Equity Framework
for Adopted Curriculum Materials

This framework may be adapted by a Material Selection Committee to ensure relevance to the type of materials under consideration.

Purpose of the Framework (Our Why): *Using instructional resources and materials that are free from bias, that promote inclusion and belonging, and that respectfully portray differing racial groups, cultural traditions, religion, gender, multiple perspectives, and sexual identity, as well as family identity, create learning environments that are safe, welcoming, and representative of our students. This framework is to act as a guide for curriculum adoption teams to use when selecting curriculum resources and materials.*

What Is Culturally Responsive Education (CRE): Culturally responsive education (closely related to the terms "culturally relevant" and "culturally sustaining" education) refers to the combination of teaching, pedagogy, curriculum, theories, attitudes, practices, and instructional materials that center students' culture, identities, and contexts throughout educational systems. Gloria Ladson-Billings and Geneva Gay's scholarship is foundational to culturally responsive education. Some key principles of culturally responsive education (CRE) include (1) validating students' experiences and values, (2) disrupting power dynamics that privilege dominant groups, and (3) empowering students. NYU Metro Center's report "Culturally Responsive Education: A Primer for Policy and Practice" more fully details the origins, significance, and impact of CRE in schools.

Significance of Culturally Responsive Education: Across the country, rigorous evaluations and studies have shown that culturally responsive curricula increase student academic engagement, attendance, grade point averages, graduation rates, civic engagement, positive racial self-images, and self-definition (Browman, 2011; Butler-Barnes, 2017; Cabrera, 2012; Carter, 2008; Dee & Penner 2016; Morell, 2013). CRE is essential for students of color, and also has a positive impact on White students and their ability to think critically (Laird, 2005). Not only does CRE impact students' academic experiences, but it can also have significant influence on racial attitudes and biases, and provide the cognitive tools needed to critique institutional racism (Garth-McCullough, 2008).

Culture Beyond Race and Ethnicity: While examining the ways that race and ethnicity are represented in the curriculum is important, it is equally important to consider how other aspects of culture are integrated into curricula as well. Other aspects of culture can include:

language, gender, ability, religion, socio-economic class, sexual orientation, age, and geographic location. Furthermore, the intersections between important identities, such as being both Black and immigrant or both Latina and disabled, can reveal unique cultural experiences that may not be present for people who share only one aspect of those identities. CRE literature and countless studies about the impact of culture in the classroom continue to support the important role that cultural relevance can play in learning, in curriculum, and in relationships at schools. There are additional cultural identities that we want to address more directly in this framework as well: gender, disability, and language.

Gender- Similar to the ways that race is socially constructed, gender is also socially constructed. Biologically there is one race, the human race. However, within society, there are multiple races: Black, Indigenous, Asian, Latinx, White, etc. and there are many ways that race can be classified and defined. Even though race is socially constructed, there are very real consequences for the social constructions of race such as racism, privilege, racial capitalism, imperialism, and colonization. The ways that gender has been socially constructed also result in multiple classifications of gender: cisgender people, women, girls, non-binary people, transgender people, two-spirit people, men, boys, and more. The most common (and problematic) construction of gender is binary as it places two genders, women, and men, at the center while othering, ignoring, or marginalizing individuals who do not hold a gender identity within that binary. Even within this binary, women experience marginalization because this society and its systems advantage men. BIPOC women and women with disabilities experience this marginalization to an even larger extent. To be culturally responsive, practitioners must adopt a more expansive view of gender and gender identity. When curricular materials uphold gendered stereotypes, perpetuate damaging and violent narratives, and neglect to provide adequate social, political, historical, and cultural context when telling the stories of girls, women, non-binary people, and transgender people, that curriculum is actively participating in cultural destruction; this is especially true for non-binary and transgender people. Transgender and non-binary people must be included with dignity in culturally responsive curricular materials. Women and girls must be included in meaningful and dignified ways that amplify their strengths and assets.

Disability- Disability is another important aspect of culture and cultural norms that is deeply intertwined with race and socially constructed. Curricular materials that reinforce ableism or do not position disability as normal cannot be culturally responsive. Friedman and Owen (2017) describe ableism in this way: “like other ‘isms’ such as racism and sexism, [ableism] describes discrimination towards a social group, in this case disabled people, but it also describes how certain ideals and attributes are valued or not valued (Wolbring, 2008). For example, walking is more socially valued than moving by way of wheelchair (Hehir, 2007).” Ableism is rooted in abled ideas of “normalcy” (the status quo) and “othering” disabled people who exist outside of those ideas (marginalized within the status quo). Culturally Responsive ELA Curriculum Scorecard | New York: Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools | New York University 9 Curricular materials with opportunities for cultural

responsiveness will meaningfully include, value, and humanize characters and people with disabilities. Materials will not relegate disability to symbolic illustrations of visible/observable disabilities. Characters with disabilities will be represented with a full range of experiences (including and beyond their disability) and emotions. Characters with disabilities are not stereotyped or tokenized in culturally responsive curricula. Additionally, when curricular materials introduce historical figures or characters based on real people, those materials should not erase individuals' disabilities (such as Harriet Tubman, Marsha P Johnson or Franklin Roosevelt). When appropriate, characters' disabilities must be situated within a social, historical, political and cultural context.

Language- Language is another important aspect of culture that sits between the intersections of identities like race, ethnicity, and nationality. Within the United States context, the English language is mostly prioritized while de-emphasizing or erasing other languages such as Navajo, Spanish, Hmong, African American Vernacular English, Patois, Creole, French, Tagalog, and American Sign Language. Historically (and currently) the weaponization of the English language has played an important role in advancing colonization, maintaining the status quo, buttressing power dynamics, perpetuating systemic racism and oppression, and more. To purposely include diverse groups of people means also including their languages and expressions. When curricular materials exclude diverse languages, they also limit the extent to which unique cultures, knowledge, and experiences among multilingual speakers and non-English speakers are included.

Culturally Responsive Education and Curricula: When public schools talk about curriculum, they often mean the whole package of learning goals and standards; units and lessons that lay out what teachers teach each day and week; assignments, activities and projects given to students; and books, materials, videos, presentations, and readings used in the class. Some examples of curricular materials include textbooks and the accompanying teacher's manual, a notebook of handout, a textbook or a book list with matching activities. Curriculum is a key component of culturally responsive teaching, as it is filled with stories, activities, assignments, and illustrations that influence how young people understand the world, and contribute to centering and normalizing people, cultures, and values. Curricula that only reflect the lives of dominant populations - for example, White people and culture, nuclear families, or able-bodied people - reinforce ideas that sideline students of color, linguistically diverse students, single parent/multi-generation/ LGBTQ+ led families, and students with disabilities. While textbooks are largely static and not responsive to students in ways that teachers can be, textbooks can provide opportunities and resources for teachers to utilize culturally responsive practices. This tool provides a way for parents, teachers, students, and communities to assess the extent to which their curriculum provides these opportunities.

How To Use This Framework: There are four steps to completing this framework.

1) **Review the check box items below to ensure they are met during the curriculum review process:**
    - ❑ **All resources are connected to a standard or essential learning**
    - ❑ **All resources present information without bias and prejudice unless being used to specifically teach about bias and prejudice (see Article 2. Section 3 of the IEA CBA)**
    - ❑ **Resources must be developmentally age appropriate**
    - ❑ **Resources adhere to the Controversial Issues regulation and Article 2. Section 3 of the IEA CBA on Academic Freedom**
    - ❑ **Resources that may trigger trauma (racism, sexual assault, immigration, refugee experience, suicide, abuse, death of a loved one, homophobia, Adverse Childhood Experiences) will require a pre-warning to students and norms will need to be established with the classroom for how to talk about trauma in a safe environment, and/or access to an alternative. **If you are providing resources or materials about trauma, you should consider parent notification (parent notification at middle school is required; high school parent notification should happen as appropriate)***

2.) **Pull out Keywords and Evidence:** Once you have your curriculum and the framework in hand, review the categories for the framework (Representation, Social Justice, Religion, Gender and Sexual Identity, Differing Abilities or Teachers Materials). Make sure the team understands each category and refer to the Glossary and Explanations if needed. Chart key words, ideas, and qualities from the categories you will look for as you read the curriculum. This will help ensure that as you read, you are focused on the information you will need to effectively score and that you are able to provide a rational for each response based on evidence from the instructional materials.

3.) Conduct the evaluation of the curriculum: The framework asks for your level of satisfaction with the curriculum on various measures. There is no right answer; this is just your opinion as someone who cares about equity and culturally responsive education. As you review the curriculum, check the scoring box that best represents the statement.

4.) **Score the Framework:**

Equity Framework Special Note:

The categories below are to be used as a guide to decrease the likelihood of bias and to assist the adoption team as they use their professional judgement in selecting adopted course materials. It is understandable that resources or materials may not perfectly align with all "met" areas in the framework. When this is the case, resources should only be adopted if the adoption team has a plan to address areas "not met".

Religion

Criteria	Met	Partially Met	Not Met	N/A
Resources present a full scope/well rounded picture of the religion (don't pick a splinter sect of a religion and present it as the religion).				
Resources infuse perspectives and contributions from members that are accurate and respectful.				
Resources avoid using stereotyped language and perspectives.				
Total				

Social Justice Score

Decolonization/Power and Privilege	Met	Partially Met	Not Met	N/A
Curriculum highlights non-dominant populations and their strengths and assets, so that students of diverse race, class, gender, ability, and sexual orientation can relate and participate fully.				
The curriculum communicates an asset-based perspective by representing people of diverse races, classes, genders, abilities and sexual orientations through their strengths, talents and knowledge rather than their perceived flaws or deficiencies.				
The curriculum, including graphics, does not communicate negativity or hostility toward people of marginalized backgrounds through verbal or nonverbal insults, slights or snubs.				

Curriculum and instructional activities promote or provoke critical questions about the dominant societal norms and beliefs, and present alternative points of view as equally worth considering.				
Total				
Centering Multiple Perspectives	**Met**	**Partially Met**	**Not Met**	**N/A**
The curriculum recognizes the validity and integrity of knowledge systems based in communities of color, communal spaces created by non-dominant communities, collectivist cultures, matriarchal societies, and non-Christian religions.				
The curriculum presents different points of view on the same event or experience, especially points of view from marginalized people/communities.				
The curriculum is factually accurate.				
The curriculum presents experiences of diverse groups, issues important to them, presented in a manner that allows students to recognize and understand the complexities.				
Resources are void of racial or cultural slurs, and stereotyped language.				
The instructional material provides a range of text, examples, scenarios, and applications relevant to our district students' real-life experiences and cultural backgrounds.				
If the images/text in instructional material addresses a stereotype or bias, the historical, social or cultural context is relevant to contemporary issues.				
Total				
Connect Learning to Real Life & Action	**Met**	**Partially Met**	**Not Met**	**N/A**
The curriculum provides avenues for students to connect learning to personal, social, political, or environmental matters that affect them and their lives and contribute to change.				

The curriculum encourages students to take actions that combat inequity or promote equity within the school or local community.				
The curriculum reflects an integration of ethnic and cultural content throughout programming rather than assigning the study of diverse cultural groups to a single unit or one month.				
The curriculum provides opportunities for students to investigate and understand how cultural assumptions and biases influence subject areas.				
The curriculum fosters respect and understanding for diverse cultures by providing materials that help students develop positive attitudes toward different racial, ethnic, cultural, language, and ability groups.				
The curriculum situates specific cultural and local knowledge in a global context.				
Total				

Accessibility

Criteria	Met	Partially Met	Not Met	N/A
Resources infuse perspectives and contributions from members that are accurate and respectful.				
Resources are provided in modalities that allow access for all learners and staff can modify or adjust based on 504 and/or IEP accommodations (preferred language, subtitles if showing a movie, audio book to accompany a hard copy book, etc.)				

Socio-Economic Status

Criteria	Met	Partially Met	Not Met	N/A
Social class groupings portray all individuals in a variety of roles and situations, displaying positive and negative				

characteristics of integrity, humility, valor, and intelligence.				
Oversimplified generalizations about social class and groups are avoided in text and illustrations.				
Individuals are judged by strength of character and not socio-economic status.				
Materials provide an opportunity for dialogue, which considers a variety of socio-economic perspectives.				

Teacher Materials Score

Criteria	Met	Partially Met	Not Met	**N/a**
Guidance is provided to build awareness of one's biases and perspectives to help recognize gaps between one's own culture, historical knowledge and identities and those of the students they are instructing.				
Guidance is provided to use student's diverse identities as assets to create and enrich lessons, incorporating multiple perspectives.				
Guidance is provided in helping students understand the dynamics and varied perspectives in historical events and how they impact current politics and events.				
Guidance is provided on engaging students in culturally sustaining experiential learning activities.				
Guidance is provided for opportunities to engage students' families and communities to enhance lessons.				
Guidance includes, for specific lessons, a range of possible student responses that could all be valid, given the range of student experiences and perspectives.				
Guidance is provided on customizing and supplementing the curriculum to				

reflect the cultures, traditions, backgrounds, and interests of the student population				
Total				

Note:

Remember our purpose (our why) behind this framework: *Using instructional resources and materials that are free from bias, that promote inclusion and belonging, and that respectfully portray differing racial groups, cultural traditions, religion, gender and sexual identity, as well as family identity, create learning environments that are safe, welcoming, and representative of our students.*

Historical and primary documents – including letters, newspaper articles, treaties, journals, photographs, census reports, cartoons, and government documents – reflect the social, political, historical, and cultural contexts in which they were created, including the biases and prejudices. These documents can be used effectively in the classroom to examine the prevalence of certain biases at particular eras in history and to investigate how such views influenced public policies, institutions, and people's lives. Understanding the development and impacts of historical prejudices and other biases is a critical part of acquiring a more accurate and comprehensive picture of our history and our present circumstance.

***WAC 392-190-055* Textbooks and instructional materials—Instructional materials policy—Elimination of bias**…Nothing in this section is intended to prohibit the use or assignment of supplemental instructional materials, such as classic and contemporary literary works, periodicals, and technical journals, that are educationally necessary or advisable even though they contain bias, **the bias should be explicitly addressed.**

References

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- Assessing Visual Materials for Diversity & Inclusivity | Kimberly S. Grotewold (funding from Branch Alliance for Educator Diversity – revised 2020)
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Appendix A: Applicable Washington State Laws

- Basic education – Goals of school districts | Revised Code of Washington ***(RCW) 28A.150.210***
- District school directors' responsibilities | ***RCW 28A.150.230***
- Legal requirements for district selection and approval of instructional materials | Revised Code of Washington ***(RCW) 28A.320.230***
- Regulations, guidelines to eliminate discrimination | ***RCW 28A.640.020***
- Textbooks and instructional materials—Instructional materials policy— Elimination of bias | Washington Administrative Code ***(WAC) 392-190- 055***
- Curricula—Tribal history and culture | ***RCW 28A.320.170***

Appendix B: Glossary and Explanations

Guidance & Literature Section

- **Cisgender:** A gender identity that society deems to match the person's assigned sex at birth. The prefix cis- means "on this side of" or "not across."
- **Gender Expansive:** An umbrella term used for individuals who broaden their own culture's commonly held definitions of gender, including expectations for its expression, identities, roles, and/or other perceived gender norms. Gender expansive individuals include those who identify as transgender, as well as anyone else whose gender in some way is seen to be broadening the surrounding society's notion of gender.

Representation

- **Stereotypes:** Characters are portrayed in one-dimensional, simplistic ways based on one aspect of their culture. For example, African American men are repeatedly portrayed playing basketball; Asian characters are portrayed as really good at math; Latinx characters are repeatedly portrayed wearing sombreros. While some of these foods and outfits may be part of the culture, they are not customs for every Latinx, Asian, or African American person.
- **Explanation of scorecard questions:** If there is conflict in the storyline the characters of color are not mostly considered the problem. When conflicts arise people of color are not demonized and seen as a threat or the problem.
- Social situations and problems are not seen as individual problems but situated within a societal context. This question is intended to identify if the text embeds the White American value/perspective of "pull yourself up by your bootstraps" and thus often portrays events as isolated and the responsibility of individuals, without accounting for systemic inequities such as poverty, war, unemployment, and discrimination.
- **Gender Expression:** How one expresses oneself, in terms of dress and/or behaviors. Society characterizes these expressions as "masculine," "feminine," or "androgynous." Individuals may embody their gender in a multitude of ways and have terms beyond these to name their gender expression(s).
- **Gender Identity:** A sense of one's self as trans, genderqueer, woman, man, or some other gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex and gender one is assigned at birth.
- **Transgender:** Identifying as transgender, or trans, means that one's internal knowledge of gender is different from conventional or cultural expectations based on the sex that person was assigned at birth. While transgender may refer to a woman who was assigned male at birth or a man who was assigned female at birth, transgender is an umbrella term that can also describe someone who identifies as a gender other than woman or man, such as non binary, genderqueer, genderfluid, no gender or multiple genders, or some other gender identity.

Social Justice

- **Dominant Discourses:** Conversations guided by the beliefs and/or perceptions of those in power. (Ex. A dominant discourse in history is that Christopher Columbus "discovered" America; there is also dominant discourse about kneeling for the anthem as unpatriotic).
- **Deficit Perspectives:** Characterizing people, groups of people, or communities by perceived flaws or deficiencies, rather than by their strengths, talents and knowledge. (Ex. Some students don't do well in school because the student's community does not value education).
- **Microaggressions:** The everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership. (Ex. Stating that someone is articulate for being an immigrant).
- **Status Quo:** The way things currently are (Ex. Despite living in one of the richest countries in the world, the large numbers of people who are food insecure or unemployed is the status quo; to raise the minimum wage to at least $15 so that most people can afford food and rent would be disrupting the status quo).
- **People of Color:** A term used to capture a widely diverse group of people. (Ex. Latinx, Black/African American, Asian American, Indigenous/Native, Middle Eastern, etc).
- **Patriarchal:** Systems, communities, or narratives that center male experiences, privilege, authority, perspectives, and power. (Ex. Most historical figures taught in school are men).
- **Marginalized:** Pushed to the sidelines, oppressed, deemed less significant. (Ex. When people organize protests they do not always consider the accessibility of events so that people with disabilities can also voice their concerns, experiences, or demands; therefore whether intentional or unintentional, people with disabilities are silenced and marginalized).
- **Connect Learning to Real Life & Action:** One of the most essential components of CRE is connecting or relating learning to students' real life experiences, communities, and cultures. Another essential component of CRE is that students develop a critical consciousness - the ability to perceive systems of oppression and take action against them and the status quo. These systems of oppression can take the form of social concerns such as homelessness and affordable housing; political concerns such as citizenship and voting rights; and environmental concerns such as logging rainforests for profit.

Teacher's Materials

Explanation of framework questions

- Guidance is provided on teaching children of diverse identities in culturally responsive ways - including but not limited to English Language Learners. This question is intended to acknowledge the need for teachers materials to connect with and honor the unique cultural backgrounds of a wide range of students, rather than just trying to get them to meet standards.
- Guidance is provided on being aware of biases and gaps between one's own culture and the culture of their students. For example, teacher guidance could pose questions that encourage teachers to reflect on their own cultural upbringing, examine the assumptions and judgments

they may make about other cultures, and pursue information and understanding of their students' cultures.

- Guidance is provided on engaging students in culturally sensitive experiential learning activities. Experiential learning - also referred to as "hands-on learning" - is learning by doing, and then reflecting on it, rather than passively absorbing information. This could include organizing or taking leadership in a community event, devising a solution to a real community problem, building a physical structure, creating a resource for use by the community, and countless other projects. Teacher guidance should include encouragement and opportunities for this type of learning.
- Guidance includes, for specific lessons, a range of possible student responses that could all be valid. Culturally responsive teaching means that teachers value different ways of being, as well as different ways of knowing. Students from diverse cultures and backgrounds bring perspectives and experiences that enrich the classroom -- but not if the curriculum focuses on getting students to produce the one "right" answer. Teacher guidance should point out where student responses and perspectives may vary. Guidance is provided on customizing and supplementing the curriculum to reflect the cultures, traditions, backgrounds and interests of the student population. Culturally responsive teaching must be continuously responsive to who is in the classroom and what they care about, as well as to the neighborhood, current events, media, and youth culture. Teacher guidance should point out where lessons offer opportunities to connect with these influences on students' minds and lives.