contemporary validity of much of the traditional cultural knowledge, values and beliefs, and grounds students learning in the principles and practices associated with that knowledge;
- 2) provides students with an understanding of the dynamics of cultural systems as they change over time, and as they are impacted by external forces;
- 3) incorporates the in-depth study of unique elements of contemporary life in Native communities in Alaska, such as the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, subsistence, sovereignty and self-determination.

C. A culturally responsive curriculum uses the local language and cultural knowledge as a foundation for the rest of the curriculum.

A curriculum that meets this cultural standard:

- 1) utilizes the local language as a base from which to learn the deeper meanings of the local cultural knowledge, values, beliefs and practices;
- 2) recognizes the depth of knowledge that is associated with the long inhabitation of a particular place and utilizes the study of “place” as a basis for the comparative analysis of contemporary social, political and economic systems;
- 3) incorporates language and cultural immersion experiences wherever in-depth cultural understanding is necessary;
- 4) views all community members as potential teachers and all events in the community as potential learning opportunities;
- 5) treats local cultural knowledge as a means to acquire the conventional curriculum content as outlined in state standards, as well as an end in itself;
- 6) makes appropriate use of modern tools and technology to help document and transmit traditional cultural knowledge;
- 7) is sensitive to traditional cultural protocol, including role of spirituality, as it relates to appropriate uses of local knowledge.

D. A culturally responsive curriculum fosters a complementary relationship across knowledge derived from diverse knowledge systems.

A curriculum that meets this cultural standard:

- 1) draws parallels between knowledge derived from oral tradition and that derived from books;
- 2) engages students in the construction of new knowledge and understandings that contribute to an ever-expanding view of the world.

E. A culturally responsive curriculum situates local knowledge and actions in a global context.

A curriculum that meets this cultural standard:

- 1) encourages students to consider the inter-relationship between their local circumstances and the global community;
- 2) conveys to students that every culture and community contributes to, at the same time that it receives from the global knowledge base;
- 3) prepares students to “think globally, act locally.”

CULTURAL STANDARDS FOR SCHOOLS

A. A culturally responsive school fosters the on-going participation of Elders in all aspects of the schooling process.

A school that meets this cultural standard:

- 1) maintains multiple avenues for Elders to interact formally and informally with students at all times;
- 2) provides opportunities for students to regularly engage in the documenting of Elders' cultural knowledge and produce appropriate print and multimedia materials that share this knowledge with others;
- 3) includes explicit statements regarding the cultural values that are fostered in the community and integrates those values in all aspects of the school program and operation;
- 4) utilizes educational models that are grounded in the traditional world view and ways of knowing associated with the cultural knowledge system reflected in the community.

B. A culturally responsive school provides multiple avenues for students to access the learning that is offered, as well as multiple forms of assessment for students to demonstrate what they have learned.

A school that meets this cultural standard:

- 1) utilizes a broad range of culturally appropriate performance standards to assess student knowledge and skills;
- 2) encourages and supports experientially oriented approaches to education that makes extensive use of community-based resources and expertise;
- 3) provides cultural and language immersion programs in which student acquire in-depth understanding of the culture of which they are members;
- 4) helps students develop the capacity to assess their own strengths and weaknesses and make appropriate decisions based on such a self-assessment.

C. A culturally responsive school provides opportunities for students to learn in and/or about their heritage language.

A school that meets this cultural standard:

- 1) provides language immersion opportunities for students who wish to learn in their heritage language;
- 2) offers courses that acquaint all students with the heritage language of the local community;
- 3) makes available reading materials and courses through which students can acquire literacy in the heritage language;
- 4) provides opportunities for teachers to gain familiarity with the heritage language of the students they teach through summer immersion experiences.

D. A culturally responsive school has a high level of involvement of professional staff who are of the same cultural background as the students with whom they are working.

A school that meets this cultural standard:

- 1) encourages and supports the professional development of local personnel to assume teaching and administrative roles in the school;
- 2) recruits and hires teachers whose background is similar to that of the students they will be teaching;
- 3) provides a cultural orientation camp and mentoring program for new teachers to learn about and adjust to the cultural expectations and practices of the community and school;
- 4) fosters and supports opportunities for teachers to participate in professional activities and associations that help them expand their repertoire of cultural knowledge and pedagogical skills.

E. A culturally responsive school consists of facilities that are compatible with the community environment in which they are situated.

A school that meets this cultural standard:

- 1) provides a physical environment that is inviting and readily accessible for local people to enter and utilize;
- 2) makes use of facilities throughout the community to demonstrate that education is a community-wide process involving everyone as teachers;
- 3) utilizes local expertise, including students, to provide culturally appropriate displays of arts, crafts and other forms of decoration and space design.

F. A culturally responsive school fosters extensive on-going participation, communication and interaction between school and community personnel.

A school that meets this cultural standard:

- 1) holds regular formal and informal events bringing together students, parents, teachers and other school and community personnel to review, evaluate and plan the educational program that is being offered;
- 2) provides regular opportunities for local and regional board deliberations and decision-making on policy, program and personnel issues related to the school;
- 3) sponsors on-going activities and events in the school and community that celebrate and provide opportunities for students to put into practice and display their knowledge of local cultural traditions.

CULTURAL STANDARDS FOR COMMUNITIES

A. A culturally supportive community incorporates the practice of local cultural traditions in its everyday affairs.

A community that meets this cultural standard:

- 1) provides respected Elders with a place of honor in community functions;
- 2) models culturally appropriate behavior in the day-to-day life of the community;
- 3) utilizes traditional child-rearing and parenting practices that reinforce a sense of identity and belonging;
- 4) organizes and encourages participation of members from all ages in regular community-wide, family-oriented events;
- 5) incorporates and reinforces traditional cultural values and beliefs in all formal and informal community functions.

B. A culturally supportive community nurtures the use of the local heritage language.

A community that meets this cultural standard:

- 1) recognizes the role that language plays in conveying the deeper aspects of cultural knowledge and traditions;
- 2) sponsors local heritage language immersion opportunities for young children when they are at the critical age for language learning;
- 3) encourages the use of the local heritage language whenever possible in the everyday affairs of the community, including meetings, cultural events, print materials and broadcast media;
- 4) assists in the preparation of curriculum resource material in the local heritage language for use in the school;
- 5) provides simultaneous translation services for public meetings where persons unfamiliar with the local heritage language are participants.

C. A culturally supportive community takes an active role in the education of all its members.

A community that meets this cultural standard:

- 1) encourages broad-based participation of parents in all aspects of their children's education, both in and out of school;
- 2) insures active participation by community members in reviewing all local, regional and state initiatives that have bearing on the education of their children;
- 3) encourages and supports members of the local community who wish to pursue further education to assume teaching and administrative roles in the school;
- 4) engages in subsistence activities, sponsors cultural camps and hosts community events that provide an opportunity for children to actively participate in and learn appropriate cultural values and behavior;
- 5) provides opportunities for all community members to acquire and practice the appropriate knowledge and skills associated with local cultural traditions.

D. A culturally supportive community nurtures family responsibility, sense of belonging and cultural identity.

A community that meets this cultural standard:

- 1) fosters cross-generational sharing of parenting and child-rearing practices;
- 2) creates a supportive environment for youth to participate in local affairs and acquire the skills to be contributing members of the community;
- 3) adopts the adage, "It takes the whole village to raise a child."

E. A culturally supportive community assists teachers in learning and utilizing local cultural traditions and practices.

A community that meets this cultural standard:

- 1) sponsors a cultural orientation camp and community mentoring program for new teachers to learn about and adjust to the cultural expectations and practices of the community;
- 2) encourages teachers to make use of facilities and expertise in the community to demonstrate that education is a community-wide process involving everyone as teachers;
- 3) sponsors regular community/school potlucks to celebrate the work of students and teachers and to promote on-going interaction and communication between teachers and parents;
- 4) attempts to articulate the cultural knowledge, values and beliefs that it wishes teachers to incorporate into the school curriculum;

- 5) establishes a program to insure the availability of Elders' expertise in all aspects of the educational program in the school.

F. A culturally supportive community contributes to all aspects of curriculum design and implementation in the local school.

A community that meets this cultural standard:

- 1) takes an active part in the development of the mission, goals and content of the local educational program;
- 2) promotes the active involvement of students with Elders in the documentation and preservation of traditional knowledge through a variety of print and multimedia formats;
- 3) facilitates teacher involvement in community activities and encourages the use of the local environment as a curricular resource;
- 4) promotes parental involvement in all aspects of their childrens educational experience.