**Progression Partners Initiative**

Progression Partners’ Equity through Cultural Proficiency Initiative helps improve academic instruction by developing effective leaders and teachers that align policies, practices, values and procedures to meet the needs of *all* students, regardless of culture, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. This allows for schools to close the achievement gap in minority students, increase student engagement in the classroom, improve attendance and student discipline, and enhance student achievement for all.

Cultural proficiency is a way of being that allows individuals and organizations to interact effectively with people who differ from them. Cultural proficiency is not an off-the-shelf program. It is an approach for responding to the environment shaped by its diversity. Cultural proficiency provides tools and help for an increasingly diverse world with an increasing number of well-intentioned people. The use of specific tools effectively describing, responding to, and planning for issues that emerges in diverse environments. Policies and practices at the organizational level and values, beliefs and behaviors at the individual level that enables effective cross-cultural interactions among employees, clients, and community. In a culturally proficient school, the culture promotes inclusiveness and institutionalize processes for learning about differences and for responding appropriately to differences.

1. **Methodology**

* Progression Partners employs a Continuous Cycle of Improvement that builds leader and teacher capacity, allowing for your schools to change in ways that support teacher and leader development to improve practices that impact student learning. The Continuous Cycle of Improvement includes a diagnostic phase, planning phase, and implementation phase, and monitoring phase that ensures teaching and learning process and experience:
  + Is free from bias, stereotyping and prejudice (whether intentional or unwitting)
  + Is inclusive
  + Values and celebrates diversity
  + Supports the statutory requirements and duties placed upon schools and districts to promote equality, challenge discrimination and unequal treatment, and eliminate discrimination

**Continuous Cycle of Improvement**

* 1. Diagnostic Phase

Each engagement begins with a diagnostic phase process where the Progression Partners consultant examines current student achievement data, evidence on student performance, and available data on school policies and practices affecting student achievement (attendance, discipline, and enrollment). The school leader advises and guides the collection of data on practice, policies, and school climate. The framework for cultural proficiency is discussed and the school leaders have the opportunity to express how they would like to customize their initiative. Specific questions include, but limited to:

* What are the areas of need based on analysis on feedback from leaders and teachers?
* What is the cultural background of the students at your school/district and are they academically succeeding?
* Are there any cultural proficient practices currently in place?
* Are the cultures, languages, heritages, and experiences of all students and families valued, respected, and used to facilitate learning and development?
  1. Planning Phase

The diagnostic phase is followed by a shared “Plan of Action” to ensure that each school/district fosters a multicultural environment with input and collaboration of key stakeholders. Together the educational consultant and school leaders will determine the steps needed for a school/district to achieve a fully culturally proficient environment so that individual and organizational behaviors align with the expressed values and mission of the school/district. Progression Partners education consultants apply their expertise and collaborate with key stakeholders to set goals and create a detailed plan of action plan mapped to the needs of the school.

Cultural proficiency cannot be addressed with a one-size-fits-all approach. In order to achieve cultural proficiency in the school environment, an inside-out approach needs to be implemented that includes:

• An individual and whole-school focus where leaders and teachers assess their own culture, the culture of their school and surroundings, and learn to manage the dynamics of difference between all parts

• Workshops to focus on the core principals of achieving a culturally proficient educational community

• Job-embedded professional development, through in-class modeling, support and feedback, individual and small group sessions before, during, or after school, and support of professional learning communities to address topical areas through the duality of cultural proficiency.

* 1. Implementation Phase

By basing professional practice on input from the *Essential Elements* of cultural proficiency – the individual and school needs identified, as well as those revealed through analysis of all available data – help focus the path on positive outcomes. The elements set standards for deep structural change at the positive end of the continuum. These behavioral competencies are used as measuring stick for individual behaviors and organizational practices.

* Assess culture: understand how the culture of your school affects those with different cultures.
* Value diversity: celebrate and encourage the presence of a variety of people in all activities.
* Manage the dynamics of difference: learn effective strategies for resolving conflict, particularly among people whose cultural background and value differ.
* Adapt to diversity: change the way things are done to acknowledge the differences that are present in the staff, students, and community.
* Institutionalize cultural knowledge: incorporate cultural knowledge into the mainstream of the school/organization

Education consultant identifies training needs for faculty and staff and provides customized professional development to support the action plan.

* 1. Monitoring Phase

Through assessments, pre-and post-testing to evaluate how the school/district has developed since the launch of the Initiative, professional development feedback, and sensitive conversations, schools and teachers are able to see where they lie on the *cultural proficiency continuum* and focus on achievement needed individually and as a whole in order to achieve cultural proficiency.

Progression Partners education consultant and school leaders meet regularly to debrief and monitor the plan to ensure engagement in a continuous cycle of improvement, making adjustments based on observation and outcome data.