Culturally Responsive: Educator Mindset and Action

Have High Expectations

>> It doesn't really move. It just comes down. And then when you let it go, there it goes. It just goes.

>> Let it go! Let it go!

>> I really need to emphasize this one, because one, the high expectations piece is critical. It's critical because we have been trained to expect very little from children. If teachers, family, communities, leaders expect certain segments of the population to perform low, then they will be satisfied with minimal gain. Now, what does it take for teachers, principals, superintendents, the public at large to look at that little child sitting there, who normally is expected to be on the bottom and see a physicist, chemist, mathematician, writer, lawyer? Basically, how can they look at that child and see that so that they stretch to make sure that that happens?

>> Did anybody notice the height of the bridge in the picture?

>> It's actually eight and a half.

>> The approach that we've taken is, we can do what we want to do. We can achieve the goals. We have high expectations and we have perseverance. And that growth mind-set piece, those two things together, the high expectations that come from the curriculum document and the permission to make mistakes, and the encouragement to persevere has really become a formula for success like no other.

>> I'm hoping they have problem-solving skills. I'm hoping that they have skills -- those soft skills that help them in the workplace, like working with others. Collaboration. Being able to communicate with each other in a positive way, even if there's conflict. I think those are sort of the soft things. And also, obviously, like the math. I want them to come back with knowledge of area perimeter, measuring using different tools. So all those curricular things, and also the non-curricular, sort of those hidden curriculum things, too. Well, we can problem-solve. We can change the world.

>> Twenty-two, twenty-three, twenty-four...

>> He tells us not to give up. He always encourages us to try, try harder. He doesn't always want the right answers. He just wants to see that you've tried your best. Because I've, like -- he told us this one time that if you already know what to do, you're not learning. If you don't know what to do, you're learning how to get better at it. I feel really great, because that he shows me that I don't -- that I can be myself. I can make mistakes. Because he's not -- he doesn't want us to be perfect. He wants us to do the best we can.
The fundamental role of a teacher is to help kids exceed their potential. And that's what those excellent, passionate teachers do. They know you can do better. They also happen to be usually very well-equipped to make you do better. But they never accept what you think is good enough.

Now we have to measure the area, how do...

I look at my students as competent. I look at them as critical thinkers, and I look at them as students who are able to achieve anything that I put in front of them. So once you raise the expectation and make it much higher, you’ll get a much better success overall rate.

I think there has been a change as well from a focus on what students do not have to what they bring to school. The more assets-based approach, rather than they don’t know how to do this, they don’t have the language, and a whole litany of what students do not know how to do. To the focus on, now, what do they bring to school? The cultural competences that they have?

I was only, like, measuring just the picture, and not thinking about the bench. So Mr. Vente warned us, like, "It's also the bench, the lights..."

The understanding. Many of our children, even those from immigrant students from war-torn countries, it's amazing the experiences they bring to school. So I am pleased with that change in education. That is much more focused on assets, and we go from there, building upon the assets, rather than focusing on the deficits.