

Recommendation 3: Develop Partnerships to Close the Achievement Gap

Connecting schools with educational organizations, city and county agencies, faith-based organizations, parent groups, and businesses is necessary to foster partnerships that will support a well-defined student support system. Such partnerships recognize that students have needs outside the classroom that, if unmet, can significantly and adversely affect their ability to learn. Breaking down barriers and creating partnerships throughout California is an important step toward implementing a consistent approach to a high-quality and inclusive educational program.

CULTURE AND CLIMATE

Recommendation 4: Provide Culturally Relevant Professional Development for All School Personnel



Learning occurs within the context of the values, beliefs, and rituals of the school community and the larger society. This is a necessary and potentially beneficial factor in creating strong schools—provided the school culture and climate reflect and are responsive to the diverse racial, cultural backgrounds, and needs of its student populations. This is not always the case; students of color often feel alienated from the norms and behaviors of the school culture or put off by educational practices that “do not reflect my background and where I come from.” To communicate and do an effective job of teaching, California’s educators need to have a cultural understanding of themselves, the students they teach, and the communities that house them.

Culturally responsive pedagogy is a key step in addressing the lack of connection between scholars and educators. California needs to develop a comprehensive, culturally relevant and responsive strategy for educators that will help them to become the kind of educator who can teach any student effectively.