

WHAT IS CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE-SUSTAINING EDUCATION

Asian Pacific Americans (APAs) have lived, struggled, and contributed for centuries to the U.S. The APA community is comprised of over 20 ethnicities, including communities from China, Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia to Bangladesh, Nepal, and the Indo-Caribbean, and speak over 40 languages.





Our cultures are central to all students' enriched learning and understanding. **Yet, APAs are often invisible in the curriculum, across all subjects.** Influential figures, historical events, and authors are excluded. When students are deprived of this knowledge, they are denied a true education that shows them the rich history and greatness of their people, their cultures, and their peers' cultures. **This reinforces racial stereotypes and discrimination that impact their daily lives.**

Public schools must be places that **center students' cultures and families, teach the accurate history of students' communities, and show students they have the vision and power to shape a better world. Culturally responsive-sustaining education does all of the above.**

"Across generations, my children and I have faced the same exclusion and invisibility from classroom practices. I want my child to be taught a curriculum which has books with protagonists that look like her, math problems that appeal to her sensibilities, social studies lesson that highlight her ethnicity, music classes that sing songs in her language. So that she and her future classmates feel equally excited about learning and progressing."

—TAZIN AZAD, NYC PUBLIC SCHOOL PARENT

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE-SUSTAINING EDUCATION (CRSE) advances educational justice by:

- 1** Centering and valuing students' cultures and identities 
- 2** Using rigorous and relevant curriculum, and anti-oppressive teaching practices 
- 3** Building strong, positive relationships between students, families, and school staff 
- 4** Supporting students to develop the knowledge, skills, and vision to transform the world toward liberation 

WHY WE NEED CRSE IN OUR SCHOOLS

CRSE means students **bring their full selves into school**. There is no part of their families and communities they have to leave behind in order to get a good education. With CRSE, **parents have a say in their children's education** and know what is happening in their schools and districts. CRSE prepares students to **transform our public schools, and create a better world for all**.
We need culturally responsive-sustaining education to transform schooling.

1

CRSE helps students excel, and build strong relationships with their peers and teachers.

- CRSE creates classrooms and schools where APA students **see themselves represented and honored**. It teaches students the contributions of their people, and gives them important role models to know their people have made it.
- In practice, CRSE could look like:
 - » Students in a social studies class read stories about immigration, interview their families or neighbors about their immigration experiences, and share their stories and learnings in ways that uplift the resilience of immigrants.
 - » A teacher covers important APA influential figures such as Filipino American labor organizer Larry Itliong who fought for farmworker rights, and Bengali American organizer Ibrahim Chowdury who advocated for citizenship rights.
- CRSE has been shown to **increase grade point averages, student engagement, self-image, critical thinking skills, attendance, and graduation rates**.
- When all students are taught to respect and honor their own and others' cultures, it is linked to **less bullying in schools**. A teacher, for instance, can teach about Muslim religious and cultural practices during Ramadan that show students how to be respectful.

2

CRSE improves the public school curriculum to truly reflect the diversity and needs of students, including Asian Americans.

Across 16 commonly-used English Language Arts curricula and booklists, **83% of the books are written by White authors**. Only 5% of the books are written by Asian authors and only 10% feature Asian characters. These materials were found to **reinforce stereotypes and negatively portray Asians, and all people of color**.

For instance, Asian countries were often presented as strange or different. One curriculum cautioned teachers about "hard to pronounce names" in a story about Nepal, rather than identify points of connection. Instead, during reading time, students could have a variety of books to choose from that center Asian characters, written by Asian authors, and portray Asian people in positive, uplifting ways.

About the Education Justice Research and Organizing Collaborative

The Education Justice Research and Organizing Collaborative (EJ-ROC) at the NYU Metro Center brings together researchers, data and policy analysts, and community organizers to provide critical research, data, policy and strategic support for the education justice movement. EJ-ROC builds on the long tradition of movement-driven, community-derived research and uses an explicit racial justice lens in its two main areas of work: rapid-response research and strategic assistance to education organizing groups.



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