



A Family For Every Child Diversity



"Diversity is the one true thing we all have in common."

Culture in the Classroom

Have you ever wondered why our education system is failing? Have you ever wondered why we have a high percentage of drop out rates for youth 18 years old and under? Did you know that the Eugene School District has a 39% drop out rate. That's over a third of the youth enrolled in public schools here in Lane County!

Now what does this mean for the youth that do drop out or have multiple suspensions in school? Where do these students go? What could we do to change this drastic percentage?

The reason why we see so many youth failing out of school or giving up on their education is due to the fact that our education system is designed as a "one size fits all model."

Some urban areas have implemented different curriculum in their classroom in order for youth to understand the material better. Although some schools are offering a more culturally sensitive approach, many other schools have failed to implement such. The "one size fits all" model is meant to be designed to see the students academic strengths and weaknesses. More importantly, students deserve a high quality curriculum. That being said, if we recognize and see so many students fail within this model, why haven't more schools begun the process of implementing a more culturally responsive curriculum?

Educators today hear a lot about gaps in education. Whether that be achievement gaps, funding gaps, school-readiness gaps. Still, there's another gap that often get's neglected. The cultural gap between students

and teachers. "A bunch of teachers here, they think they know what's wrong with us. But they don't know. If people want to help us, they have to see what we've been through, not from what their own experiences tell them."

- Billie, a Lakota teen speaking of the teachers at her high school

Most educators within the education profession are white, middle class and English speakers. This is so different from the youth that populate the school system. The youth that populate our school's come from various cultural backgrounds with many different views on their personal academics futures. Some youth come from different socioeconomic backgrounds.

Some youth have families that struggle to survive below the poverty line.

As much as educators would like these families to uphold their responsibilities as youth from affluent families do, sometimes it's an accomplishment for students to actually attend school daily, regardless if they are "tardy". There are so many temptations for them to stay out of school. The main truth is culture matters. Specifically in the classroom. Culture isn't just a list of holidays, shared recipes or language; it is a lived experience unique to each individual.

As educators and those that works with youth, it's our job to stimulate the intellectual development of the youth we serve. If we take the extra step to customize our curriculum in schools to ensure that all youth understand and thrive with the knowledge given to them, we have done our duty within educating and holding true to every youth's cultural background. To truly engage students, educators must reach out to them in ways that are culturally and linguistically responsive and appropriate.

Legacy Charter School

Here is a clear example our how a charter school in South Carolina that implements youth culture in teaching their elementary class the 13 colonies of the United States of America. You will see that the students are engaged, having a great time learning the 13 colonies and the material fits these children's cultural influences.



The fourth grade extended-day program showed off their talent and their smarts with this

Legacy Charter Elementary has clearly defined learning objectives for our children following the Common Core National Standards. While teaching this curriculum, we create a school atmosphere in which every student can learn the values of discipline, respect, and a love of learning. All students have general music, strings, and percussion. Our curriculum stresses individual attention and community and parental involvement for student success.

School-To-Prison Pipeline

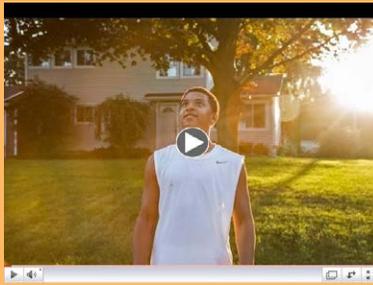
The "school-to-prison pipeline" refers to the policies and practices that push our nation's schoolchildren, especially our most at-risk children, out of classrooms and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems. This pipeline reflects the prioritization of incarceration over education. For a growing number of students, the path to incarceration includes the "stops" below.



How The School to Prison Pipeline Ruins Lives Before They Start
BRAVE NEW FILMS:
JUSTICE #2

ACLU, 2014

The School-To-Prison Pipeline begins with inadequate resources in public schools. Due to the ever changing about of funding schools are offered, lack of resources also come with lack of funding. Many of the schools resources, such as school counselors, after school programs and special education services are all removed and in turn academically hurt the students at these schools.



Gone Too Far: Our Kids in Handcuffs

With this outcome, so many of the students that are not meeting the academic standards set by these school districts are often push out the low performing students. Also, schools have embraced and implemented the "Zero Tolerance Polices" that automatically impose severe punishment regardless of circumstances. Under these policies, students have been expelled for ridiculous reasons. Some have been expelled for bringing a basic nail clipper or pair of scissors to school. Rates of suspension have increased dramatically over the years. These suspensions have been most dramatic for youth of color.

Mentoring Works

Give the gift of time!

Mentor a youth in need!

Our Mentor Program is continuously looking for male mentors and mentors from various cultural backgrounds. Sometime all a youth needs is someone to cheer for them, be there when they need help and to be a friend. Our program is designed to create profoundly meaningful relationships that last a life time!

Questions?

Contact mentor@afamilyforeverychild.org today!



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