

Complete and Discuss the Self-Evaluation

District and school leadership teams should begin or continue their work by completing the following Self-Evaluation Rubric (page 121) and then, working in groups, compare their perceptions and discuss appropriate next steps.

Educate English Language Learners

Educators must understand the needs of ELL students and ensure that they receive high-quality instruction in all areas. Evaluate and support language and literacy development as well as a culturally sensitive and supportive environment.

Understand the Characteristics of Poverty and Different Cultural Groups

Educators must learn the characteristics of poverty and different cultural groups. Without this understanding, teachers and administrators may react to student achievement or behavior with misunderstanding, bias, or prejudice rather than with insight.

Understand the Externally Centered Student

Educators must teach externally centered students to take control of their lives and to understand that hard work and effort can bring big rewards.

Anticipate the “Collision of Cultures”

Middle-class schools need to plan carefully to anticipate and address the “collision of cultures” between the middle-class values of the school and the culture of poverty and minority groups. This might include providing parent education, requiring professional staff development for teachers and administrators, and helping students transition from home to school.

Conduct Home Visits and Form Partnerships With Parents

Teachers should conduct home visits to the families of poverty-level students. These can be invaluable to student success when teachers seek to develop a constructive partnership with parents or guardians based on the mutual desire for all students to learn.

Engage Parents in Meaningful Work

Build relationships with parents and students, and work to cooperatively develop rules, regulations, and consequences for schools and classrooms.

(continued)

Next Steps

Address Student Mobility

Mobility can be detrimental to student learning; educators need to learn more about its causes and work to develop successful interventions, such as keeping kids in their home school, scheduling alternate transportation, or working closely with the new school.

Foster Resiliency to Improve Student Behavior

Despite what appear to be overwhelming challenges, many students become resilient in ways that allow them to persevere and even thrive. Build resiliency in students by developing school and community programs to enrich their social and emotional growth, such as mentoring programs, service-learning programs, outdoor challenge programs, cross-age tutoring, and conflict resolution training.

Provide Professional Development

Teachers need intensive professional development about the culture of poverty, resiliency, and effective approaches for working with poor children and their families. Teachers need to learn about the growing number of programs that have positive effects on poor children.