African American Blueprint for Action

October 19, 2021

THE PALMDALE PROMISE
Le PROMESA de Palmdale
Table of Contents

Message From The Superintendent 04

Message From The School Board President 05

Executive Summary 09

Palmdale School District Metrics 12

Values & Beliefs 13

Guiding Principles 14

Vision & Mission 15-17

Introduction 18-19

Background 20-21

Supporting The African American Learner 22-23
Message from
The Superintendent

It gives me great pleasure to announce the completion of the African American Blueprint for Action. First, I want to thank the African American Advisory Council members for all the years of service and dedication in writing the “Blueprint.” It has been a long journey with purpose, dedication, commitment, and now satisfaction knowing the value of the collaboration among the team members, educators, staff, students, parents, and community members.

The Palmdale School District adopted five values and beliefs which are at the core of our strategic plan called the Palmdale PROMISE.

» HIGH INTELLECTUAL PERFORMANCE that prepares every student to graduate ready for college, career, and the global 21st century world.
» EQUITY for all our students, schools, and communities as reflected in outcomes and opportunities.
» Facilitating and supporting every student’s achievement by BUILDING ON THEIR STRENGTHS, CULTURES, LANGUAGES, and experiences to create new successes.
» MULTILINGUALISM and MULTICULTURALISM as individual, community, national, and global assets in the 21st century.
» INTEGRITY AND COMMUNITY based on trust and common purpose that empower individuals and communities.

For years, the Palmdale School District has valued diversity, equity, and inclusion for all students. The PROMISE represents our new leadership strategy for dramatically improving educational outcomes for all students. The “Blueprint” shows the commitment to developing, exploring, and implementing strategies to serve our African American students based on their needs. Please take the time to read the document, and you will see how the “Blueprint” will help educators and staff guide us forward in meeting the needs of our African American students.

The Palmdale PROMISE maintains that equity is one of our most important core values and beliefs. The “Blueprint” will ensure we operate with an equity lens and do the work needed to fulfill the vision of the Palmdale PROMISE strategic plan. We have a dynamic and diverse teaching staff committed to providing the best educational program for our students. It has been a long road and journey to complete the “Blueprint,” but I believe that Palmdale School District is committed to serving our students with actions and plans that meet the needs of our students. The time is right for us to move forward in providing African American students with a powerful document that aligns with our major initiatives, vision, mission, goals, and instruction priorities.

I want to thank our school board for leading the way to provide a “Blueprint” that sends a strong message to the community that we value our African American students. As we say in Palmdale, “Palmdale LEADs.” Lastly, I would like to thank the African American Advisory Council and parents for their hard work, dedication, and support. Together, we can dramatically improve students’ engagement and achievement through access and powerful learning opportunities.
Message from
The School Board
President

It is my pleasure to sit as Board President and witness the completion of the African American Blueprint for Action. This is the culmination of more than an eleven-year journey. Our school district has worked on the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion for many years and this document serves as a product of all of the professional development and stakeholder training we experienced throughout that time. The African American Advisory Committee persevered in this work and displayed determination to ensure our district received a working document that will help guide us as we move forward.

Our African American student population deserves our attention as we continue to look at performance data and strive to produce high levels of student learning. The Palmdale PROMISE maintains that Equity is one of our core values and beliefs. The “Blueprint” will ensure we operate with an equity lens and do the work needed to fulfill the vision of the Palmdale PROMISE. We have a dynamic and diverse staff that is committed to actualizing all aspects of our strategic plan.

Painstaking work went into developing the elements of this powerful document. Not only is there background highlighting the past work, performance goals and action plans provide a solution focus for staff to consider when engaging our African American student population. This document is aligned to major initiatives in our school district, therefore, the strategies suggested continue us on a similar path of exploration and growth. Moving forward, the “Blueprint” is presented as further evidence that “Palmdale Leads!” On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Palmdale School District, I would like to thank the committee for their hard work and declare the Board’s support in the work ahead as we continue this journey of appropriately and effectively educating all students in the Palmdale School District.

Ralph Velador

Ralph Velador,
Board President
Palmdale School District
Board of Trustees

Ralph Velador
President

Simone Zulu-Diol
School Board Clerk

Sharon Vega
Trustee

Nancy Smith
Trustee

Anthony Hunt
Trustee

Lucy Torres
Student Board Member
African American Advisory Council

Gerald Luke
Director of Access & Equity, African American Student Achievement

Joe Boyd
Parent Representative

Dr. Donna Campbell
Assistant Superintendent, Special Education & Student Services

Dr. Rondale Cooper
Director of Special Education

Linda Duran
Library Assistant

Inja Gray
Teacher

Nadine Luke
Teacher Support Coach

Dr. Beverley Martin
Principal

Vince Marzett
Custodian

Antoinette Mitchell Spann
Parent Representative

African American Blueprint for Action
African American Advisory Council

Enina Obayuwana
Student Intervention Specialist

Krishna Spates
Assistant Principal

Rena’ Thorogood
Principal

Treavale Tucker
Parent Representative

Dr. Frances Ufondu
Assistant Superintendent
Business Services

Dr. Kimberly Wright
Director, Health & Safety

Dr. Cassandra Ziskind
Director of Student Services

Raul Maldonado
Superintendent of Schools
Executive Summary

Framework for Action
The African American Blueprint for Action provides a framework and practical strategies that ensure all students receive a superior education and graduate from high school prepared for college and career. It aligns with the Palmdale PROMISE, the strategic plan for the district, emphasizing the unique and specific needs of our African American student population. This blueprint serves to address the systemic challenges present that create barriers when attempting to appropriately educate this population. The aim for this document is to provide a path to actualize the values and beliefs and guiding principles captured in the Palmdale PROMISE.
PSD AA Blueprint
Our Journey

2006-2007
Beginning of our equity journey

2009
Focus: Bridging the Achievement Gap

2010-2011
Blueprint for Action

Establishment of African American Advisory Committee
PSD Launches the 1st Bridging the Achievement Gap Conference
New focus on developing a blueprint to close the achievement gap

2006 - 2007
Our Equity Journey Begins

» PSD established the African American Advisory Committee to meet monthly to discuss: Closing the opportunity gap

» District Wide Professional Development: Cultural Proficiency, Culturally & Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning

2009
Building Staff Capacity Begins

» PSD Launches: 1st Annual Bridging the Achievement Gap Conference

2010
Development of the Blueprint Begins

» The African American Advisory Committee focuses its attention on developing a plan to provide a culturally relevant education to all students

» Professional Development Continues: Solution Tree Facilitator, Anthony Muhammad hired to focus on transforming school culture
## African American Blueprint for Action

### 2015
**Responsive Professional Development**
- Howard Group Topics: Implicit bias, race and culture, trauma informed teaching practices
- Howard Group Support during crisis related to emergent situations within the district
- PSD becomes a Capturing Kids Hearts

### 2020-2021
**The COVID-19 Pandemic**
- The Howard Group Facilitates PD & Provides Support

### 2021
**Defining Equity**
- Building internal organizational capacity to lead equity work

### 2022
**Next Steps**
- Publish African American Blueprint for Action for the Board of Trustees, Superintendent and Cabinet to review and study

- The Equity Committee defines, “equity” for the Palmdale School District
- An internal team is created to lead professional development around: race and culture, implicit bias, culturally responsive pedagogy, and institutional racism
### Student Population

The Palmdale School District serves approximately 17,500 students beginning in our early childhood education program, head start, through 8th grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>African American Student Enrollment</th>
<th>16%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attend 27 Schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of African American students enrolled in the AVID college-readiness program</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of African American students identified as chronically absent, meaning they missed more than 10% of the school’s instructional days</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American Student Enrollment Gender Composition</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.7% Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4% Male</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Disproportionate –</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Values & Beliefs

High Intellectual Performance
That prepares every student to graduate ready for college, career, and the global 21st century world.

Equity
For all our students, schools, and communities as reflected in outcomes and opportunities.

Strengths, Cultures & Languages
Facilitating and supporting every student’s achievement by building on their strengths, cultures, languages and experiences to create new successes.

Multilingualism & Multiculturalism
As individual, community, national, and global assets in the 21st century.

Integrity & Community
Based on trust and common purpose that empower individuals and communities.
Guiding Principles

01
Assets-Based Education

All Palmdale staff foster an assets-based mindset by valuing and affirming their students’ and families’ cultures, languages and backgrounds and cultivating a joy of learning for all.

02
Sociocultural Competence

Classrooms and school culture are affirming environments that foster positive attitudes among students, staff and families regarding all backgrounds and cultural and linguistic identities.

03
Rigorous Academics for All

Student learners engage in intellectually rigorous and developmentally appropriate learning experiences that promote high levels of proficiency in Standard English.

04
Systematic Support

All Palmdale staff are provided integrated professional development that supports them to encourage shared responsibility for educating and monitoring the progress of student learners and ensuring that all instruction is equity oriented and research-based.
Palmdale will become a district where . . . All African American students leave ready for success in high school and beyond: College, Career and the Global World.

The mission of the African American Advisory Committee (AAAC) is the same as the Palmdale School District mission: to implement our vision with actions and services targeted to students, parents, and staff so our students can live their lives to their full potential.
Mission Statements

01. Students

» Are proactive motivated learners who contribute to their own growth.

» Have equal access to quality staff, courses, activities, and resources based on their individual needs.

» Receive an education in an equitable and safe environment.

02. Parents

» Encourage parents and teachers to work together to enhance the achievement and academic environment for African American students.

» Encourage and increase parental involvement at all levels through creating warm and welcoming environments that value and seek input from parents and caregivers.

» Become a vital part of the decision-making process in the education of African American students.

» Empower parents/caregivers with information training to navigate public school systems and advocate for their student(s).

03. Schools

» Ensure culturally relevant high-quality instruction that differentiates for student needs.

» Hold high expectations for all students regardless of academic levels or socioeconomic status.

» Will increase student engagement through interesting and innovative instructional pedagogical practices.

» Will foster safe and supportive school environments that provide social emotional support and affirming and restorative practices.

» Develop and maintain equitable learning environments.
Mission Statements

04. Central Office

- Recruit, train, and develop teachers that better reflect the diversity of our student population.

- Recruit, train, and develop site and district leaders that are culturally responsive and are willing to address and mitigate systemic inequities.

- Develop and maintain equitable learning environments.

- Be responsive to the needs of the African-American community by intentionally building positive relationships among all stakeholders.

05. Community

- Work in a collaborative fashion with members of the community (businesses, local churches, and municipal organizations) to build partnerships supporting our African-American students and their families.
Introduction

Our collective goal is to develop a staff fully equipped with all the tools needed to effectively educate our student body.

The Palmdale School District

The Palmdale School District serves approximately 17,500 students, and of that number 14% are African American students in Pre-K through 8th grade. PSD now has a dependent charter high school. This new high school is included in all aspects of this blueprint. Recognizing the discrepancy in academic performance and behavioral data between African American students and other demographic groups, the District established an African American Advisory Committee in 2007. This Committee holds monthly meetings where discussions center on closing the opportunity gap. From these discussions, the first annual “Bridging the Achievement Gap Conference” emerged in the Fall of 2009.

This conference has attracted presenters who have addressed concerns such as home school relationships; culturally relevant pedagogy; the disproportionate number of suspensions and expulsions and special education referrals as it relates to African American students; as well as the role of the Church and the community in educating African American students and parents.

In 2010 the Committee focused its attention on creating a blueprint for action that would provide a culturally relevant education benefitting all students with a focus on the African American population. Students of color, who make up the majority of the children in our district, deserve to feel welcomed and understood in their classrooms. That is not always the case. In particular, our African American student population continues to perform at the lower end of the spectrum when it comes to student achievement data. We know there is no cognitive deficit in our African American students attached to biology. In fact, research suggests that African American primary students qualified for gifted education at similar rates to their European descended peers (Zhbanova, Rule, & Stichter, 2015). More research posited there is no significant difference in cognition and academic abilities between African American and Euro-American students (Jordan, Bain, McCallum, & Bell, 2012).

There are, however, educator attitudes and systemic barriers to higher achievement for African American students (Hill & Craft, 2003). Through this blueprint, the PSD presents its commitment to mitigate the negative statistics for African American students and support educators in building the capacity to effectively educate the African American student population.
All educators must travel through the journey of cultural competence to culturally sustaining pedagogy and the time to begin that work is now

Supporting the African American Learner, 2021

On the Journey to Improve Instructional Services

The PSD has been on the journey to improve instructional services to our diverse student population for several years. In 2006 and 2007 we contracted with Randall Lyndsey and Stephanie Graham and offered professional development for administrators around Cultural Proficiency.

Also, in 2007, we contracted with Sharroky Hollie to train administrators and classroom teachers in Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning. Dr. Hollie worked with our school district for approximately four years. In 2011, we utilized the services of Solution Tree and were trained by Anthony Muhammad on the topic of Transforming School Culture. In 2015 the PSD brought in The Howard Group, with Tyrone Howard, and trained on topics such as implicit bias, race and culture, trauma informed teaching practices, to name a few. During that same time, we became a Capturing Kids Hearts school district after receiving training from The Flippen Group.

Given this multiple year commitment to building capacity in properly educating students of color, in particular, and all students, in general, we have become a more informed staff and community. We are now moving in the direction of developing accountable measures that confirm enhanced student achievement and improved student learning.

Our next steps are to continue the pre-COVID-19 work of our Equity Committee that is tasked to define equity for our district and address issues of equity in our daily work. We will also develop a team trained to facilitate professional development around topics such as race and culture, implicit bias, culturally responsive pedagogy, and institutional racism. Our collective goal is to develop a staff fully equipped with all of the tools needed to effectively educate our entire student body. We acknowledge and understand that our African American student population deals with certain inequities in school and it is our job to eliminate those inequities and provide a safe and welcoming learning environment. The African American Blueprint for Action will provide the framework for the successful attainment of our collective goal.
Background

Student Achievement
Culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogy is essential to African American students’ success, and the success of all students, as it places the student at the center of the learning experience.

We teach what we value.
- Gloria Ladson-Billings

The achievement of our African American students is reflective of an important aspect of equity and opportunity in our Country. Data indicate that proportionally, African American students are achieving lower rates of academic success than all their counterparts. This is especially true for our African American male students who consistently are under-served in all states.

To achieve this mission, it is critical that we continue to improve educational opportunities for all students. Nationwide, many African American students are not performing at high academic levels which stem from low expectations by teachers and high suspension rates of African American students. The Palmdale School District’s African American Advisory Council (AAAC) was established to ensure that all African American students in the Palmdale School District achieve at high academic levels. To help achieve that goal, the AAAC Stakeholder Committee was formed. This committee is a collaborative network comprised of representatives from all stakeholder groups within the District.

As current educational policy changes due to the development of Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAP), new opportunities are being implemented to ensure equitable distribution of resources and the adoption of research-based practices to support our African American students and other underserved student populations. Some examples of these include implementation of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, Restorative Justice Discipline practices, ongoing professional development related to cultural responsiveness and unconscious bias, and the development of African American Parent Advisory Councils (AAPAC) at the school and district levels.

To examine the timeline of the history of the education of African American students, one can see the system has been designed to create exactly the results it continues to create. Since the inception of No Child Left Behind, the disparities have been highlighted through the disaggregation of data by student groups.
These glaring disparities resulted in a focus on students of color and English Learners. In 2007, California State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Jack O’Connell, convened a research group specifically to examine the achievement gap and in 2008, the Closing the Achievement Gap: Report of the Superintendent Jack O’Connell’s California P-16 Council, was released. This led to the creation of the African American Advisory Committee by the California State Board of Education. And, in 2015, the California State Assembly created the select Committee on the Status of Girls and Women of Color.

Over the years, these initiatives have resulted in little change for African American students. It is doubtful the latest efforts to remove school police from schools will either unless educators begin to put research into practice. What is needed is a meaningful and purposeful approach to teaching that embraces and reflects the lived experiences, culture, and socioemotional elements that these students bring to the classroom.

As Gloria Ladson-Billings put it, “we teach what we value,” and it is now time for educators to value and teach that which reflects the African American student population. Through the acknowledgment and nurturing of these elements, which are central to students’ lives both within and outside of the classroom, educators can simultaneously demonstrate their commitment to educational equity and social justice (Paris & Alim, 2017).

Implementing culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogy is essential to African American students’ success, and the success of all students, as it places the student at the center of the learning experience.
Supporting African American Learners

Explore Belief Systems

To begin the work, explore belief systems. Sarah Fiarman (2016) indicates, deconstructing our unconscious bias takes consistent work. We can’t address it once and be done. We need to recognize these unwanted, deep rooted beliefs and limit their influence on us. Then our actions will match our intentions.

» We must first look inward. Unconscious biases are the attitudes and stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. Unconscious bias is pervasive and everyone has them.

» We must adopt a willingness to shift mindsets and practices. Acknowledge unconscious biases and be motivated to change (intention). Pay attention to your triggers (attention). Make time to practice new strategies to break automatic associations (time).

» Develop an understanding of power and privilege structures.

Culturally Relevant Instruction

Ensure culturally relevant, sustaining, and revitalizing high quality instruction. Three keys to culturally relevant, sustaining, and revitalizing (CRSR) high quality instruction;

» Focus on connection with learners through relationships and empowering student voice and agency. Start with connections. Advocate for students. Design learning experiences embedded with student voice and choice.


» Create empowering environments for learners by designing rigorous, flexible, and engaging learning experiences. Design instruction with culturally sustaining and relevant curriculum. Design instruction using culturally relevant and sustaining pedagogy. Design learning experiences using the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Engage in continuous improvement. Be committed to being an antiracist educator.

Note

Taken from Los Angeles County Office of Education; Supporting the African American Learner 2021.
Mitigate Disadvantage

Mitigate the accumulation of disadvantage.

» Create Culturally Responsive systems that address antiracism and actively counter structural racism. To what extent is institutional and systemic racism manifesting itself in our organization? How does institutional and systemic racism manifest itself in our organization with respect to policy making, leadership, curriculum and instruction, human resources, fiscal management, child welfare and attendance, and school safety? How does institutional and systemic racism in our organization impact and influence services? Are we strategically and deliberately targeting and investing in the lives, safety, health, and overall well-being of Black students and their families in ways that empower and show that they matter? Are we exploring non-traditional service delivery options (e.g. mobile services) to hard-to-reach populations that bring services and supports to the Black community?

» Ensure local fiscal policy explicitly includes Black students in need of targeted support. Prioritize Black students as one of the groups in need of targeted support. Use data to identify and target Black students’ needs. Determine measurable outcomes and regularly monitor and assess with appropriate interventions. Engage in stakeholder engagement to ensure family and community perspectives help shape decision making.

» Invest in Community School models to mitigate accumulation of disadvantage. Engage with community-based organizations (e.g. businesses, faith-based, civic groups). Facilitate and leverage additional resources such as community counseling, mental health services, youth development programs, etc. Employ social workers and counselors to address the social emotional needs of students.

» Create access to quality preschool options.

» Create Culturally Responsive social and emotional development and behavioral systems.

» Dismantle punitive discipline systems. Implementing restorative justice circles. Build a school culture and climate that utilizes inclusive school safety policies and procedures. This could include social workers, counselors, and mental health professionals. Implementing a culturally responsive PBIS system. Reducing school police budgets and redirecting resources for mental health professionals, social workers and counselors.

Note
Terms like “achievement gap,” “majority minority,” “low performing students,” “struggling readers,” “loss learning,” “at-risk,” are not asset-based references. These terms actually center whiteness as the standard thus making the students we place in these terms “less than”
Performance Goal 01.

To increase the number and percentage of African American students who score meets or exceeds in reading and mathematics on state standardized tests.

**Action Plan**

1. Develop a targeted intervention plan called, "Individual Academic Plan" (IAP) for underserved students who are performing below grade level common core standards including local assessments. The IAP will include an exit plan.

2. Plan and restructure classroom organization and academic instruction to support culturally relevant and/or differentiated instruction.

3. Provide staff with initial and ongoing opportunities to learn and address belief systems, content (reading and mathematics), culturally relevant pedagogy and classroom cultural environments.

4. Prepare site leaders to lead conversations to build their staff's capacity around culturally responsive teaching practices.

5. Launch campaign to get our African American students reading by 3rd grade.

Performance Goal 02.

To increase the number and percentage of African American students who successfully maintain passing grades in upper level mathematics courses (i.e., algebra, geometry).

**Action Plan**

1. Assess students at the beginning of the school year to determine their individual performance levels of achievement in reading and math.

2. Use CFA &/or LPM's to monitor students' academic performance.

3. If students are not performing at grade level standards in math classes, intervention strategies will be utilized. If students are performing at grade level, enrichment strategies will be utilized. Develop and share a list of effective intervention strategies to improve student learning for African American students.

4. Systematically celebrate African American student achievement in site/district quarterly awards assemblies.

5. Offer tutoring/homework support during the school day (lunch/recess) to provide students with an opportunity to receive academic support.

6. Eighth grade students enrolled in Algebra I (instead of Math 8)
Performance Goal 03.

To increase the number and percentage of African American students who are enrolled in Honors and GATE classes and successfully maintain passing grades.

Action Plan

1. Implement a plan to identify African American students who are eligible for GATE, Honors/AP classes, utilizing district assessments, CST scores, report card grades, and/or recommendation.

2. Identify a clear pathway to Honors and AP Classes that is consistent across the school district.

3. Increase students’ ability to use effective study skills using collaborative strategies and/or cooperative grouping.

4. Provide recognition incentives for students to be further motivated toward achievement.

5. Ensure special programs (e.g. AVID, GATE, Film, Project Lead the way), at least, proportionately reflect the number of African American students enrolled within the school district.

6. Delineate a clear pathway to honors in the middle schools and honors/AP in the high school to ensure that honors classes reflect the enrolled PSD AA student population.

Performance Goal 04.

To increase the number and percentage of African American students who achieve GPAs of 2.0 (scale of 0-4) or higher, in all academic areas.

Action Plan

1. Complete a student-based Goal Setting sheet within the first two weeks of school that provides the students with the results of their performance on the state standardized tests. Students will also be encouraged to write academic goals to achieve success.

2. Provide regular, consistent feedback to students to keep them aware of their progress or problems and to motivate them to work harder to meet academic expectations/goals.

3. Have 8th grade students and their parents make preliminary plans for their high school schedules after meeting with high school counselors to provide assistance in planning schedules to meet graduation and college admission requirements.

4. Systematically celebrate student achievement at the Gala, Unity in the Community, quarterly board recognition, and school sites.
Performance Goal 05.

To increase the number and percentage of African American students who are prepared to enter four-year colleges and universities upon graduation.

**Action Plan**

1. Expose students to AVID strategies that prepare them for success in higher studies, i.e. critical reading strategies, inquiry-based learning, Costa's levels of thinking, etc.

2. Target under-achieving African American students for the AVID elective in intermediate schools.

3. Heighten exposure to “college life” via college fairs, field trips, and Californiocolleges.edu website for intermediate school students.

4. Hold career nights for elementary students and parents with African American role models as speakers, stressing the role that college has played on their road to success.

5. Host college fair for middle and high school students - every 8th grade student will get to visit a college/university.

Performance Goal 06.

To decrease the number and percentage of Black students who are suspended.

**Action Plan**

1. Provide more opportunities for communal learning in the form of cooperative learning.

2. Initiate more positive contact with parents of students with challenging behaviors to establish trust and build relationships. For example, teachers could make telephone calls home at the beginning of the school year to introduce themselves to the parents.

3. Institute and monitor an effective school-wide positive behavioral support program that supports non-punitive methods of discipline as an alternative to suspensions.

4. Create new approaches to discipline which involve other personnel such as mentors, counselors, student interventionists, psychologists, etc., to address behavior.

5. Provide professional development in cultural proficiency and culturally relevant pedagogy to all school personnel so they can be more sensitive to the behaviors or communication styles associated with diverse cultures.
Performance Goal 06.
To decrease the number and percentage of Black students who are suspended.

Action Plan

6. Provide professional development in cultural proficiency and culturally relevant pedagogy to all school personnel so they can be more sensitive to the behaviors or communication styles associated with diverse cultures.

7. Prepare site leaders to facilitate conversations/sessions that allow teachers time/space to learn how to teach in a way that is culturally responsive.

8. Using data that identify students experiencing behavior challenges and ensure they are provided the appropriate restorative support. (i.e LSE groups).

9. Classroom materials should reflect the demographics of students in the classroom.

Performance Goal 07.
Follow the MTSS/RTI process before appropriately and proportionately referring Black students for Special Education.

Action Plan

1. Teachers will engage in effective first time teaching to mitigate the instances where high percentages of students need intervention on new concepts.

2. Have the RTI teams establish specific criteria, in accordance with Special Education regulations, that will assist them in identifying which students legitimately should be considered for Special Education placement.

3. Utilize the Response to Intervention and data problem solving processes in an effort to fully implement all possible intervention strategies before recommending students for special education.

4. Have staff participate in culturally relevant classroom management training.

5. Offer Parent Workshops and Teacher Professional Development on Special Education.
Performance Goal 01.

The District will develop and implement a plan for the placement and support of African American Learners of Standard English.
(See pp. 34 - 38 for LSE information)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Plan</th>
<th>Action Plan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Implement data-driven and researched-based strategies that provide supports and accommodations necessary to ensure all students, families, and staff have access to the same opportunities.</td>
<td>5. Provide required course(s) in language development and literacy acquisition for all teachers with an understanding of the structure, syntax, and cultural significance of various dialects spoken within the African American community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Identify placement criteria, instructional pedagogy and exit criteria to assess student progress through a program which will include a language assessment scale with benchmarks and monitoring measures.</td>
<td>6. Launch campaign to get our African American students reading by 3rd grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Provide necessary learner centered, equity-focused professional learning programs for teachers, staff and administration to understand and implement program components, strategies, and instructional activities in the area of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Equity Trainings.</td>
<td>7. Recognize and create instruction and curricula that allow African American students to use oral language and academic discourse as key means for mastering Standard English in all content areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Develop and implement policy research-based criteria that support and respect the language and culture students bring to the classroom while enabling them to master Standard English.</td>
<td>8. Create a budget, support staff, and partnerships that support the policies adopted for Learners of Standard English comparable to the support provided to English Language learners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Develop and implement a mandatory pre-service program to train all newly hired teachers in culturally relevant curriculum, cultural sensitivity, and effective instruction for Learners of Standard English.</td>
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Performance Goal 02.

The District will identify and train staff to serve as AAPAC Coordinator for the site with a provided stipend or access to extra-duty hours.

**Action Plan**

1. Establish qualifications for teacher leaders who can implement goals as outlined in this plan, assist with improving the environment consistent with research including high expectations, knowledge of cultural context-learning styles of African American students and pedagogy.

2. The District will provide research-based training for teachers in the areas of equity and learning for African American students.

Performance Goal 03.

The District will expand/develop the Pre-K-8 course of study so that it gives African American students access to culturally relevant contextual, standards-based curriculum.

**Action Plan**

1. Design curriculum and provide instruction that connects new tasks or concepts to prior knowledge, incorporating culturally responsive pedagogy. This can be accomplished by adjusting what and how students are taught to meet their social and emotional needs and experiences.

2. Have teacher professional development which includes strategies for implementing culturally relevant pedagogy for African American students in the area of mathematics and reading.

3. Embed specialized professional development supervision of instruction to include specific strategies for African American students in the District's core reading program that considers culturally relevant teaching practices.

4. Require all sites/teachers do a demographic study of their classrooms and site to identify who is specifically enrolled in the school and in the classroom then ensure that the classroom reflects the specific students in their classrooms/at the site (e.g. posters, books, videos, guest speakers, field trips etc.).
Performance Goal 01.

The District will provide comprehensive professional development for teachers and administrators so that they understand how to design and implement embedded culturally relevant and responsive education for African American students into the District's curriculum and instructional practices. Culturally relevant and responsive education for African American students into the District's curriculum and instructional practices.

**Action Plan**

1. Provide professional development that identifies culturally relevant instructional strategies to improve African American student achievement.

2. Provide professional development at the school site related to understanding the mask of poverty and its impact on the academic achievement of many African American students.

3. Emphasize the importance of African American students learning about African history and culture that includes the origins of humanity and culture.

4. Build site leader capacity to lead conversations/facilitate sessions related to African American student achievement and equity.

5. Prepare teachers and administration to serve as coaches (similar to EL Coaches - from within the district) to work with teachers to develop culturally responsive classrooms and schools.

6. Provide professional development for teachers and administrators focusing on teaching Black History, all year long, and understanding why all students need to learn Black History.

7. Utilize the AAPAC African American monthly themes presented annually. These themes can be used school wide and/or in the individual classrooms.

8. Provide Social Justice training for staff and conduct ongoing follow-up to track change.

9. Provide African American Students Mentoring workshops to help prepare students for the next school year and encourage academic and emotional success.

10. Workshops provided for administrators and teachers on inclusive teaching and grading practices and how they can use it in their course design and interactions with students.

11. Require annual equity inservice for administrators and teachers.

12. Require Equity in the Educational System module (i.e., Target Solution module) to be completed annually. (Exploring racial inequities in the public school system related to resources, discipline, and academic achievement from a systemic perspective, focusing on how institutional racism limits opportunities and choices.)
Performance Goal 01.

The District will increase parent involvement and parent advocacy of African American students by seeking and gaining assistance from school programs and organizations.

**Action Plan**

1. Survey parents about ways to improve home-school communication.
2. Provide a vehicle by which parents can share their ideas, concerns and strategies for improving the way schools function on behalf of their children.
3. Each school site will establish an African American Parent Advisory group that will provide leadership and guidance for parents.
4. Require each school to have a plan to communicate curricular matters to parents to ensure that the parents know what the school plans are for their children.

Performance Goal 02.

The District will devise strategies to use parents’ cultural knowledge and resources in the way schools’ function on behalf of their children.

**Action Plan**

1. Provide training for parents on how to help their children with grade level reading and math.
2. Encourage and organize means for parents, teachers, students and administration to work collaboratively to improve student achievement.
3. Assist schools in taking the cultural/language relevance of parents into full account in order to achieve the desired needs and performance targets.
4. Have 8th grade students and their parents make preliminary plans for their high school schedules after meeting with high school counselors to provide assistance in planning schedules to meet graduation and college admission requirements.
5. Provide parent training in practices that positively influence African American students’ achievement and attendance. Increase parent leadership skills by recruiting and training them to become leaders which will enable them to reach out to other parents.
African American Advisory Council

The District’s African American Advisory Council (AAAC) is designed to ensure that District stakeholders have a mechanism to plan and coordinate for optimal programs and for the success of African American students. The Council is composed of key district leaders and various site administrators, teachers, parents and community members.

The AAAC meets monthly to discuss topics pertaining to the implementation of programs to support African American student success. The Serves as a clearinghouse for strategies, ideas and suggestions for African American students, as well as a focus group for collaborative problem solving. Provides a forum to evaluate and determine that practices, resources, and personnel are used effectively to implement strategies to foster African American student success. Makes recommendations to the PSD Cabinet for reporting on the performance of African American students. Ensures communication and integration as we continue to bring clarity, consistency and continuing improvement to the district’s programs for African American students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Attends school daily, arrives on time, and works for high achievement and participates in school activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Advocates for support services for students not meeting standards and benchmarks who may be at risk of retention or who require interventions in order to reach goals. Then, attends team meetings and informs parents of progress and strategies to support students in meeting standards. Uses data to understand and respond to student needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Classroom Teacher | Provides effective universal instruction. Determines and implements differentiated strategies to increase academic performance. Then, implements intervention, enrichment and acceleration programs as needed to support African American students.  
Provides instruction that aligns with Common Core and Next Generation State Standards  
Monitors African American student progress, reviews school/classroom data, uses data to modify instruction, reviews content and English Language Development Standards and assessment procedures  
Advocates for support services for students not meeting standards and benchmarks who may be at risk of retention or who require interventions in order to reach goals  
Attends team meetings and informs parents of progress and strategies to support students in meeting standards.  
Uses data to understand and respond to student needs |
| Principal        | Leads the creation of a culturally and linguistically responsive school climate for all and provides opportunities for leadership in all aspects of the educational program  
Monitors achievement data, suspension rates, GATE referrals and placement in intervention, enrichment and accelerated programs for African American students  
Reports periodically to district administrators on the progress of African American students |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal</td>
<td>Assists the principal in administration and monitoring of the progress of African American students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monitor behavioral and student study team referrals of African American students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provides opportunities for Restorative Practice and other means of discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Personnel</td>
<td>Assists with initial placements, based on data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monitors progress of African American students toward meeting language and academic benchmarks such as CAASPP, Illuminate and Educlimber that aide in the MTSS process and reporting progress for African American Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assists with interpretation of student assessments, collaborates with teachers and others in devising individual program modifications and interventions, as needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supports the implementation of the African American Advisory Council Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District African American Advisory Committee</td>
<td>Examines program evaluation findings on an annual basis and frames recommendations for program improvement for the following year as part of its advisory role to the PSD Cabinet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provides annual report to Board of Trustees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advice on issues relevant to African American students in the district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Works with other District committees to ensure African American students have equal access to all pertinent materials and resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
African American students are continually sidelined, punished, left behind and not given adequate support.

Despite the research on the importance of placing African American students at the center of the classroom with culturally sustaining pedagogy, the data does not reflect that actually happening in schools and districts. But this does not mean that it always must be like this. The recommendations in the following pages cover key practices that educators can implement in the classrooms and administrators can support to create an environment that is culturally relevant and sustaining.

- Supporting the African American learning, 2021
The Principals, school administrators, teachers and counselors in elementary and middle schools, as well as District staff, must work closely together to ensure that African American students have access to equitable, culturally and linguistically relevant classroom environments, and culturally and linguistically relevant and responsive instruction, provided by qualified teachers. Staff of all ethnicities and positions must meaningfully participate in equity and cultural proficiency efforts. School leaders should model authentic conversations about teacher and student identity and agency and engage all stakeholders in the development of equitable school site plans.

In schools that demonstrate disproportionate referral, suspension, and expulsion data for African American students, school personnel must be involved in programs to ensure that equitable treatment and appropriate practices are demonstrated by more restorative staff behaviors. This is an expectation for interaction with all students and, in particular, African American students.

Site administrators, counselors, and teachers in all schools must work closely with parents and students to ensure that African American students have access to Honors courses and are specifically targeted for programs that help them gain access to college.

Design curriculum and provide instruction that connects new tasks or concepts to prior knowledge, and incorporate culturally responsive pedagogy by adjusting what and how students are taught to meet their social and emotional needs and experiences. Administrators should make every effort to ensure that African American students have access to the highest quality teachers.

Where change is expected and needed to improve African American students’ opportunity to learn, the District must make every effort to ensure that its staff and the external support providers responsible for change are adequately trained to have the knowledge and skills (i.e. academic, culturally relevant and responsive) to perform effectively to enhance the academic achievement of African American students.

Parents should be given the opportunity and tools to be the most effective educational advocates for their children. To this end, the District should continue to support the efforts of its schools to encourage parents to be active participants in their children’s education.

The District should annually evaluate the actions taken by the various parties to close the opportunity gap of African American students. The evaluation should report on the status of African American students in the District as a whole, on the performance indicators enumerated in this Action Plan, and it should include case studies for a sample of schools and classrooms on the specific actions that have been taken to close the gap. The assessments should include an analysis of the impact of those actions on student outcomes (i.e., attendance and standardized test scores in reading, mathematics, and writing). This evaluation will guide the District’s future efforts to close the opportunity gap in the achievement of African American students.
Cultivating and Incorporating a Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Environment

A culturally and linguistically responsive (CLR) classroom environment is the key providing a learning environment that supports, values and validates all students, all the time. The authors of the Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education describe a culturally sensitive environment as one where students feel safe and supported by a warm, caring community. Research on effective schools has consistently shown that students are more successful when they are engaged in a positive school environment that is orderly and safe, has a warm and caring community, and facilitates learning. Students and teachers benefit when the school (and each classroom) is a caring community, particularly in schools which a large number of ELs, ethnic minorities, or students who live in poverty. [1]

Elements of a Culturally Responsive Learning Environment | Teachers & Staff

- Integrate multicultural, multiethnic and equity themes into instruction
- Demonstrate awareness of the diverse needs of students.
- Use multicultural and multiethnic curriculum materials that represent the students’ backgrounds.
- Celebrate and encourage the use of home languages of all varieties.
- Invite students to think critically and engage in learning activities that promote social justice and believe that all children can learn.
- Receive training and feedback on a regular, ongoing basis regarding their approach to all students.

The Palmdale Teaching and Learning Framework in development clearly defines the emphasis the district places on creating schoolwide and systematic environments that promote inclusion, empathy and support for all students. In particular, Standard XX speaks to the requirement that a classroom environment reflect the experiences of all students, including ELs and LSEs. Additionally, the Standard addresses the importance of the design and setup of the classroom, visuals hanging on the walls, books, materials and examples used during classroom instruction.
Who Are Learners of Standard English?

The District’s African American Advisory Council (AAAC) is designed to ensure that District stakeholders have a mechanism to plan and coordinate for optimal programs and for the success of African American students. The Council is composed of key district leaders and various site administrators, teachers, parents and community members.

The AAAC meets monthly to discuss topics pertaining to the implementation of programs to support African American student success. The Serves as a clearinghouse for strategies, ideas and suggestions for African American students, as well as a focus group for collaborative problem solving. Provides a forum to evaluate and determine that practices, resources, and personnel are used effectively to implement strategies to foster African American student success. Makes recommendations to the PSD Cabinet for reporting on the performance of African American students. Ensures communication and integration as we continue to bring clarity, consistency and continuing improvement to the district’s programs for African American students.

Mainstream, or standard English, is defined as the language variety most often used in education, media, government and business. Standard English is the language that is used by teachers and students for the purpose of acquiring new knowledge and skills, imparting new information, describing abstract ideas, and developing students’ conceptual understanding. LSEs are students who speak a variety of English that is different in structure and form than academic English. LSEs often struggle academically due to lack of proficiency in standard English, and they often go unnoticed as ELs because educators assume that because they speak English, they are fluent in standard English when they enter school.

Varieties of English used by LSEs should be viewed as valid and valuable. The language varieties spoken by Palmdale LSEs are rule-governed, with aspects of syntactic and pragmatic complexity that are not present in mainstream English. As a result, LSEs bring critical linguistic knowledge to schools which needs to be welcomed, supported and further developed.
New Ways Of Talking About Language

Chapter 9 of California’s ELA/ELD Framework presents a new way of talking about language. Table 1 below presents the information with examples for educators.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instead Of</th>
<th>Try This</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thinking in terms of:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proper or improper</td>
<td>Talk about grammar as:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good or bad</td>
<td>Patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Varied by setting and situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking about grammar as:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right or wrong</td>
<td>Talk about grammar as:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correct or incorrect</td>
<td>Patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Varied by setting and situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking that students:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make mistakes or errors</td>
<td>See students as:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have problems with plurals, possessives and use of tense.</td>
<td>Following the language patterns of their home language or home varieties of English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Using grammatical patterns or vocabulary that is different from standard English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saying to students:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Need to correct”</td>
<td>Invite students to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Are supposed to”</td>
<td>Code-switch (use the type of language appropriate for the setting and situation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Should be”</td>
<td>Translanguage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making corrections and notes in the margin:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correcting students' language</td>
<td>Lead students to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compare and contrast examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Build on existing knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LSE-evaluate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Typologies of Learners of Standard English

Palmdale enrolls students from four general categories of Learners of Standard English. The language variations represented by these students may be subject to linguistic camouflaging, a situation in which similar-sounding vocabulary and structures are assumed to be identical to mainstream English when the features of the languages carry distinct syntactic, semantic or pragmatic meanings.

The chart below provides the four general categories and a brief description of each.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learners of Standard English</th>
<th>Linguistic Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American Speech Communities</td>
<td>A prominent difference from mainstream English is its complex tense-aspect markers, including those indicating habitual, future habitual, habitual resultant, and states initiated in the past. Other important differences include the absence of present tense forms of “be”, multiple negation, and negative auxiliary inversion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English spoken by Americans of Mexican origin</td>
<td>Prominent features of MxAL that differ from standard English varieties include regularization of irregular verbs, variable absence of past-tense marking, use of zero direct objects and zero subject pronouns and multiple negation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawai’ian-American speakers of English</td>
<td>Prominent features of HAL are aspect markers to indicate habitual past, null copula, multiple negation, and pronoun and topicalization systems that differ from mainstream English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American and Alaska Native speakers of English</td>
<td>Prominent features are characterized by phonological differences from mainstream English vowels, variable absence of plural and possessive marking, passive constructions using “get” rather than “be” and null copula.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contact

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