Premises/Assumptions for our work:
- “Success” is a socially constructed term.
- External influences often shape the ways that schools define success for students.
- Children and families may have definitions of “success” that are very different than those definitions valued by schools and policymakers.
- Culture, language, disability, economic conditions, and/or educational experiences have an influence on an individual’s definition of success.

Hypothesis:
Schools (as represented by policies, practices, administrators, teachers) construct the meaning of success in ways that differ significantly from the ways in which (CLD) children and their families construct the meaning of success.

How do schools define success?
- No Child Left Behind
- Race to the Top
- LEARN
- Accountability
- Statewide (High stakes) Testing
- IEPs

We need to ask:
What is the purpose of education?
What are we teaching students and families to value?
How and when are students and families engaged?
How and when is success discussed with students and families?

Things to consider:
- College readiness
- College access
- College success
- Alternative postsecondary pathways
- Cost of higher education
- Obstacles to success
- "Dropout" issues
- Structure and organization of schools
Need to move beyond diversity to equity
K-12 need to promote and value diversity
equity consists of equal opportunities, not same opportunities
equity "demands the full participation of historically disenfranchised people in any given system" (Nelms)

For those who do make it to college
Students (with and without disabilities) need tools to succeed if they do make it to college:
- These tools are often not taught
- Academic success
- Personal empowerment
- Learning the system (demystifying)
- i.e., organizing a group of students with disabilities
- who to call when infrastructure does not allow for proper access – knowing your rights
- Access to technology
- Learn about your own individual learning style
- Setting goals

Collaboration between schools and families has been encouraged (Friend & Cook, 2007; Turnbull & Turnbull, 2001):
Benefits for professionals:
- multiple perspectives
- support systems
- resources
Benefits for families and students:
- role/voice in educational decisions
- potential for improved services

We need to ask ourselves whether collaboration is authentic (Harry, 2008).

Often we overlook how many CLD families support their children by instilling values, ensuring that basic needs are met, sending them to school, and overlooking the skills they acquire by tasks learned outside of school.

College Age Students with Disabilities
- Success is defined by their ability to become a student at a 4 year university
- Parents are still critical members in their lives
- For transportation
- access to classes
- basic needs

For some students success is defined by their breaking away from familial beliefs about what they can and can’t do
Success for some is how well the parent/s know how to navigate the “system”
Success is learning to advocate for oneself (breaking down barriers)

What parents want for their children
“More than what I have/had” (education, work, opportunity)

How can we help CLD students/ families be “successful”?
Funds of Knowledge
Knowledge that is learned at home through students’ interactions with other individuals (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005)

Culturally Relevant/Responsive Teaching (CRT)
Teachers incorporate the lives of the students in the classroom.
Move away from a deficit perspective of CLD
Focus on the cultural capital CLD students bring with them (Bartolome & Trueba, 2000)

NEA (2008) describes Cultural Competence as the skills and knowledge needed to effectively serve students and their families from diverse cultures
▪ valuing diversity
▪ being culturally self-aware
▪ understanding the dynamics of cultural interactions, and
▪ institutionalizing cultural knowledge and adapting to diversity
▪ Becoming Culturally Competent
▪ Regardless of the student we are working with we must recognize and accept each other’s culture.
▪ We are all cultural beings.

Success – defined by Mooney & Cole (2000)
“Throughout our lives, we had looked to the idea of succeeding in school to define our worth and our intelligence. In childhood, we were told we were defective goods, and to be better we had to be other than what we were. In our adult lives, we tried to use academic success to define ourselves.” (pg. 61)

Becoming personally proactive
1st step towards taking ownership of your education
Strengths are not identified and ignored in the identification process – only differences are highlighted

“Socialized”
▪ From the perspective of LD/ADHD students
▪ Function of school is to shape the behavior and thinking of children and forms identities that fit the cultural norms
▪ One of the highest values in school is to conform, passivity, and obedience
▪ Children who are natural learners and strengths which don’t align within the “box” are never developed – learning is typically sequential and not about creative and intuitive

How do we learn to set goals?
▪ Why are some students from CLD/E backgrounds more resilient than others?
▪ 1st generation college students
▪ Cultural boundaries (students get accepted to ivy league or tier 1 universities, many come back not prepared for the challenges that they will face)

Building Culturally Responsive Relationships (Harry, 2006)
▪ We are all cultural beings
▪ Cultural Responsiveness – respecting the cultural expectations and styles of families
▪ Cultural Reciprocity – respecting and learning about other cultures while sharing information with families regarding American culture
- *Cultural Competence* – suggest that are learning to be as competent as possible in cross-cultural interactions
- Attitude is what we aim to attain
- Cultural self awareness – our practices and beliefs are based on cultural values- they are not universally held by everyone

**The role of teacher preparation programs?**
National Network for Educational Renewal - The goal is to improve simultaneously the quality of P-12 education for thoughtful and informed participation in a democracy and the quality of preparation of educators for our schools.
References
Harry, B. (2006). Building culturally responsive relationships with diverse families of children with disabilities. Blue Luma Productions supported by The Monarch Center and the National Association for Multicultural Education.