



NHCSL

THE NATIONAL HISPANIC CAUCUS OF STATE LEGISLATORS

RESOLUTION

No. 2019-13

Integrating Ethnic Studies into K-12 Education

Reported to the Caucus by the NHCSL
Education Task Force
Sen. Martín Quezada (AZ), Chair

Sponsored by Rep. Teresa Alonso León (OR) and Rep. Lillian Ortiz-Self (WA)

Unanimously ratified by the Caucus on December 5, 2019

- 1 **WHEREAS**, according to Census Bureau data, Hispanic students currently account for
2 25 percent of all 54 million K-12 students¹ and will grow to about one third of pre-K
3 to 12 enrollment by 2023;² and,
4
5 **WHEREAS**, when students see people like them portrayed in a positive light on class
6 materials, they feel empowered instead of marginalized;³ and,

¹ See Pew Research Center, *Key facts about young Latinos, one of the nation's fastest-growing populations* (Sep. 13, 2018) by Mark Hugo Lopez, Jens Manuel Krogstad and Antonio Flores, available at, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/09/13/key-facts-about-young-latinos/>

Hispanic children enrollment in schools has been on the rise. The article states that Latinos are about 25 percent of all students in K-12 education.

² See Claudia Sanchez, *Latino Students: A Portrait In Numbers* (Oct. 8, 2016), available at, <https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2016/10/08/496563168/latino-students-a-portrait-in-numbers>

Latino children enrollment in K-12 education is rising and will be around 33 percent in 2023 (white children enrollment is currently at 52 percent). The information is from the National Council of La Raza.

³ See Proposed Amici Curiae Brief of the National Association of Chicana and Chicano Studies, ET AL. in *Acosta v. Huppenthal*, CV-10-623-TUC- AWT (Mar. 7, 2012), available at, <https://www.naccs.org/images/naccs/documents/MAS-BRIEF-FILED.pdf>

7
8 **WHEREAS**, when courses connect with students’ lived experiences, engagement
9 increases and both literary skills and attitudes toward learning improve;⁴ and,
10
11 **WHEREAS**, ethnic studies is the critical and interdisciplinary study of race, ethnicity,
12 and indigeneity, with a focus on the experiences and perspectives of people of color
13 and both social and ethnic minorities⁵ within and beyond the United States;⁶ and,
14
15 **WHEREAS**, the role of ethnic studies is to change the curriculum to promote critical
16 thinking regarding the intersection between systems, social and ethnic minorities
17 status so that material is substantially inclusive of all students and the achievements,
18 experiences, and perspectives of the individuals and people of color in history that
19 have often been hidden behind Eurocentric curricula in K-12 education;⁷ and,
20
21 **WHEREAS**, ethnic studies curricula acknowledge the needs of the growing
22 population of Hispanic students, other students of color, and the white students who
23 interact with them;⁸ and,
24
25 **WHEREAS**, ethnic studies pedagogy, when it is incorporated into the core curriculum,
26 has beneficial results for children of all ethnicities, including white children,⁹ as early

Amicus Curiae Brief in support of Tucson Ethnic Studies Case (). Explains why ethnic studies could reduce the achievement gap.

Discusses the potential for ethnic studies to empower students, instead of a current Eurocentric curriculum which marginalizes them.

⁴ See Julie Depenbrock, *Ethnic Studies: A Movement Born of a Ban* (Aug. 13, 2017), available at, <https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2017/08/13/541814668/ethnic-studies-a-movement-born-of-a-ban>

A San Francisco ethnic studies high school educator explains the positive effects of teaching ethnic studies and discusses some of the history regarding the process of establishing ethnic studies in high schools.

⁵ See <https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2017R1/Downloads/MeasureAnalysisDocument/37306>

HB 2845 defines both social and ethnic minorities on Sections 1. (1)(A) and Sections 1. (1)(C) (a) “Ethnic minorities” means individuals who are Native American or Americans of African, Asian, Pacific Island, Chicano, Latino or Middle Eastern descent. (c) “Social minorities” means women, people with disabilities, immigrants, refugees and individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

⁶ See the Ethnic Studies Department at the University of California, Berkeley, available at, <http://ethnicstudies.berkeley.edu/>

Definition provided by the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Berkeley.

⁷ See Zulema Naegale, *Student and Teacher Perceptions of the Impact Ethnic Studies Courses Have on Students of Color: A Collective Case Study* (2017), available at,

<https://pilotscholars.up.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1038&context=etd>

Banks and Banks (2001) explain the role of ethnic studies in educational reform. This information was found in Dr. Zulema Naegale’s dissertation named “Student and Teacher Perceptions of the Impact Ethnic Studies Courses Have on Students of Color: A Collective Case Study”

⁸ See note 2.

⁹ See Dr. Emery Petchauer, *Why Ethnic Studies Courses Are Good for White Kids Too* (Jan. 9, 2012), available at, <https://diverseeducation.com/article/31372/>

Dr. Emery Petchauer explains why white students also stand to benefit from ethnic studies. She explains how white students need to learn about the perspectives of people of color, especially if they want to be leaders in a world where eventually they will be the minority.

27 as 5th grade¹⁰ and some experts conclude that it can be integrated even earlier in a
28 child’s education;¹¹ and,

29
30 **WHEREAS**, teaching young children about historical racism is an effective way to
31 develop positive attitudes toward and among students of color¹² and is one method
32 of helping to close the achievement gap;¹³ and,

33
34 **WHEREAS**, integrating ethnic studies materials and approaches into the standard
35 curriculum for all students increases student interest in school, helps students
36 appreciate different viewpoints, and allows students of color identify more with
37 historical figures;¹⁴ and,

38
39 **WHEREAS**, participation in ethnic studies has increased student attendance in
40 several San Francisco high schools by 21 percent, increased cumulative ninth-grade
41 GPA by 1.4 grade points, and increased the number of credits earned by 23 credits;¹⁵
42 and,

43

¹⁰ See Carolina Valdez, *Subverting Scripted Language Arts Curriculum: Ethnic Studies Literature in the Elementary Classroom* (Oct. 5, 2017), available at, <https://www.tandfonline.com.proxy01.its.virginia.edu/doi/full/10.1080/00228958.2017.1369282>

Carolina Valdez explains how she incorporated ethnic studies in her fifth grade classroom and how students learned about power, racialization, and colonial processes.

¹¹ See Ogo Okoye-Johnson, *Does Multicultural Education Improve Students' Racial attitudes? Implications for Closing the Achievement Gap* (Jun. 10, 2011), available at, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0021934711408901?journalCode=jbsa>

Multicultural education is beneficial for children of all ages and is akin to ethnic studies. It is also important to note that the Okoye-Johnson argues that it should begin early in a child’s education and should be a required component of the curriculum, instead of an elective.

¹² See Julie M. Hughes, et al, *Consequences of Learning About Historical Racism Among European American and African American Children* (Dec. 2007), available at, <https://cpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com/you.stonybrook.edu/dist/e/2677/files/2018/04/ContentServer.asp-2929zpx.pdf>

This study looks into the benefits that students can receive by learning about historical racism. One of these benefits is bias reduction.

¹³ See Note 3

Discusses the potential for ethnic studies to empower students, instead of a current Eurocentric curriculum which marginalizes them.

¹⁴ See Martell, C. C. & Hashimoto-Martell, E. A. (2011), *Throwing out the history textbook: Changing social studies texts and the impact on students*, available at, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED518770.pdf>

Examines the inability of students to see themselves in history. It also looks into the problematic nature of US history textbooks and its Eurocentric focus.

¹⁵ See Thomas Dee & Emily Penner, *The Causal Effects of Cultural Relevance: Evidence from an Ethnic Studies Curriculum* (2016), available at, <https://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/wp16-01-v201601.pdf>

Most students in the study had attendance rates of over 87.5 percent before ethnic studies was implemented. The 21 percentage points increase due to ethnic studies would have brought many students to near perfect attendance. The GPA was on a 4.0 scale, which means ethnic studies had a big impact on the students’ grades. The 23 credits equate to about 4 courses, which is about an extra half year of school. 60 percent of the students who participated in MAS programs were Asian, 23 percent were Hispanic, and 6 percent were black.

44 **WHEREAS**, students enrolled in the Mexican American Studies (MAS) program of
45 the Tucson, Arizona School District, were twice as likely to graduate from high school
46 than non-MAS students, including white students;¹⁶ and,

47 **WHEREAS**, Hispanic perspectives and histories are not the only material that needs
48 to be added to K-12 curricula; and,

49
50 **WHEREAS**, Asian Americans have also been misrepresented in history textbooks,¹⁷
51 there is “abysmal ignorance” surrounding Native Americans,¹⁸ and African American
52 history should not be reduced to only discussing slavery during Black history month
53 as it traditionally has been in many schools;¹⁹ and,

54
55 **WHEREAS**, although the overwhelming educational outcomes and evidence support
56 ethnic studies, legislation surrounding ethnic studies, implementation has been
57 gradual;²⁰ and,

¹⁶ See Willis D. Hawley, *An Empirical Analysis of the Effects of Mexican American Studies Participation on Student Achievement within Tucson Unified School District* (Jun. 20, 2012), available at, https://www.tulibro915.com/uploads/1/2/5/5/12552697/mas_report_2012_0.pdf

“Results suggest that there is a consistent, significant, positive relationship between MAS participation and student academic performance.”

¹⁷ See Nicholas D. Hartlep and Daniel P. Scott, *Asian/American Curricular Epistemicide: From Being Excluded to Becoming a Model Minority* (Aug.18, 2016), available at, https://www.academia.edu/27170952/Asian_American_Curricular_Epistemicide_From_Being_Excluded_to_Becoming_a_Model_Minority

Latinos and Hispanics are not the only people missing from textbooks. This article and study explains how Asian Americans also need ethnic studies to learn their histories. Additionally, how textbooks must fix all misrepresentations of Asian Americans.

¹⁸ See Carolyn Jones, *Native Americans push schools to include their story in California history classes* (July 25, 2018), available at, <https://edsources.org/2018/native-americans-push-schools-to-include-their-story-in-california-history-classes/600669>

Article discusses the lack of Native history taught in California schools, despite according to census data, California having the highest number of Native Americans (362,000).

¹⁹ See Coshandra Dillard, *Black History Month: Teaching Beyond Slavery* (Jan. 29, 2019), available at, <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/black-history-month-teaching-beyond-slavery>

Black history should empower student identity. If a classroom will teach about slavery and civil rights, don't only talk about rebellion. Talk about black scholars and other important contributions from people of color.

²⁰ **Alaska**

- See Alaska Native Knowledge Network, available at, <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/Publications/standards.html> Alaska's State Cultural Standards have a focus on ethnic studies, specifically on the indigenous First Nations in Alaska.

Arizona

See Julie Depenbrock, *Federal Judge Finds Racism Behind Arizona Law Banning Ethnic Studies* (Aug. 22, 2017), available at, <https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2017/08/22/545402866/federal-judge-finds-racism-behind-arizona-law-banning-ethnic-studies>

- Federal court ruled that the Arizona law banning Tucson Unified School District's Mexican American Studies program was racist and unconstitutional
- The district has avoided reinstating the MAS program, but they still have some ethnic studies courses. District wants to avoid the issue because it became a divisive and partisan issue.

California

- See California A.B. 331, available at, <https://legiscan.com/CA/bill/AB331/2019> Would require one semester of ethnic studies for graduation. It is currently being review in the state Senate.

- See Joshua Molina, *Santa Barbara Unified School Board Delays Ethnic Studies Requirement to 2024* (May 19, 2019), available at, <https://www.noozhawk.com/article/santa-barbara-unified-school-board-delays-ethnic-studies-requirement-2019051>
- See Eduardo Cuevas, *A sense of identity: Salinas high schools to require ethnic studies in fall 2020* (April, 5, 2019), available at, <https://www.thecalifornian.com/story/news/education/2019/04/05/salinas-high-requirements-ethnic-studies-class/3365548002/>
- Salinas Union High School District will incorporate an ethnic studies requirement, beginning with the class of 2024. Approved a semester-long high school course in ethnic studies, by reducing a one-year health course to be only one semester.

Colorado

- See Melanie Asmar and Sam Park, *I'm noticed: Why Denver wants to increase the number of students taking ethnic studies* (May 1, 2019), available at, <https://chalkbeat.org/posts/co/2019/05/01/im-noticed-why-denver-wants-to-increase-the-number-of-students-taking-ethnic-studies/>. In the 2018-2019 school year, about 8 percent of the high school students in Denver took an ethnic studies course.
- See Colorado HB19-1192: *Inclusion Of American Minorities In Teaching Civil Government*, available at, <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb19-1192>. Will create a 16-member commission that would make recommendations to the state board of education on the standards for teaching history and civics classes related to ethnic studies. Sponsored by Representative Serena Gonzales-Gutierrez, Representative Bri Buentello, and Senator Julie Gonzales.

Connecticut

- See Brenda Iasevoli, *Race, Ethnic Studies Will Be a Graduation Requirement in Conn. District* (Oct. 31, 2017), available at, http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/curriculum/2017/10/courses_on_race_ethnic_studies.html
Bridgeport, Connecticut will require all high school students to take a course in African-American studies, Latin-American studies, or perspectives on race to graduate. This will take effect during the 2021-2022 school year.
- See Connecticut HB 7082, available at, https://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/cgabillstatus/cgabillstatus.asp?selBillType=Bill&bill_num=HB07082&whi_ch_year=2019. Would include Black and Latino Studies in the public-school curriculum, however, the classes would not be mandatory. It has passed the House and Senate and has been sent to the Governor.

Delaware

- See Sophia Schmidt, *Wilmington City Council wants fairer, more inclusive school system* (May 23, 2018), available at, <https://www.delawarepublic.org/post/wilmington-city-council-wants-fairer-more-inclusive-school-system>
Wilmington, Delaware City Council adopted a resolution encouraging Wilmington-area school districts to adopt K-12 ethnic studies curriculums.

New Mexico

- See Frances Kai-Hwa Wang, *Albuquerque Public Schools Add Ethnic Studies to High School Curriculum* (Jun. 8, 2016), available at, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/albuquerque-public-schools-add-ethnic-studies-high-school-curriculum-n588321>
Albuquerque Public Schools will launch a new ethnic studies program for all 13 of its high schools beginning August 2017.

Illinois

- See Melissa Sanchez, *Latino Studies curriculum will make CPS a pioneer* (Mar. 9, 2015), available at, <https://www.chicagoreporter.com/latino-studies-curriculum-will-make-cps-a-pioneer/>
Chicago Public Schools have Latino and Latino and Latin American studies curriculum for K to 10th grade.

Indiana

- See Indianapolis Recorder article, *Gov. Holcomb signs Ethnic Studies bill into law* (May, 26, 2017), available at, http://www.indianapolisrecorder.com/education/article_831c4172-424a-11e7-a891-0f37ece5e283.html
As of July 1, 2017, all Indiana high schools will be required to offer ethnic and racial studies as an elective course at least once every school year under Senate Enrolled Act 337.

Kansas

58 **WHEREAS**, ethnic studies implementation has also been different across the nation,
59 including approaches such as the provision of a high school elective ethnic studies
60 course, the requirement of an ethnic studies course for high school graduation, or the
61 integration of ethnic studies through all subjects and curricula in K-12 education; and,
62

63 **WHEREAS**, although all of these approaches are laudable and positive developments,
64 electives and even required ethnic studies classes generally only focus on high school
65 students,²¹ often take away the opportunity for a student to take an AP course, and

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- See Kansas HB 2207: Development and implementation of ethnic studies in schools, available at, http://www.kslegislature.org/li_2016/b2015_16/measures/hb2207/. Died on calendar on June 1, 2016.

Oregon

- See Oregon HB 2845, available at, <https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2017R1/Downloads/MeasureAnalysisDocument/37306>. Establishes an advisory group to identify where current statewide social studies standards fail to recognize the histories, contributions and perspectives of ethnic and social minorities. Requires advisory group develop ethnic studies standards to propose for adoption into existing statewide social studies standards. Requires the Oregon Department of Education to adopt ethnic studies standards for public students in kindergarten through grade 12 by September 15, 2020.

Vermont

- See Vermont H.3: An act relating to ethnic and social equity studies standards for public schools, available at, <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/H.3>. Signed into law by Vermont Governor Phil Scott on March 29, 2019. The law aims to make school learning materials more inclusive. It creates an Ethnic and Social Equity Standards Advisory Working Group. The panel will review standards for student performance and recommend updates to recognize the history, contributions and perspectives of ethnic and social groups.

Washington

- See Washington HB 1314: Concerning ethnic Studies in public schools, available at, <https://legiscan.com/WA/bill/HB1314/2019>. Requires Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to adopt state learning standards that identify the knowledge and skills that all public students need to be global citizens in a global society with an appreciation for the contributions of diverse cultures; and to develop a model ethnic studies curriculum for use in grades 7 through 12. It is currently in the House Committee on Appropriations.
- See J. Gabriel Ware, *Ethnic Studies Courses Break Down Barriers and Benefit Everyone—So Why the Resistance?* (Mar. 23, 2017), available at, <https://www.yesmagazine.org/peace-justice/ethnic-studies-courses-break-down-barriers-and-benefit-everyone-so-why-the-resistance-20170323>. All public schools must teach a course named “Since Time Immemorial”, which teaches students in elementary, middle, and high school about Native Americans. It is endorsed by 29 federally recognized tribes.

²¹ See note 11

Okoye-Johnson’s (2011) meta-analysis of 30 studies comparing the impact of a multicultural curriculum or program with that of the traditional curriculum, on students’ racial attitudes found a multicultural curriculum to produce a large effect size. Further, when the multicultural curriculum is part of the school’s regular programming rather than extracurricular, it has a much more powerful positive impact on students’ racial attitudes. If ethnic studies results increase student success, should it not begin earlier than high school? In the Tucson case, some students dropped out before they took an ethnic studies class in high school.

66 fail to address the prevalence of Eurocentric material²² and the need for these
67 perspectives in the core curriculum;²³ and,

68
69 **WHEREAS**, elective ethnic studies courses cannot be a substitute for K-12 ethnic
70 studies integration, but as a minimum, has helped students learn more about higher
71 education options and has led many students to pursue Latino studies.

72
73 **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Hispanic Caucus of State
74 Legislators understands that ethnic studies are an exceptionally beneficial addition
75 to K-12 curriculum, particularly social studies curriculum, and should be
76 implemented in all states and territories; and,

77
78 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that ethnic studies objectives and benchmarks be
79 included in a school’s improvement plan; and,

80 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that state legislatures and school boards should
81 examine the above-referenced literature on ethnic studies and the results of future
82 ethnic studies research and their recommendations on curricula; and,

83 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that when schools are audited to determine their
84 success in integrating ethnic studies into K-12 curriculum, it should be done with a
85 group of diverse stakeholders; and,

86 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that ethnic studies be integrated into K-12 core
87 curricula, throughout all courses as appropriate, and if not merely as separate
88 required or elective courses, and that ethnic studies be considered an indispensable
89 component of all students’ educations; and,

90 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NHCSL calls on the seven regional accrediting
91 organizations to incorporate robust ethnic studies standards, following the
92 guidelines outlined in this Resolution, into the private school accreditation process;
93 and,

94 **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that General Education Development (GED) tests
95 integrate best practices in ethnic studies into its 4 subjects’ content.

²² See Christine E. Sleeter, *The Academic and Social Value of Ethnic Studies: A Research Review* (2011), available at, <https://www.nea.org/assets/docs/NBI-2010-3-value-of-ethnic-studies.pdf>

An analysis of the History-Social Science Framework for California Public Schools in 2001 revealed that of the 96 Americans who were named for study in the Framework’s course descriptions, they were 77 percent White, 18 percent African American, 4 percent Native American, 1 percent Latino, and 0 percent Asian American.

²³ See Nolan L. Cabrera, *How Ethnic Studies Can Reduce Racial Achievement Gaps* (Jun. 5, 2018), available at, <https://scholars.org/brief/how-ethnic-studies-can-reduce-racial-achievement-gaps>

Effective ethnic studies classes are for core-credit. Since ethnic studies will be incorporated into the core curriculum, students will not be isolated or segregated in classes and this will address Eurocentric material in a variety of class subjects.

96 THE NHCSL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY AMENDED AND APPROVED
97 THIS RESOLUTION ON AUGUST 2, 2019 AT ITS SUMMER MEETING IN SANTA FE, NM.
98
99 THE NATIONAL HISPANIC CAUCUS OF STATE LEGISLATORS UNANIMOUSLY
100 RATIFIED THIS RESOLUTION ON DECEMBER 5, 2019, AT THE ANNUAL MEETING IN
101 SAN JUAN, PR.

