

Re-Thinking College Preparation for Alaska Native Students

RUBRIC for SELF ASSESSMENT DOCUMENT

1= Not Yet 3= Partially Met 5= We got this!

Purpose:

This school self-assessment rubric is designed to help high schools identify opportunities to increase culturally responsive practices in college readiness.

This rubric should be used alongside student data in the school improvement process.

The information from this rubric has three purposes:

1. Open-up professional conversations around culturally responsive school behaviors contributing to college readiness for Alaska Native students.
2. Help focus school improvement efforts; choosing one or two of these behaviors for targeted improvement can help move schools forward.
3. Provide an opportunity for schools to monitor their own progress on improvement in culturally responsive practices in college readiness for Alaska Native students.

How to use this document:

Discussions about school practices is the ultimate goal for this document, leading to school improvement targets. Without discussion, the data from the rubric will have little meaning, and may be inaccurate.

Three ways to consider using this:

1. Have teachers complete the rubric separately and then structure communication around the compiled data.
2. Have groups of teachers work through the rubric, encouraging communication through the process of scoring.
3. Invite others to complete the rubric along with teachers to invite a different perspective into the conversation.

IMPORTANT: Each of the statements includes backup information to provide clarity of the statement, provide examples, and provide the research behind the statement. These can be found on:

Academic Preparation

A.1 Proportionality Checks

Our School systematically checks who is taking college pathway classes* and makes plans to address an imbalance. Proportionality is not only checked by ethnicity, but also socio-economic status, first-generation status, and other relevant sub-groups.

*Ex: early enrichment classes, upper level math/science, honors, Advanced Placement, Dual Credit

1. Not Yet 2. Starting 3. Partially 4. Almost There 5. We Got this!

A.2 Finding Talent

Our school routinely uses data to identify students with potential and actively works to place those students in courses to allow for college preparation. In this process, we specifically look for students who have not been traditionally recruited into college preparation classes.

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A.3 Support without Tracking

Our school program includes early interventions designed to address learning needs. However, participation in interventions or support classes does not track students for their entire high school time. If a student needs interventions or support classes as a freshman, our school system and counseling provide opportunities for this student to still access a college-preparation pathway.

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A.4 Strength-based vs Deficit Mindset

Our school interventions to address performance gaps are designed to be culturally responsive and build on the strengths of the students. Our school staff avoid taking on a deficit-model theory in approaching gap-closing measures.

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A.5 Student Involvement in Academic Progress Monitoring

Our school actively involves students in monitoring their own academic progress. Students understand their academic standing compared with their own goals or post-secondary plans. They know what classes are expected for their goals. Students are active participants in making plans to address any identified academic gaps.

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A.6 Native Knowledge is Academic

Our school includes academic instruction that recognizes and values Native ways of knowing. Native knowledge is presented as valid and academic, and we avoid presenting Western knowledge systems as superior. Our recognition of Native ways of knowing as academic is not limited to special populations, special classes or special units; it is woven throughout course content and considered rigorous for all.

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Cultural Identity

C.1 Historical Acknowledgement

Our staff is aware of the historical relationship between schools and Alaska Native populations and the theories of how this has impacted Alaska Native populations generationally. Students and staff have opportunities to learn about this history and theories on generational impacts.

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C.2 Open Discussions about what “Decolonization” means

Our school has a culture in which we openly discuss school practices that may be anchored in colonization or assimilation. We routinely reflect on these tendencies, challenge each other in our thinking, and invite other viewpoints and/or ways of practice.

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C.3 Cultural Code Shifting rather than “Right Way”

Our school avoids presenting Western culture as the “right way” and seeks out opportunities in which Indigenous ways of being are valued and invited into classroom activities. Cultural code-shifting is when a student shifts between cultural expectations based on their surroundings. We help students think about when this might be helpful, yet also encourage them to think about when it can be enriching to share their Indigenous ways of being.

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C.4 Cultural Identity as an Assistive factor

In our school, a well-developed cultural identity is viewed as an assistive factor in college readiness and persistence. Students are guided in developing this as part of their college preparation. We not only encourage students to include their culture in applications and scholarship essays, but also help them understand how cultural identity helps to succeed and persist in an unfamiliar college setting.

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C.5 Explore and Practice Self-Identity

In our school, classroom instruction includes helping students explore self-identity. Students have opportunities to practice how they may articulate the cultural part of themselves. We provide students time to consider skills they could use in environments where they may confront cultural assumptions.

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C.6 Indigenous Spaces

Our school provides Indigenous spaces*. These are times and places in which Indigenous culture is the expected culture. Native language, traditions, foods, customs are part of the environment.

*Examples include a culture room, Native student services, dance groups, Native Language learning etc.

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Navigation

N.1 Early Comprehensive Outreach

Our school includes early college awareness embedded into the school program. Starting in 9th grade or earlier, we provide direct information about early preparation activities, career and college exploration, testing requirements, and expected courses to prepare for college and other post-secondary goals.

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N.2 Beyond the Counselor's Office

Our school's outreach for students to actively explore their own interests and self-identity, as well as recruitment into activities and college prep courses aligned with these interests. is pervasive throughout the school and not solely reliant on the counseling office. Adults in our building (teachers, secretaries, coaches etc.), serve to guide, encourage, and connect students with resources so that targeted outreach to students does not rely on the students coming to us.

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N.3 Avoid Projecting our Own Values

Adults in our school avoid projecting our own values and college opinions onto students; instead, we are skilled in empowering students to know themselves and explore their options. We serve to help students' access and interpret the information they need about themselves and post-secondary opportunities to make informed decisions.

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N.4 Culture Impact on Motivation

Exploration of post-secondary options is presented in a way in which students explore their own motivations and consider cultural ways of being. Lasting motivation is personal and deeply connected to culture and family. We avoid assuming the motivations and priorities of prevailing school culture when presenting post-secondary information and career exploration.

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N.5 Cultural lens on Independent Skills

Our school recognizes the independence and resiliency of our students, even when these skills are not those most commonly expected by school environments. Some students are very self-reliant in many situations, yet this same value can make them reluctant to ask for help or undermine confidence in an unfamiliar school setting. We value the independent and resiliency skills students have while also teaching them to recognize skills expected by schools with opportunities to practice with feedback.

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N.6 Home Outreach

Our school includes home and community in conversations about post-secondary plans. We avoid labeling student and family behavior in the context of our own beliefs or school experiences. We are aware of cultural differences and recognize strengths. We know how to help students explore and identify ways in which their family and/or cultural supports can benefit them.

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