Graphic of hanging fish Title Cultural Integration Those who think they can accomplish something, will. Inupaiaq proverb


|  |
| --- |
| As Alaskan schools have recognized the impact of trauma on their students, staff, and the wider community, school staff have requested a guide to systemically gauge their trauma-engaged work. The **Transforming Schools Milestone Guides** can serve as a reference for superintendents, school administrators and teams, school staff, and school board members. Some guides also have steps for the community, students, and families. Milestone Guides offer four levels of action to complete, broken out by leadership and staff roles, for each of the 11 components within the Framework and Toolkit.   * **Preparing** – In schools we prepare students all the time, for projects, concerts, and tests. We consider why certain skills and actions are important and what we need to prepare students for success. For our trauma-engaged work, we gather information and resources to deepen understanding of why trauma-engaged work is essential to our mission and how we can begin. * **Starting** – After preparing we make a start. In schools, we start our reading skills, begin to play the music, or meet to begin the project. We see what skills students have and build on those skills and expand them. As a trauma-engaged team, we assess where we are with this work – we see our strengths and weaknesses and we develop priorities of what we want to address. * **Applying** – After we get to know our students and their strengths we begin to build new skills and strengthen existing ones. In trauma-engaged schools, we prioritize actions that can have the most impact, and we have the capacity to implement. Applying means that we are working together and planning for the concrete trauma-engaged supports we want to be accessible to our students and families. We know that, like students, we need repetition and practice to feel confident and competent. * **Refining** – As students achieve their learning goals, we work with them to hone in on more subtle skills. For example, a student's writing style is enhanced, nuanced music skills are developed, or group activities skills are more deeply explored. Trauma-Engaged schools and staff take time to reflect on their structures, practices, and tools to make quality improvements by deepening and expanding their practice.   The Transforming Schools Milestone Guides offer steps and a starting point to deepen personal growth, establish a common vision with colleagues and community, and remind each of us that this is a process of preparing, starting, applying, and refining our trauma-engaged work. Individuals and teams move through the steps many times to continue to improve upon and deepen our approach. Using the Milestone tool, schools, districts, and individuals can reflect on their work on an ongoing basis. While primarily a planning tool, the guides can also be used to celebrate progress. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Cultural Integration and Community Co-Creation Section Overview:** Community co-creation and cultural integration require each staff member to reflect on their own relationships with self, as well as with students, peers, families, and the community. These relationships take an intentional effort to understand our own identity, positional power, influence, shared decision making, biases, and ability to establish trust. A sense of safety and trusting authentic relationships are at the heart of trauma-engaged schools, community healing, and ful cultural integration in schools.  Trauma-engaged schools consider each student and each family’s lived experience. Each family has their own experience with boarding schools, language disruption, education, migration, subsistence practices, communication, learning from Elders, parenting, and may have unique values to share in the school setting. Each community has its own story and strengths. While many communities are healing from the impacts of colonization, there is much knowledge, resilience, language, connectedness, and stewardship of the land that has been passed down over generations.  Modern-day Alaska communities range from schools with more than 100 languages spoken at home to communities that are more culturally distinct. Schools are continuing to find ways for students, families, and staff to bring their whole selves into each lesson and classroom. School staff are working with local culture bearers, tribes, and families to incorporate accurate histories and opportunities to learn on the land where students live. Other teachers are incorporating questions and individualized learning into each lesson plan. All communities can benefit from bringing students’ families and traditions into the classroom. All students can benefit from Alaskan people’s extensive knowledge of the land, relationships, math, science, and teaching strategies. |

|  |
| --- |
| **LEADERSHIP: Cultural Integration and Co-Creation Milestone Guide** |

|  |
| --- |
| **Leadership 1. Create a roadmap for culturally responsive allyship and integration in your district.** |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Preparing** | **Starting** | **Applying** | **Refining** | **Key Dates & Next Steps** |
| a. Read about and understand how leadership roles/positions can influence relationships, community-school connections, culturally responsive practices, trauma-engaged schools, and equity.  b. Join peer structures with other leaders to check in about equity and culturally responsive work. Continue to work on the self, including openness, relationships, and influence.  c. Identify key spokespeople and facilitators to work with staff to create more equitable learning environments and structures to support students in becoming a respectful person.  d. Identify key goals and objectives that provide a vision for culturally responsive, whole-student teaching.    e. Build relationships in the community and with students, staff, and families. Keep trusting relationships at the core.  f. Review your student, staff, and family school climate data on cultural responsiveness. | g. Continue to examine your relationships, biases, and how you interact under stress.  h. Review examples, case studies, and approaches to co-creation and cultural integration of learning strategies and practices that are culturally affirming.  i. Work with the board to support policies, curricula, budgeting, and district/school-developed action plans that support cultural integration.  j. Establish onboarding, professional development, and coaching structures that help staff examine their relationships, biases, local knowledge, and culturally responsive strategies.  k. Develop regular communication structures and school organizing teams to establish norms and a reflective learning practice for culturally responsive indicators.  l. Establish questions or protocols with the trauma-engaged team to build confidence, curiosity, and courage when developing and refining approaches.  m. Work with leadership team and community members to prioritize opportunities. See section 4 on leadership team.  n. Understand and be able to communicate the strengths and gaps for cultural responsiveness for schools or districts. Incorporate data and reflection. | o. Translate policies into school handbooks or other school-level materials as needed.  p. Incorporate culturally responsive expectations with clear onboarding, professional development, and coaching opportunities.    q. Develop common language that allows the community and school to speak about and participate in trauma-engaged school efforts.  r. Ensure that families and students have access to culturally affirming healing strategies and learning that is incorporated into all subject areas, social and emotional learning, events, and routines.  s. Connect community-based cultural programs to  year-round learning in core content areas.  t. Link social and emotional learning to authentic cultural activities.  u. Support local priorities and Alaska knowledge bases, including language and accurate regional histories. | v. Identify areas of growth and continued personal goals to strengthen relationships, level power dynamics, and uncover additional blind spots that impact your ability to lead on equity.  w. Listen to feedback or corrections from Elders with curiosity and humility.  x. Consider what knowledge set has been embedded into school practices and identify the additional steps you can take as a superintendent or school administrator. Review handbook, onboarding, learning structures, lesson planning, scheduling, restorative approaches, modeling, etc.  y. Establish places to share resources for personal growth and tools for tracking culturally responsive strategies and approaches.  z. Review disaggregated school climate data to track progress.  aa. Set learning and practice goals for the next year based on learning and feedback. |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Leadership 2. Ensure that school staff understand the power of culturally responsive teaching and learning.** |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Preparing** | **Starting** | **Applying** | **Refining** | **Key Dates & Next Steps** |
| a. Include questions on culturally responsive teaching in interviews and hiring conditions.  b. Share the board vision on cultural responsiveness and the leadership vision on what that looks like in the district and school.  c. Identify stories or examples that share the "why" of culturally responsive teaching and its impact on student learning. Include brain science, ethics, and learning impact.  d. Build trust with staff to have honest conversations about disproportionality and the importance of culturally responsive teaching.  e. Provide outside training to help prepare staff for culturally responsive work. Support all staff, regardless of background and experience, to be successful culturally responsive teachers. | f. Include local knowledge bearers in training, material development, and coaching structures.  g. Prioritize opportunities for school staff to see community and family-based learning in action.  h. Establish strong trusting peer communities and coaching structures to share learning and roadblocks.  i. Create a calendar of significant community events and encourage staff to participate.  j. Establish mentoring pairs or work structures that allow teachers to tap into family and community knowledge bearers. Encourage reflection on classroom practices, relationships, and instruction. | k. Incentivize culturally responsive credentials and endorsements.  l. Identify what is helping staff to move from knowing to doing. | m. Understand how structures meet staff learning and classroom preparation needs.  n. Adjust incentive programs to better support culturally responsive teaching and learning.  o. Review student, staff, and family perspectives of school climate and cultural responsiveness. Work toward closer alignment with goals. |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Leadership 3. Integrate activities in schools that are healing for the community and families. Review “harvests,” locally relevant information learned from community conversations.** |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Preparing** | **Starting** | **Applying** | **Refining** | **Key Dates & Next Steps** |
| a. Create structures for families and communities to serve as coaches or consultants. Consider language, self-regulating activities, and cultural content.  b. Review community dialogues to understand community tools and goals for resilience.  c. Prioritize and provide staff support for community-identified projects.  d. Establish teams to review curricula through culturally responsive, place-based, and intergenerational healing lenses.  e. Begin to identify community partners to engage in hiring and on-boarding of new staff.  f. Talk to long-standing staff and other community leaders about successes and challenges around integrating culturally responsive work in the classroom. | g. Build up coaching skills of culturally responsive mentors.  h. Connect learning to the seasonal calendar and important cultural milestones for students and families.  i. Host new or additional dialogues/community workgroups as directed by community partners.  j. Discuss and deepen staff understanding of communication styles, ways of learning, and strategies for self-regulating and healing. Consider impacts on trauma-engaged schools and successful conditions for learning.  k. Identify and incorporate key thinking patterns to connect content to family and place.  l. Consider how to center healing around language revitalization. Determine which languages need to be supported for families to fully engage. | m. Provide opportunities for staff to receive consultation on lesson plans, classroom routines, family partnership opportunities, and culturally responsive social and emotional practices.  n. Create structures to share seasonal and cultural lessons across grade levels and content areas.  o. Share successes and gaps at community dialogues. Partner with the community to make changes based on identified gaps.  p. Incorporate activities, practices, and routines that are healing and support cultural resilience for students and families. | q. Debrief regularly on consultation and coaching model.  r. Collect feedback from students and families to understand successes and areas for improvement with trauma-engaged efforts.  s. Determine the language and concepts that are most helpful in co-creating and integrating cultural responsiveness. Identify additional needs.  t. Work to improve consistency across classrooms and scaffolding (developmentally).  u. Center and learn from student knowledge bases, experiences, and ways of learning int school. |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **STAFF: Cultural Integration and Co-Creation Milestone Guide** |

|  |
| --- |
| **Staff 1. Learn about and be intentional about ways to include culture and community context in curricula and classroom practices.** |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Preparing** | **Starting** | **Applying** | **Refining** | **Key Dates & Next Steps** |
| a. Learn about and feel comfortable talking about your own culture and family experience.  b. Explore your own values and assumptions and their impact on outcomes for students.  c. Read about cultural safety, cultural integration, place, and experiences of families in your school (read book list)  d. Approach culture and community knowledge with openness, humility, and curiosity.  e. Speak with colleagues and community members that understand the history, current practices, and knowledge of the community.  f. Prioritize learning about others’ culture and values to build mutual understanding and respectful trusting relationships.  g. Create community  and/or family sessions to better understand how to incorporate cultural knowledge into practices, routines, planning, lessons, and student social and emotional skill development.  h. Set aside time each week to dedicate to growing this in your teaching practice.  i. Consider your daily routines and opportunities for each routine to be enhanced by culture, family, and place.  j. Review school or classroom data and consider any biases that might need to be addressed in the school or classroom. | k. Participate in a reading or reflective practice group to  foster curiosity, connection, and courage while building culture and community knowledge.  l. Work with cultural mentors or coaches to better understand ways to incorporate place, seasons, and relevant topics (culturally specific or collectivist).  m. Adopt or adapt lesson planning tools to incorporate place-based knowledge and reflection tools. Consider culturally specific or reflection questions that invite each family history/context.  n. Learn about how classroom routines, language, teaching strategies, curricula, or other standards could be more culturally specific or support collectivist cultures.  o. Create a document or notebook to track lessons learned about cultural and community context. | p. Practice approaches regularly and incorporate regular debriefs.  q. Prioritize trauma-engaged strategies to establish, maintain or restore cultural safety in the school.  r. Incorporate authentic cultural activities and knowledge sets from the community into the school.  s. Include Elders, community leaders, and families as teachers and education leaders.  t. Work together with families to embed social and emotional practices and to understand strengths of each student.  u. Establish classroom routines and language to reinforce cultural knowledge and culturally based trauma-engaged practices.  v. Identify areas for improvement in classroom practices, content, or preparation. | w. Reflect on the effectiveness of cultural adaptations and make improvements.  x. Measure and review changes in student or family perceptions of cultural responsiveness.  y. Continue training and building your own understanding and muscle memory for integrating culturally responsive practice.  z. Film classroom lessons and instruction.- Debrief with a coach, mentor, peer, or on your own to identify opportunities to incorporate culturally grounded ways of learning (social emotional learning or subject area).  aa. Review your notebook or document that tracks lessons learned.  bb. Remain open and humble to feedback from families, students, and Elders. |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Staff 2. Align social and emotional teachings, school expectations, and authentic learning activities with cultural values.** |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Preparing** | **Starting** | **Applying** | **Refining** | **Key Dates & Next Steps** |
| a. Build your understanding of how families and the wider community talk about social and emotional skills.  b. Study the existing self-regulation strategies used in the community.  c. Learn about self-care and healing strategies used in the community.  d. Learn the local language. Apply local language to help students navigate difficult situations. | e. Collaborate with families and Elders to develop plans to support students' social and emotional development as a class and as individuals.  f. Identify culturally responsive activities to teach social and emotional skills.  g. Practice using a few phrases in the local language to engage, encourage, and reassure students. | h. Develop opportunities for families and Elders to join and contribute to the classroom climate.  i. Invite families and Elders to support community-based classroom learning opportunities that link to authentic cultural activities and social and emotional learning.  j. Embed local language into the classroom more fully. | k. Identify additional structures that could be helpful in the classroom.  l. Assess student and family perception on social and emotional learning development over the year.  m. Review School Climate and Connectedness data, particularly on cultural responsive and social emotional scales. |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Staff 3. Create opportunities in class for students to consider their own family, culture, community ways of life, and school norms.** |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Preparing** | **Starting** | **Applying** | **Refining** | **Key Dates & Next Steps** |
| a. Spend time identifying the cultural norms, important life events, and ways of life for your students’ families.  b. Identify questions or a lesson planning tool to link each lesson and content area to students’ families or the region.  c. Expand your own learning and knowledge by participating in community events, ceremonies, or seasonal activities. | d. Work with cultural experts and designated colleagues to make sense of your own experience.  e. Work with students’ families to calendar significant life events and ways of life activities throughout the year.  f. Use lesson planning tools that incorporate cultural standards or reflection questions. | g. Share lesson plans, classroom tools, and other materials that incorporate family cultures and place into your school.  h. Integrate community and cultural events and seasonal activities into curricula in authentic ways.  i. Find ways to bring the classroom into the community and the community into the classroom. | j. Document and share what you learned over the year about cultural practices, history, current knowledge, and norms that you incorporated in your lessons.  k. Identify areas for improvement, including in practices, content, ways of teaching, planning tools, community co-creation, and reflective practice.  l. Pinpoint specific opportunities to make your lessons more authentic or meaningful to students.  m. Identify next steps or milestones for cultural integration. |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Staff 4. Contribute to strategic plan development to advance cultural integration and culturally responsive goals.** |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Preparing** | **Starting** | **Applying** | **Refining** | **Key Dates & Next Steps** |
| a. Work with school leadership to identify achievable and measurable objectives toward cultural integration and responsiveness.  b. Ensure curriculum committee has a clear understanding of current curriculum and curriculum goals. | c. Establish clear goals with measurable indicators of success.  d. Use lesson planning tools that incorporate cultural standards or reflection questions.    e. Work with cultural experts and designated colleagues to your own experience. | f. Work as teams within the school to implement strategic plans and report on progress. | g. Identify persistent challenges in carrying out identified goals.  h. Assess impact of strategies within the plan and make improvements or adjustments as necessary. |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **SCHOOL BOARD: Cultural Integration and Co-Creation Milestone Guide** |

|  |
| --- |
| **School Board 1. Budget for cultural integration and community co-creation.** |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Preparing** | **Starting** | **Applying** | **Refining** | **Key Dates & Next Steps** |
| a. Examine your school budget to understand the values expressed by your school board. Are funds designed to reach each student early, make content relevant, help each student achieve their goals equitably. See examples below\*\*  b. Identify and understand sources of funding for culturally responsive programs, cultural programs, and integration. | c. Determine a plan to create stable and consistent funding for cultural, trauma-engaged, and community-engaged programs.  d. Create braided funded sources that can be consistent across years. Collaborate with tribes and native nonprofits.  e. Identify line items that must be in the general budget annually to support cultural and equitable education opportunities. | f. Review budgets annually through equity, community, cultural, and trauma-engaged lenses.  g. Ensure that cultural and community-driven programs are not the first programs asked to justify their funding.  h. Meet regularly with partners that fund cultural programs to forecast program sustainability needs. | i. Evaluate the effectiveness of programs and refine braided funding opportunities.  j. Meet with tribes and nonprofit organizations to maintain strong relationships and continue a braided funding approach. |  |

\*\* Examples: Does your school focus on school climate/inclusive classrooms where all children belong? \* Does your district work to create culturally and academically literate students? \* Do you have career- and college-ready programs for all students that ground them in their identity and create relevant job pathways? \* Do you fill opportunity gaps for each student with after school activities and high-engagement activities during school? \* Do you use data-focused decision making from classrooms to board rooms to compare how groups of students are doing? \* Do you compensate cultural knowledge and language proficiency in teachers?

|  |
| --- |
| **School Board 2. Adopt and adapt policies that support cultural integration, place-based healing approaches, cultural integration coaching, staff development, and family participation.** |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Preparing** | **Starting** | **Applying** | **Refining** | **Key Dates & Next Steps** |
| a. Understand core components of cultural safety and cultural integration policies:   1. Cultural safety and place-based healing approaches. 2. Cultural integration- learning and school environment. 3. Hiring, onboarding, and training of staff to be culturally responsive educators with strong links to the community. 4. Policies that build family and community partnerships. 5. Policies that convey high expectations of all students. 6. Policies that support student-centered and place-based instruction. | b. Review current policies to determine if your district has adopted the latest AASB trauma-engaged and culturally responsive policies.  c. Identify any gaps in existing policies.  d. Work with AASB or legal counsel to draft policies to meet identified gaps. | e. Follow policy protocols for reviewing, reading, and adopting policies. See policy section of toolkit.  f. Include policies in administrative regulations, school handbooks, and other accountability structures. | g. Review unintended outcomes and adjust policy recommendations.  h. Reach out to AASB and share additional policy considerations, including policies with potential statewide impact). Follow up with AASB as they work with policy subscribers to legally vet policies.  i. Consider any exhibits or administrative regulations that can support your policies. |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **School Board 3. Adopt a strategic plan that embeds cultural integration and community co-creation goals.** |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Preparing** | **Starting** | **Applying** | **Refining** | **Key Dates & Next Steps** |
| 1. Reflect regularly on the direction of your district.  b. Direct superintendent to identify potential facilitators.  c. Approve strategic planning process proposed by administration. | d. Allocate necessary resources to implement the strategic planning process.  e. Develop a committee to work with the facilitator on the strategic plan.  f. Identify school board members and community partners who will be part of the community planning process.  g. Develop a community survey that the planning team will use in the planning process. | h. Adopt the goal areas and objectives after the planning team meets.  i. Ensure that district leadership and staff develop strategies and indicators for each objective. | j. Review strategic plan progress at each board meeting.  k. Review progress in more detail during a board work session each year  l. Ensure the strategic plan is a living document by reporting to the public on progress each year. |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **School Board 4. Establish two-way communication structures that support cultural integration, community co-creation, and healing.** |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Preparing** | **Starting** | **Applying** | **Refining** | **Key Dates & Next Steps** |
| a. Learn best practices on cultural integration policies.  b. Establish communication structures that track cultural integration and community co-creation progress.  c. Identify role as a board member to be a communication and information ambassador. | d.. Review communication policies.  e. Establish reporting intervals and reporting tools to track progress.  f. Identify specific activities and talking points or listening prompts for all board members. | g. Follow policies.  h. Review progress on cultural integration and community co-creation.  i. Participate in community activities. | j. Adopt policy changes as needed.  k. Assess progress and identify next steps to advance cultural integration and community co-creation.  l. Understand impact from community activities. |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **School Board 5. Review and approve curricula that achieve cultural integration and partnership goals.** |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Preparing** | **Starting** | **Applying** | **Refining** | **Key Dates & Next Steps** |
| a. Set schedule for curricula review. Refer to policy for guidance.  b. Ensure that curriculum committee has clear goals and understands resources available to guide curricula choices. | c. Ask the administration what curricula area will be reviewed each cycle.  d. Allocate necessary resources for curriculum review committee.  e. Review curricula recommendations carefully with particular emphasis on cultural accuracy. | f. Adopt curricula proposed by the committee. | g. Review relevant student data to understand effectiveness of curricula.  h. Continue to assess impact of curricula and determine needed adaptations. |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Tribal Government and Community Members: Cultural Integration and Co-Creation Milestone Guide** |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Preparing** | **Starting** | **Applying** | **Refining** | **Key Dates & Next Steps** |
| a. Learn about the impact of trauma on students, families, and community.  b. Understand your own experiences.  c. Establish MOUs and agreements between tribal organizations and districts/schools to clarify roles and partnership opportunities for delivering education.    d. Offer structures or ways for school staff to partner and build on knowledge in the community. | e. Establish regular meetings between tribes and school leadership to discuss big-picture goals, collaboration, and engagement opportunities.  f. Ensure that community members can serve on planning committee and have opportunities to provide feedback at various stages of policy implementation.  g. Request community facilitator trainings, support dialogues, and healing conversations in partnership with First Alaskans Institute.    h. Invite school leadership, student government, and school staff to meetings, events, or other opportunities.    i. Share knowledge, help school staff design curricula, build relationships with local knowledge-bearers, and support relationships between school staff and the community. | j. Monitor progress and action steps from shared goals.  k. Recruit more families, organizational, and community partners to participate in learning and decision-making in the educational arena.  l. Host community dialogues and circles to support healing, relationship building, and community action.  m. Contribute to student learning inside and outside of the school. | n. Continue ongoing recruitment of staff, families, and others to participate  o. Help school staff establish, maintain, or restore relationships to improve student outcomes.  p. Assess progress on integrating culture and community into learning structures.  q. Identify key areas for improving collaboration and achieving goals. |  |