

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LEADERSHIP IN AMERICAN K-12 EDUCATION: A GAP ANALYSIS

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Purpose

Explore the extent to which culturally responsive leadership (CRL) influences school climate and student outcomes

Research Questions	Foundational Assets	Findings	Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the attributes of culturally responsive leadership in district leadership that create a climate for student success? • What is the interaction between stakeholder knowledge, motivation, and organizational culture and context related to the School District of Philadelphia’s goal of culturally responsive leadership providing a climate where 100% of students will graduate, ready for college and career? • What are the recommended knowledge and skills, motivation, and organizational context for culturally responsive leaders? 	Systemic oppression and institutional racism	100% of leaders were able to connect the elements of systemic oppression and institutional racism to their personal practice and to the importance of CRL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build foundational knowledge of culturally responsive leadership amongst senior leadership • Develop a professional development plan for culturally responsive leadership • Provide executive coaching to support the implementation of culturally responsive leadership initiatives across the district • Establish a central office Equity Department at the School District of Philadelphia
	Understanding of CRL within a school district	82% of senior leaders were able to define at least one element of CRL within a school district setting, with most citing the importance of developing culturally responsive teachers.	
	Leveraging CRL to improve school climate	73% of senior leaders were able to connect CRL to school climate improvement efforts and recognized the importance of managing personal biases and professional development.	
	Utilizing CRL to close the achievement gap	64% of senior leaders identified that either the CRL element of professional development or self-reflection was critical to closing the achievement gap for Black and Latino students.	
	CRL to strengthen community relationships	55% of participants were able to identify actions of a culturally responsive leader that build community relations, however, their responses were not aligned.	
	Assessing one’s own traits as a culturally responsive leader	64% of senior leaders were able to identify at least one element of CRL as a strength or weakness in their own practice. 27% referenced that they reflect on their hiring practices, 27% shared that they reflect on their parental engagement practices, and 27% mentioned that they reflect on their personal biases and behaviors.	
	Value of implementing CRL to improve school climate	55% of senior leaders found CRL useful for achieving their goals and connected it to their personal leadership practices through culturally relevant curricula, diversity in staff, addressing children’s interests, and culturally responsive pedagogical practices.	
	Usefulness of CRL in professional practice	64% of senior leaders identified CRL as a core responsibility in their own practice that supports the attainment of their professional goals.	
Methods and Data Analysis			Key Literature
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants: 11 senior district leaders including 4 chief level officers, 5 assistant superintendents, and 2 central office executives • In-person and Virtual Interviews: 9 in-person and 2 virtual 	Implementing CRL to improve school climate	64% of senior leaders believed they were capable of implementing CRL to improve school climate. 36% felt they have autonomy, and 36% mentioned there is willingness amongst the executive leadership team to have conversations pertaining to culture, race, and equity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gillborn & Ladson-Billings, 2010 • Green, 2017 • Harper & Davis, 2016 • Harper, Patton, & Wooden, 2009 • Khalifa, Gooden, & Davis, 2016 • Marshall & Khalifa, 2018 • Renfrow, 1981 • Smith-Maddox, 1998
	Creates structures and goals to build CRL	73% of senior leaders believed that the district incentivizes and establishes formal organizational structures and goals related to culturally responsive leadership.	
	Resources to build CRL	55% of senior leaders believed that the district allocates resources, professional development, and autonomy with provisions to leaders to build culturally responsive leadership. However, these leaders were uncertain on the district’s position on CRL.	