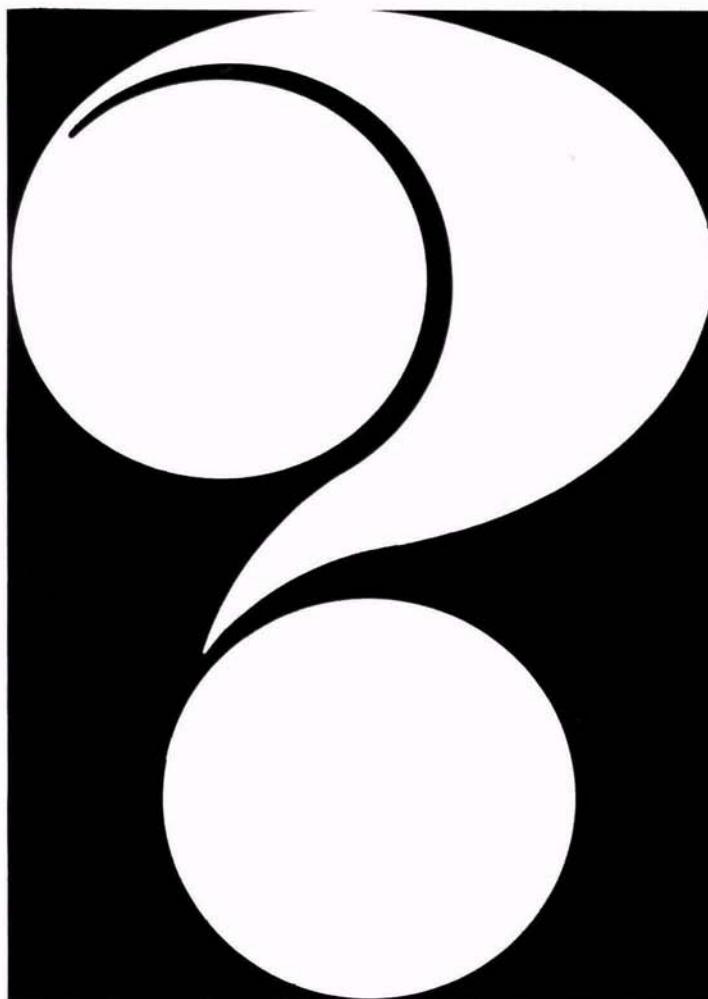


# *What Is Your School's MEQ?*

*If your school's multicultural education program is worthwhile,  
it practices what it preaches.*



GENEVA GAY

No school assessment is complete without attention to multicultural education. How well is your school doing, and by what standards? Evaluation can help you close the gap between what is and what ought to be.

To gauge your school's MEQ (Multicultural Education Quotient), you need to examine every aspect of school operation, considering both process and product. For example, as students learn facts about ethnic and cultural pluralism in the United States, they should be employing analysis, synthesis, and evaluation skills. As much attention should be given to attitudes and feelings and to application of learnings to real situations as to acquiring information.

A good multicultural program addresses many different ethnic groups, includes both historical and contemporary perspectives, and focuses on variations and similarities within and among different ethnic groups. School nutritionists and planners of assembly programs are as responsible for ethnic diversity and cultural pluralism as are the social studies teachers. In short, the program is comprehensive, integrative, and systemic.

#### Criteria

To determine your school's multicultural education quotient, begin by dividing the schooling process into areas of operation, such as curriculum and instruction, staffing, support services, student activities, and school climate. Once these categories are chosen, specific pertinent questions can be identified.

Following is a list of 45 criteria for assessing MEQ, grouped by function. These questions are not mandatory or exhaustive, but they do provide minimum guidelines.

#### Curriculum and Instruction

1. Does the content accurately present ethnic groups' experiences, lifestyles, and cultures?

2. Are racial minorities and white ethnic groups included in discussions about ethnicity and cultural pluralism?

3. Is the content about ethnic di-

versity and cultural pluralism evident in all aspects of the instructional plans for given subjects and in the total school curricula?

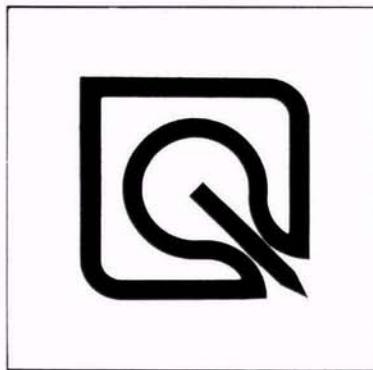
4. Are the learning styles, value systems, and cultural conditioning of different ethnic groups considered seriously and consistently in determining instructional modalities? In providing learning alternatives? In assessing student performance?

5. Is pluralism a critical factor in the selection of instructional materials?

6. Are ethnically and culturally diverse experiences, content, perspectives, and contexts used to teach the fundamental skills of the various school subjects?

7. Does the content address simi-

*"Achieving effective multicultural education is a schoolwide function; every individual or group must contribute to the process."*



larities and differences within and among ethnic groups? Historical and contemporary perspectives of ethnic experiences? Heroes and heroines as well as the general ethnic population?

8. Does the content make use of many different information sources, such as historical records, communal experiences, case studies, academic scholarship, and the arts?

9. Does the content examine both positive and negative aspects of ethnic experiences in American history, heritage, and contemporary life?

10. Does pluralism permeate all curriculum components (rationales, goals and objectives, content, activities, evaluation) in all subjects?

#### Staffing

11. Is the school staff multiethnic and multiracial?

12. How are the ethnic members of the school staff distributed across job classifications (administrators, teachers, counselors, noncertified staff)?

13. Are different ethnic groups represented in leadership and decision-making positions?

14. Do individuals from various ethnic groups on the staff reflect different ideological positions about ethnic group membership and affiliation?

15. What is the school's policy on affirmative action?

16. Are ethnic minority staff members role models for students from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds?

17. How do staff members from different ethnic groups interact and work with each other?

18. Is racial or ethnic clustering among staff members consistent throughout school functions, activities, and operations?

19. Is the school staff informed about the specifics of ethnicity and cultural pluralism and how these specifics relate to their own job functions?

20. Does the staff recognize and promote ethnic and cultural pluralism in their respective operational areas?

#### Support Services

21. Are multicultural resources and multiethnic personnel represented among support services that students use?

22. Are ethnically specific services available to students?

23. Do the library and audiovisual center have accurate and recent materials on ethnicity and cultural pluralism?

24. Are these resources written, audio, and visual materials of different kinds, created by members of different ethnic groups, and about a variety of ethnic experiences?

25. Do policies stipulate that all student support services will be sensitive to and promote ethnic diversity and cultural pluralism?

26. Are there adequate resources (human, material, fiscal) for ethnically diverse students who need help in adjusting to the school culture?

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(For example, are there facilities for tutoring and remedial instruction in English?)

27. Do counselors adjust their techniques to make them more compatible with the value systems and cultural styles of different ethnic groups?

28. Are school programs (assemblies, festivals, and dances) multi-ethnic and culturally pluralistic?

#### Student Activities

29. Does the school have a policy of nonrestricted membership in all student clubs, organizations, and activities?

30. Do ethnic students participate in all student activities and organizations or do they tend to cluster along ethnic and racial lines?

31. What is the quality and quantity of interethnic group relations in formal and informal school activities?

32. Are some student activities and organizations disproportionately high or low in ethnic representation?

33. Are student organizations' planned activities pluralistic?

34. Are ethnic students both followers and leaders, doers and

designers in student activities and organizations?

35. What techniques are used to elicit more diversified ethnic participation in student organizations and activities?

36. Is there racially motivated competition or hostility among student organizations?

#### School Climate

37. Are ethnic diversity and cultural pluralism evident in the physical aspects of the school and its classrooms?

38. Are cross-ethnic group interactions among students and teachers smooth and consistent?

39. Do students and teachers from different ethnic groups communicate and relate to each other as easily in noninstructional times as well as in instructional periods during the school day?

40. Do students and teachers from different ethnic groups work cooperatively to maintain a school climate that promotes ethnic and cultural pluralism?

41. Do school symbols, signs, and insignia (mottoes, showcase displays, songs, and mascots) reflect ethnic

and cultural pluralism?

42. Are school procedures flexible enough to allow for free expression of cultural pluralism?

43. Are opportunities available to honor specific ethnic and racial minority individuals and events?

44. Do students from different ethnic groups feel comfortable and have a sense of ownership or pride in the school?

45. How are students from different ethnic groups encouraged and rewarded to work together to create a school spirit that incorporates elements of ethnic diversity and cultural pluralism?

#### Conclusion

Achieving effective multicultural education is a schoolwide function; every individual or group must contribute to the process. For some, their contributions will be very direct, formal, instrumental, and technical; for others, they will be more indirect, incidental, tangential, and informal. An adequate assessment of the program, like the program itself, must be holistic and systemic in content and form. ■

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