

# Why should schools focus on the cultures of their students?

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The New York State Education Department understands culture as the multiple components of one's identity, including but not limited to: race, economic background, gender, language, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, and ability. Culture far transcends practices such as cuisines, art, music, and celebrations to also include ways of thinking, values, and forms of expression. These ways and forms are in constant flux, renegotiation, and evolution. Schools then



systems approach for cultural inclusion that broadens what ethnic groups, classes, sexualities, and ties are privileged in the creation maintenance of traditional education

Research suggests that many students whose cultures are more closely aligned with the “cultural fabric” of schools experience praise and are viewed as more dedicated than those whose home cultures differ. Educators committed to understanding both the concept of culture and many different cultures

can refocus their lens for viewing students’ cultures not as “deficiencies to overcome” (Paris & Alim, 2014, p. 87), but as assets. Students from different cultures possess vibrant realities and rich reservoirs of knowledge. By making all cultures matter, our students’ cultures can be positioned as strengths and as the foundation of empowering, rigorous, and innovative learning.



Learn more about [Culturally Responsive Sustaining Education Framework](#).

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