

LEADING & LEARNING FROM WITHIN:

Leveraging Internal Experts to Build a Community of Practice

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2024

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Context

Peach Springs, Arizona is a small, rural town located in the northwestern part of the state, with a population of just over 1,000 residents. It is situated along Historic Route 66 and serves as the Hualapai tribal headquarters and is centrally located within the nearly million-acre Hualapai Indian Reservation. A short drive down the center of town along Diamond Creek Road leads to the only place you can drive straight to the bottom of the Grand Canyon with direct access to the Colorado River. The Hualapai Indian Reservation's economy relies heavily on tourism, particularly visitors traveling to the Grand Canyon West, which offers outdoor recreational opportunities such as hiking, camping, hunting, and exploring the surrounding area.

I moved to Peach Springs last Fall to join the Peach Springs Unified School District as their Special Education/Resource Teacher at Music Mountain Jr./Sr. High School. I currently teach students grades 7-12 in a Learning Disabled/Behavior Disorder Self-Contained Life Skills classroom, providing direct student support with a focus on post-secondary transition goals, credit recovery, and overall student academic instruction in all content areas. The school has a high density Native American student population (95%), serving predominantly Hualapai, but also other tribal groups, at both the elementary and jr./sr. high schools. The district is a public education institution but is located on tribal lands. Because of this dynamic, there is a unique partnership between the school, the community, and the tribe. The schools have a component of cultural education embedded into their educational programs and the Hualapai tribal departments are regular guests on campus, often invited to speak to students about various topics, issues, and opportunities relevant to tribal youth.

The junior/senior high school size is relatively small, with the total enrollment around 65 students allowing for smaller class sizes, typically with around a 1:10 teacher to student ratio. The students have separate teachers for core academic classes, in addition to art, physical education, and Hualapai culture/language for electives. Those with eligible Individual Education Plans (IEPs) or medical 504s have access to Special Education/Resource from one period to all day, depending on the level of services needed. All students can choose to participate in girls/boys basketball or student council for extracurricular activities through the school. The district is currently looking to expand sport and club offerings to further meet the interest and needs of the students.

As a twenty-year veteran in the field of education, having taught in K-12, higher education, and adult education, with a background in human resources, and aspirations of school leadership, I would like to share my subject matter expertise and overall educational and experiences and cultural experiences to explore utilizing the inner resources of the community and district to support student learning. This Leadership Practice Guide, *LEADING & LEARNING FROM WITHIN: Leveraging Internal Experts to Build a Community of Practice*, will explore concepts of culturally responsive schooling through developing a sense of belonging amongst community and tribal members by recognizing the strengths of individuals and entities that already exist within the representation of tribal and school communities.

Rationale

Native community experts have localized expertise and distinct knowledge that can be shared with district leaders, teachers, staff, and students. Often this can be more valuable, applicable, and cost-effective than seeking consultation services from outside of the community. Indigenous experts can help teachers, staff, and the learners they serve gain a more relevant and deeper connection to place¹, taking into consideration intersections of cultural, geographical, and academic thresholds. Experts can be defined in terms of various descriptions, identifications, nomenclatures and classifications within the community. As applicable to the purpose of this practice guide, an integrated definition of cultural expertise from multiple sources will be used.

For the purposes of this leadership practice guide for culturally responsive schooling, an expert is identified into two categories. An **internal expert** is someone who is employed by the district and works and may live with the student population and therefore has personally vested interest as a key stakeholder in student success and outcomes; these are educational field experts and may or may not belong to an Indigenous community. A **community expert** is defined as a person with specialized knowledge within the community from various fields to represent themselves with authority as cultural advisors, brokers, and mediators. Working together, these experts can collaborate in a concerted effort to locate and describe with relevancy the issues directly impacting students for the use of enhancing understanding through firsthand practice, inherent knowledge, direct experience, and/or scholarly dedication to the subject(s) being presented. These experts offer diverse perspectives and histories, reflecting students' cultures, and promoting critical thinking about relevant societal issues.

Leading from within is about leveraging the wealth of knowledge that exists within the community and among the professionals already employed by the district in order to build a stronger academic and cultural foundation to meet the individual needs of Native youth. This model of incorporating culturally responsive schooling will help to develop future leaders from within who are investing in serving the needs of the community and beyond. There is an interconnectedness that comes from those that have a direct interest in the success of the youth in the community and this method of incorporation is one of the most discounted and underutilized facets within public education. Furthermore, the modern school model is extremely anglocentric, middle class driven, not leaving much room for diversity in terms of behavioral, social, and academic equity. The traditional framework for learning includes a standardized foundation in knowledge, skills, and vocabulary and it should be recognized that the background reference is inherently different for Indigenous students. This model emphasizes educational neutrality that influences the scope of learning and subsequent classroom experiences of learners. "...The notion of neutrality... is potentially dangerous and describes the historical instances in which neutrality has, in fact, concealed a bias that enforced and perpetuated discrimination against First Nations" (Holden, 2020, p. 11). Therefore, educators cannot assume student prior knowledge of content and in contrast, should teach students to critically analyze different perspectives and viewpoints.

¹ Place as used here references a location-specific social environment where the importance of the local context, including the community's culture, history, values, and resources are emphasized.

This topic is significant for the Hualapai community and the students and families served by the district because there has been a history of the negative impact of schooling dating back to Indian boarding schools. In fact, there is a boarding school less than ten miles from the high school in Valentine, Arizona that impacted many residents of Peach Springs. Community members have spoken of how their grandparents were forcibly removed from their homes to attend there, forced into hard labor and harsh living conditions, and were punished for any sign of their Native traditions. As a result, most stopped speaking the language and did not pass on their customs to future generations. This trauma of the past continues to impact the mistrust the community has in the education system, and some are still hesitant to have assurance in the intentions of the “hiku/hikuwi”, the white man. Bringing in community experts and drawing from those who are most directly involved in impacting the outcomes of the students within the district allows for the further re-establishment of confidence in the education system that for so many years sought to oppress them as a people. Collaboration between stakeholders is key to building and maintaining a lasting relationship with the community and where the betterment of students is the priority. One way this can be achieved is through encouraging students and creating opportunities for them to become active participants in their communities

Likewise, the topic of this Leadership Practice Guide is also important for the staff within the district who have direct interaction with the students on a daily basis. Teachers are hired based on their qualifications and being certified by the Arizona Department of Education in their designated area of instruction. Their degrees in education, whether at the Bachelors, Masters, or Doctoral levels, affords in-depth exposure to educational pedagogy and theories of practice. In addition, years of experience in the classroom enhances this level of expertise which all make up the qualities of an effective teacher. Support staff are equally trained to advise in the areas needed to be efficient in their roles. Working in a school that has a high density of Native American students is immensely rewarding but offers unique challenges that sometimes only those from within the community may be able to adequately address. It can be frustrating, confusing, and even insulting when an outside consultant offers strategies that have no relevance with the student population being served. Teachers and staff may feel this training is wasted valuable time and dismiss the training altogether or spend their own time and research finding ways to adapt, adjust, and apply this misguidance. District leaders should recognize this and instead look at their community and their own highly qualified personnel to share the knowledge that already exists from within. Staff/teacher training would ideally include an understanding of local cultural traditions, Indigenous history, and value of the natural surroundings as relevant to student populations served.

Recognizing and celebrating the traditions of local experts in Indigenous knowledge systems, in collaboration with professional educators and administrators who have specialized training in the field, can positively influence learners in ways that are relevant in making lasting impacts. This is especially true in Native American communities when individuals and organizations who do not have a connection to their culture attempt to apply “outside” principles and practices that are just that- outdated and out of touch. The often unintended consequence undermines tribal autonomy and influence in the educational development of Native youth who ideally will grow to become the next generation of community experts and leaders, and therefore should be replaced with culturally responsive professional development when available.

Leading from within is essential to culturally responsive schooling. According to the Dr. Brayboy (2024), the key components for Indigenous learning systems include: epistemology (what is knowledge), ontology (consciousness/ways of being), pedagogy (teaching/learning), axiology (value systems), and cosmology (origin). Culturally responsive schools can use Indigenous knowledge systems to increase student proficiencies to enhance learning state standards and life, college and career skills by making correlations between these philosophical and cultural systems to add relevance through relationality. Students that have this connection to the world around them will inherently be more engaged and motivated, thus more likely to absorb information being presented in the classroom. Inherently, incorporating autochthonous knowledge and perspectives is essential for creating a culturally responsive schooling environment that respects and reflects the diverse backgrounds of all students.

Topic Summary

Internal and external influences contribute to a school's culture, but often the best sources of growth and development come from within. These internal sources can be overlooked while districts spend absorbent amounts of funding on consultants who have little to no experience with the community or the unique student populations being served. The continual repackaging and reselling of professional learning to outside consultants can be damaging to the morale of teachers who are asked to apply irrelevant and sometimes outdated educational practices to a body of students in which it is ineffective. The integrity of information and strategies being suggested for implementation is not always applicable to the demographic being served and research suggests a one-size-fits-all model is rarely successful in practice. Ultimately, execution of these measures is not successful because they were not designed with the target population in mind, thus hindering equitable opportunities to make relevant connections between learning and life outside of the classroom. Instead, district leaders must intervene and create systems that are best for *our* students to thrive by increasing diverse learning opportunities for all students and promoting culturally responsive classroom practices.

Utilizing internal training facilitators is not only a cost-savings measure but a way to build relationships among the community and value among the existing teachers and staff. Employees want work that is interesting, to feel appreciated, and have input all of which do not have a cost association. Evidence supports that one of the most important qualities in the field of education is autonomy for licensed, certified professionals. Autonomy allows certified teachers the freedom to exercise their professional knowledge and judgment, which directly impacts job satisfaction, retention, and effective teaching outcomes. Teachers who engage in participant-learning exchanges have greater control over their tasks and methods are more likely to experience higher job satisfaction and lower burnout (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014). Substantial presence in developing teachers/staff, in addition to regular, significant interactions with students can also be effective to incorporating relevant training.

Respect goes a long way in culturally responsive schooling. Individual spirit-building leads to team-building and this involves training that is interactive, engaging, and ongoing! Utilizing internal expertise as thought partners is not only valuable, but instrumental and often more value-added than external constituents can offer. Existing staff experts can "... provid[e] a conceptual

umbrella to a variety of evolving practices, all of which include the use of special knowledge...” (Holden, 2020, p. 11). Additionally, helping them to understand and incorporate tribal identity by immersing them in activities outside of the four walls of the school building can not only enrich content, but increase a sense of belonging that leads to retention.

Examine your school’s brand- is it positive within the community? If so, what have you done to continue to foster this positive image? If not, what are you currently doing or what action steps are you looking to do to build your brand into one that is positively reflected? An advocacy mindset is needed to propel change in the right direction. As an example, this philosophy is aligned to the mission/vision of the Peach Springs School District: The Mission of Peach Springs Unified School District is “to provide a safe and enriching learning environment where the whole student is nurtured and developed” (PSUSD, 2002-2024.). This whole student approach includes acknowledging their Native traditions and should be reflected in their learning environment through the use of authentic community experts and embedded regularly into lessons. A balance in the complexity of integrating mandated state standards with cultural diversity that honors traditions and values while emphasizing the importance of human connection is imperative.

Educators in culturally responsive schools must ask themselves, “How is what we are doing making people’s lives better?” Not just the students served, but the communities they go into and the society they contribute to after graduation. Students draw inspiration from what challenges them and will ultimately do what inspires them, even if it is not easy. Integrating culturally responsive school practices such as “leading from within” strategies can help make connections between content and relevance of learning, which in turn develops reflective thinking. Developing culturally responsive teaching and learning strategies that contribute to the overall goal of academic achievement and helping the students to mentally and physically prepare for life beyond school can all be accomplished through leveraging community and cultural resources that surround school systems. “Community members are experts in using the local formal and informal information networks and in negotiating local systems of influence and power” (Teufel-Shone, 2005, para 10). Leveraging community assets and employing culturally responsive practices can help bridge the skill and content divides that challenge many Indigenous students in modern school systems.

Leveraging experts within Indigenous communities can also help build soft skills that are essential skills for Indigenous students to learn and apply. Experiences that build skills of communication, presentation, innovation and creativity, stress management, problem solving, critical thinking, breaking up larger objectives into smaller targets, task management, integrity, and teamwork are valuable skills that can be developed with the help of community partners. These can be embedded in a shared value statement that embodies a functional community of practice. Working together, nearly anything can be accomplished through acting with honesty, fairness, and respect for others. If everyone is focused on meeting the needs of the students and exceeding the expectations of the parents and state, it is a win-win for all involved. A value statement alongside instructional practices that reflect cultural responsiveness through innovation and collaboration to deliver exceptional student-focused experiences will ultimately help drive district initiatives and improve overall academic success amongst Indigenous populations. In addition, growing talent from within and building capacity amongst the assets that exist within

and amongst an organization can increase job satisfaction and retention in Indigenous serving schools that often lack candidates to fill employment positions both certified and classified.

Learning analytics gathered through psychological studies suggest that students become more proficient independent learners when engaged in activities that are meaningful and relevant versus significantly longer when they are unable to make connections to learning objectives (McComb, 2015). Effective instruction involves using data to gain insight about Indigenous learners to raise overall performance and provide excellent instructional strategies should be at the foresight of every school administrator. Educators in culturally responsive schools should identify what problem needs to be solved and then try to use community partners and professional experts from within the district for an applicable resolution. The analytics process involves framing a driving question, forming a hypothesis, gathering and analyzing data, summarizing the data, drawing conclusions, identifying solutions, implementing change(s), and then validating and re-processing as needed.

Students who are familiar with localized content will be more engaged and have increased levels of participation. They are eager to learn and demonstrate making academic progress when there is authentic interest. Native American students have previously been cheated out of opportunities for meaningful learning. Culturally responsive schools can lean into learning by creating experiential experiences that value the vibrant knowledge of those from within the ancestral community and respect the rich culture and local traditions. Community experts can embody this from "...the wide span of fields of cultural expertise going from the recognition of the rights of autochthone minorities and the First Nations to the politics of cultural expertise in modern reformulations of customs..." (Holden, 2020, p. 10). The need for cultural expertise is then reinforced through practice of interdisciplinary collaboration and cross-curricular planning within the schools.

Position management involves insight updates with stakeholders, and this involves timeliness in communication and quality in the services being provided. Advanced features that a district can offer by collaborating with community experts and tribal departments brings a unique opportunity to native-serving schools. In addition, utilizing position integration of already highly qualified staff into professional development taps into talent that have direct contact with students on a daily basis, often bringing more customization and relevance to training.

Leaders in culturally responsive schools should follow their instincts- they are often the best guide. There is no lasting change without action. Being the best version of yourself involves being passionate about what you are doing, and others will be on board. District employees can use links with local community members to enhance the mission and vision to support the best interest of the learners and advocate for school systems that support the diverse learning styles of the Native student population.

Implementation Plan

Leaders in culturally responsive schools leading through the concept of leading from within should develop a comprehensive professional development plan for their schools. One aspect of this comprehensive plan is to develop a culturally responsive design to professional development. There have been many approaches to learning and training, but the most effective are those that are implemented with a Culture>Systems>Practices>Outcomes design in mind. Immersing new hires in the culture and community can make them more in tune to best practices to serve students that ultimately leads to academic success in the classroom. With diversity, equity, & inclusion are incorporated into classroom curriculum, alongside school training and professional development to reflect the diverse populations served and local cultures are represented and respected. In turn, identifying community experts and liaisons to assist and lead the professional development, initiating internal professional development and growth outcomes, and developing intentional community outreach and relationship building can be the cornerstone for culturally responsive schooling outcomes.

Every community is rich in resources, in Peach Springs, Arizona, this includes the Hualapai Tribal departments. The first thing in identifying community experts is to locate a list of tribal departments and contacts from those departments that would be willing to partner with the school to share their areas of expertise and collaborate in various community-based experiential learning projects. In addition, the school can host community lunch & learn events to leverage additional talent from community members that may offer insight into a variety of career fields and even be able to incorporate soft and life skill training into learning activities. Student engagement can be enhanced with opportunities for direct, real-world, and hands-on interactions with community experts, such as through internships, project-based learning, or extracurricular activities that involve collaborating with local professionals.

This type of real-world collaboration brings learning to life and brings place-based relevancy to native learners who can apply hands-on experiences to standards-based lessons. This approach encourages learners to engage with their surroundings, such as parks, neighborhoods, and local organizations, in order to foster a deeper understanding of their environment to promote active, experiential learning. By connecting education to real-world issues and local perspectives, place-based learning helps students develop a sense of responsibility and stewardship for their communities. “It enhances achievement, but, more important, it helps overcome the alienation and isolation of individuals that have become hallmarks of modernity. By reconnecting rather than separating children from the world, place-based education serves both individuals and communities, helping individuals to experience the value they hold for others and allowing communities to benefit from the commitment and contributions of their members” (Smith, 2002, p. 594). Transformational learning experiences should include community liaisons as regularly invited guests to school campuses and welcomed to share their wealth of knowledge with staff and students, eliciting further appreciation of local natural and historical resources that highlight rich cultural attributes.

Secondly, in terms of professional development, creating an internal model for professional development by surveying staff and teachers on areas of strength to identify internal subject-matter experts and identify areas of desired and needed development. All teachers, staff, and

administrators have an area of expertise that can be shared. Help entry-level, mid-career, and veteran professionals find value in and learn new skills that can benefit their role through peer training to help students *they* serve achieve personal and academic success. Community experts that have already been identified to come into the classrooms can also work with staff to address growing diversity and the potential for inequities that exist when there is a lack of cultural competency in training. In addition, the use of succession planning to identify high performers, with a potential performance matrix that grows them within the district can be created for training-up pathways. Likewise, process improvements, using stay interviews and exit surveys to find out what is working well, gathering and valuing employee input, and retaining employees can go a long way in fostering a highly-effective workforce. These things can be collected into a district toolkit for employees that define critical roles, policies, procedures, and protocols and includes a distinct community overview, interactive training modules, professional development resources, and curriculum/instructional tools from a culturally responsive perspective.

Community building is the third component of implementation. While parent engagement has long been a focus of school administration, community building should be of equal importance in the conceptualization of this model. Building a community of practice involves working together towards a common interest to enhance student experiences through joint action. Create open communication pipelines with local tribal departments to engage a large population of local expert workforce. Community engagement should include the context of expertise in areas of language, arts, history, natural resources, and traditions of the local community. For instance, seek opportunities for student job shadowing and apprenticeships, while applying real world skills that can be developed in the classroom. Public information sessions should be held on a routine basis to keep the community apprised of school events and updates of school board meetings. Consider presenting these as talking circles that honor Indigenous values and practices.

Talking circles are a traditional cultural practice among the Hualapai Tribe and other Native tribes. These circles serve as a means of communication, community building, and conflict resolution. The key aspects that make them unique are in structure, talking piece, and cultural significance. Typically, participants sit in a circle, which symbolizes equality and inclusivity; this setup allows everyone to see and hear each other, fostering open dialogue. Once the circle is open, an object representing a talking piece is passed around the circle and only the person holding it can speak, ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to share their thoughts without interruption. Talking circles provide a safe space for individuals to express feelings, share experiences, and discuss ideas and issues. Participants are encouraged to listen actively and empathetically, and this process can facilitate understanding and healing. These circles strengthen relationships within the community and help to maintain cultural traditions, and districts who incorporate this technique can foster communication by allowing for integral dialogue and sharing of ideas in harmony with the tribe that are rooted in local culture and reflect local values of respect, listening, and community.

Working together to meet the needs of the students can build a better understanding of what they need to be successful, both in and out of school. This involves two-way communication, not just relaying messages, listening and receiving input as well. Modeling participation in the community and leading by example, encouraging student and staff participation in community events, as well as bringing local traditions into the schools. For example, the school's Student

Council could become familiar with tribal governance and mirror processes and procedures that will allow them to grow into future leaders of their community. Understanding the social complexities and community norms that exist and recognizing the strength in unity that is accomplished working in tandem is an asset that any leader at the district level should consider in enhancing the student/community experience. Inherently, it is the responsibility of schools who serve Native populations to practice cultural responsiveness and promote inclusive curriculum that provide local relevance to honor traditional places and interrelated community experiences that students can translate to in the educational environment.

Assessment

Assessing whether internal experts are being utilized within a school district involves multiple considerations and transparent self-reflection of current practices. An initial review of existing programs and protocols is necessary to examine current initiatives to see the intent they may already include input or participation from internal and community experts in order to establish partnerships with local community organizations, businesses, individuals or staff within the district that offer specialized knowledge and unique perspectives to resolve any deficiencies.

Evaluation of professional development to investigate whether teachers and staff receive adequate training and workshops led by community experts that include content that enhance their skills and broaden their perspectives on local traditions would be part of this initiative. This can be done through gathering information via community focus groups, student surveys, and staff interviews to engage with learners, teachers, administrators, and community members to gather insights on their perceptions of expert involvement and can also elicit invited participation in school events or curriculum development, in various roles as guest speakers, mentors, learning consultants, and training facilitators.

A valuable tool for assessing culturally responsive schooling is a Performance Rating Matrix, which can provide a structured framework to evaluate various aspects of educational practices, policies, and outcomes. A SWOT Analysis Matrix with a specified rating criteria can be developed to define key indicators of leveraging internal experts, identify culturally relevant curriculum and learning experiences, evaluate inclusive teaching practices and methods used in the learning process, and measure levels of community participation and voice in decision-making and the relevance of learning to their cultural contexts. A guiding rating scale can be developed to evaluate each indicator, using one of the following methods: checklist (yes/no), descriptive (poor/fair/excellent), graphic (not at all/extremely), Likert (agree/disagree), numerical (1-10), ordinal (first-last), semantic (low/high); the method that most resonates with the locale should be the one chosen; *see sample SWOT Rating Scale in Appendix I*. Regardless, ensure that the criteria for each level are clearly defined and based on behaviors and outcomes that are measurable and observable.

Overall, the assessment of existing programs and protocols within the school/district will seek to address the impact on student learning and engagement, looking for data that supports improvements in student performance, attendance, motivation, or interest in learning. Using a

matrix, like the one provided, provides a structured method for assessing and improving practices related to internal expertise, curriculum relevance, inclusivity, and community participation in education. By systematically examining these areas, a clearer picture can be gained of how community experts are currently being utilized in the school district and leadership can then identify opportunities for enhancement in this area.

Closing Statement

In order to truly be a school or district that is **LEADING & LEARNING FROM WITHIN: *Leveraging Internal Experts to Build a Community of Practice***, the following must be examined: the context, rationale, topic summary, implementation plan, and assessment. The context of the community where your school is located and the constituents served is the basis for which these experts will be extracted. Likewise, evaluating the authentic reasons for seeking to build a community of practice will provide insight into a well-thought-out rationale that will serve as a valid guiding framework. It is imperative to become subject matter guides in this area, advocating for the consultation of internal experts and incorporation of local, community resources to reinforce prior knowledge, expand upon essential concepts, and to progress towards district strategic planning and objectives. Once these have been appraised, a specific data-driven action plan with clear explanation of what will be done to ensure engagement in culturally responsive principles can be administered. As a leader, regular assessment and adjustment to determine the effectiveness of the methods being used to accomplish goals will determine the overall success and challenges related to your implementation.

The Indian Community School Leadership Institute (ICSLI) experience serves to promote and integrate culturally responsive schooling into school systems by bringing increased awareness to school districts who may already be taking some steps in the right direction and giving them action steps to implement further positive change, as well as creating an opportunity for conversation for those looking to develop further support in this area. We need to advocate for and prioritize how Indigenous students learn in the Twenty-first Century. A closer intersectoral collaboration among community experts and local school districts will offer greater transparency in the practice of cultural responsiveness. In combination, these efforts will not only considerably increase culturally responsive schooling practices within school communities, it will also enhance decision-making, foster collaboration, and ultimately lead to greater success in achieving desired outcomes.

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Appendix I (pages 21-23)

SWOT Analysis Matrix with Rating Scale for Key Indicators

The scale ranges from 1 to 5, where:

1 = Very Weak 2 = Weak 3 = Neutral 4 = Strong 5 = Very Strong

SWOT	Leveraging Internal Experts (Rating: 1-5)	Culturally Relevant Curriculum & Learning Experiences (Rating: 1-5)	Inclusive Teaching Practices & Methods (Rating: 1-5)	Community Participation & Cultural Relevance in Decision-Making (Rating: 1-5)
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong institutional knowledge. - Cost-efficient. - Trust and relationships built with staff and students. <p>Rating: ____</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deepens engagement and pride. - Provides meaningful and personalized learning. <p>Rating: ____</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diverse student needs are addressed. - Increased accessibility and equity. <p>Rating: ____</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Builds trust and stronger community ties. - Relevant to real-life contexts. <p>Rating: ____</p>
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Risk of internal biases. - Resistance to new ideas. <p>Rating: ____</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resource-intensive to design. - May miss broader skills. <p>Rating: ____</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Challenging to maintain consistency. - Requires ongoing professional development. <p>Rating: ____</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conflicting community interests. - Time-consuming to engage fully. <p>Rating: ____</p>
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Custom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthens

	networks with external experts. - Professional growth for internal staff. Rating: ____	curriculum for diverse groups. - Innovations in curriculum design. Rating: ____	innovative teaching. - Higher student performance. Rating: ____	collaboration with local leaders. - Community-driven initiatives. Rating: ____
Threats	- Over-reliance on internal views. - Risk of stagnation. Rating: ____	- Cultural biases risk. - Alienation of some groups. Rating: ____	- Faculty resistance to change. - Limited resources for continuous improvement. Rating: ____	- Fragmentation of decision-making. - Risk of tokenism. Rating: ____

How to Use:

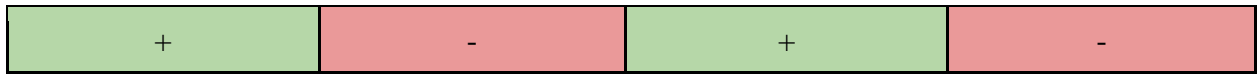
1. Assign a rating from 1 to 5 for each SWOT category.
2. For each key indicator (e.g., "Leveraging Internal Experts"), assess the current situation based on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.
3. Use individual ratings to identify areas of focus where adjustments are needed:

	Strengths/Opportunities	Threats/Weaknesses
High Scores (4 & 5)	Areas for reinforcement	Areas to prioritize for refinement
Neutral Scores (3)	Areas for continued support and development	
Low Scores (1 & 2)	Areas to prioritize for refinement	Areas for improvement or additional development

4. Add up the total for each SWOT category/row, using positive integers for strengths and opportunities and negative integers for weaknesses and threats.

SWOT Rating Totals:

Strengths: ____	Weaknesses: ____	Opportunities: ____	Threats: ____
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_____ + _____ - _____ + _____ - _____ =

5. Add up the total for each key indicator/column, using positive integers for strengths and opportunities and negative integers for weaknesses and threats.

Key Indicators Rating Totals:

Leveraging Internal Experts: _____	Culturally Relevant Curriculum & Learning Experiences: _____	Inclusive Teaching Practices & Methods : _____	Community Participation & Cultural Relevance in Decision-Making: _____
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6. Analyze Rating Totals:

Culturally Responsive Schooling Scoring using key indicators from LEADING & LEARNING FROM WITHIN: <i>Leveraging Internal Experts to Build a Community of Practice</i>		
	SWOT Ratings	Key Indicators Ratings
Exceeding	25 - 40	8 - 10
Developing	16 - 24	4 - 7
Emerging	0 - 15	0 - 3
Underperforming	Any negative total, below 0	

7. Use the SWOT analysis data as a strategic tool to assess the school’s current performance and plan improvements by identifying strengths, examining weaknesses, exploring opportunities, and assessing threats for informed decision-making and identify the most relevant actions needed to address culturally responsive schooling.

Adapted from: OpenAI. (2024). Retrieved from ChatGPT. <https://www.chatgpt.com/>