

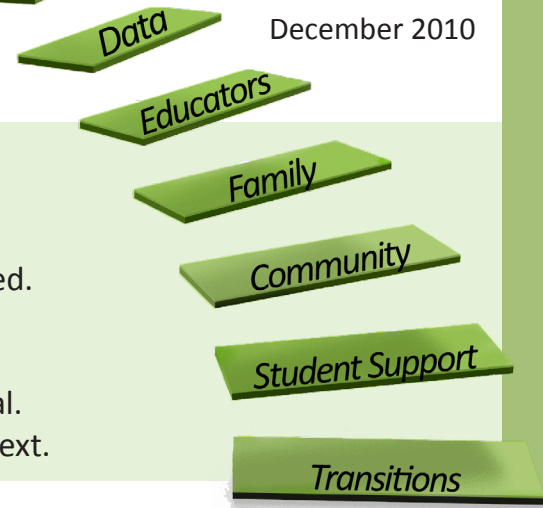
Eliminating Gaps

Eliminating gaps will require the collaboration of all members of a community, not just staff in a school building and students' families.



Classroom Teacher

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Eliminating gaps will require changes in how I think about and work in the following areas:

Data — what and how data is collected; who sees it and how it is used.

Educators — recruitment, hiring, placement, retention, and training.

Family/community — engagement in students' education.

Student support — academic, physical, social-emotional, and cultural.

Transitions — students' transitions from one academic level to the next.

As a classroom teacher, what I do makes a difference!

Data: I need to consider multiple data elements and use data differently.

- **Differentiated instruction:** How do I learn about the “special needs” of students who are English Language Learners, on a 504 plan, receiving special education services, or highly capable? How do I differentiate instruction? How do I identify students who are not currently being served by these programs? Do I discover the learning and communication styles of each of my students?
- **Academic and behavior patterns:** How do I use the patterns I see in my classroom to inform the way I provide instruction to create a successful environment for each and every student? How do I document these patterns, share this information with other adults in the building, and create plans to improve the experience for all students?
- **Assessment:** How do I gather information about the strengths and talents of my students? How do I use *formative* (regular/daily checks for understanding) and *summative* assessment (chapter tests/state assessments) to influence how I plan lessons and select supplemental material? How often do I communicate with others in the school about student progress? How do I ensure that each and every student reaches standard in my subject area?

Educator: I need to become more effective as a teacher.

- **Building relationships:** How do I know students trust and respect me? How do I build meaningful relationships with each of my students? How do I help students build positive relationships with each other and with other adults in the building?
- **Classroom expectations:** How do I demonstrate that eliminating opportunity and access gaps is a priority for me? How do students know that I believe each and every one of them is capable of success? How am I modeling this philosophy to other educators and to the students I serve?
- **Curriculum and teaching:** How often do I have productive conversations with my peers about curriculum and pedagogy? How do I determine if the curriculum I am using is culturally and linguistically relevant to my students? If it is not, how do I get the resources and professional development I need to be highly effective with a diverse population of students?
- **Communication:** How do I know each and every student is learning? How do I overcome barriers with a student or group of students? How do I know I am communicating effectively?
- **Professional development:** How do I plan to get the professional development I need? Do I have a mentor who can support me when I have questions about working with a student, a group of students, a family, or when I am developing curriculum or writing a lesson plan?

As a classroom teacher, what I do makes a difference!

Family/community: I need to engage families and communities.

- **Communicating about students:** Am I making positive verbal contact with the families of each of my students early in the year? How do I gather input from families about students' strengths and areas of growth in order to better serve my students? What do I do outside of my classroom and the school day to engage families, particularly those of students who seem to be struggling? How do I invite families to participate in classroom and school activities, in addition to parent-teacher conferences?
- **Connecting people, resources and information:** Where should my students' families go to get information about what is happening in my classroom and in the school building? How do I inform them about ways to reach me? How do I create an environment in which families feel welcome and invited to provide me with regular feedback? How do I know that I have communicated effectively with families? Do I invite family and community members to speak, volunteer, and/or mentor in my classroom or school? Do I attend events in the community or engage families outside of the classroom or school?

Student support: I need to recognize and address students' academic, physical, social-emotional, and cultural needs.

- **Social and cultural:** Am I making each and every student feel welcome, prepared, comfortable, and safe in my classroom? How do I create an environment in which all students feel comfortable letting me know when they have a need? How do I help students who seem to be socially or culturally isolated from their peers? How do I follow up with students and stay in their circle of care beyond a particular incident?
- **Physical:** How do I support students or connect them to support when they are homeless, hungry, without clothing or need health care? To whom do I send students if I perceive mental health issues?
- **Academic:** How do I support students in my classroom who perform below or above grade-level? How do I differentiate instruction so each and every student is both challenged and supported? Where can students go in or outside of my building to get additional academic support?

Transitions: I help students make seamless transitions from one academic level to the next.

- **Academic:** How do I know if students entering my class are ready for the level of instruction I am providing? What formative and summative assessments do I use, and how do I share the results with teachers at the next level? How do I intentionally prepare my students for the next level, with the necessary academic, study, and behavior skills they will need to be successful?
- **Managing change:** How do I achieve clear cross-grade level communication? How does my school ensure that students are prepared academically and socially to move from one level to the next, with particular care paid to students moving from one school to another?
- **Inner preparedness:** How am I preparing my students to become more responsible, to take initiative and persevere in solving problems, and to care about and work cooperatively with others?

